



NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 238
May
2015

OXFORD PUNT 2015

The annual
showcase of
Oxford's best
new music
returns

Also in this issue:

RIDE return!

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plus

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reviews and six pages of local gigs

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THE BULLINGDON

MAY 2015

Thursday 30th April

CC Smugglers

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 30th April

Pearson Sound

Doors: 11pm

Friday 1st May

Shushians

Doors: 6.30pm

Saturday 2nd May

**Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
1st Semi-Final
Hell's Gazelles
Fallen From Grace
Silk Road
Fleisch**

Doors: 6.30pm

Tuesday 5th May

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:
Hugh Turner Band**

Doors: 8.30pm

Friday 8th May

**Bunty
Mary James**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 8th May

**Deep Cover:
Zed Bias Soundsystem
Flowdan
Champion
Terror Danjah**

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 9th May

**The Blues Brothers
Tribute Show**

Doors: 9pm

Tuesday 12th May

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:
Big Colours (16 Piece band)**

Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 13th May

Brookes Big Night Out

Doors: 6.30pm

Saturday 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

Wednesday 20th May

**HT Presents:
Tim Renkow**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 21st May

**JP Harris and
the Tough Choices**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 22nd May

Set It Off

Doors: 7pm

Friday 22nd May

Bloody Knuckles

Doors: 10pm

Saturday 23rd May

**Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
2nd Semi-Final
Retribution UK
Godsbane
Evavoid
Dead A Thousand Times**

Doors: 6.30pm

Sunday 24th May

**Simple Afters:
Trevino
DJ Lee (Sideways)**

Doors: 11pm

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

Thursday 28th May

Matt Edwards Band

Doors: 7pm

Friday 29th May

Chuck Prophet

Doors: 7pm

Friday 29th May

**Bossaphonik Presents:
The Dele Sosimi
Afrobeat Orchestra**

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 30th May

**Man Make Fire
EP Launch Party feat:
Elm Tree Street (Aus)**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 30th May

White Magic Sound

Doors: 11pm

Monday 1st June

**Chameleons Vox
'What does Anything Mean? Basically' Tour**

Doors: 8.30pm

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

Thursday 11th June

**Khamsina
Single Launch**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 12th June

**Homage to Led Zepplin
Denny Ilett & Company**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 13th June

**Danny and the
Champions of the World**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 13th June

**Simple & Playground:
Kowton & Peverelist**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 15th June

Ryan McGarvey (US)

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 16th June

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:
Stuart Henderson Quartet**

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 18th June

**Well Hung Heart
Dave Arcari**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 19th June

The Aureate Act

Doors: 7pm

Friday 19th June

**Deep Cover:
Goldie feat. MC GQ
Om Unit
DJ Lee**

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 20th June

**Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
3rd Semi-Final**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 20th June

**Bedrock
Oxford's Rocking Club Night.
Release Your Inner Dinosaur!**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 22nd June

Hamilton Loomis

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 23rd June

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:
Rory McInroy Band**

Doors: 8.30pm

Tuesday 30th June

**Jazz at the Bullingdon:
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited**

Doors: 8.30pm

Wednesday 1st July

Sarah Jane Scouten

Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd July

**Bloodstock:
Metal to the Masses
The Final**

Doors: 6.30pm

Monday 13th July

Moreland & Arbuckle

Doors: 7pm

Monday 20th July

Della Mae

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 29th July

Angaleena Presley

Doors: 7pm

Monday 10th August

Little Devils

Doors: 7pm

Monday 14th September

Marcus Malone

Doors: 8.30pm

Monday 21st September

Kirk Fletcher

Doors: 8.30pm

Thursday 24th September

Cardboard Fox

Doors: 7pm

Friday 23rd October

**The Corn Potato
String Band**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 25th October

The Ruts DC

Doors: 7pm

Friday 30th October

Hollis Brown

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 14th November

Dedication 2015

Doors: 5.30pm

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NEWS

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THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND, DREAMING SPIRES and Alphabet Backwards are among the local acts announced for the **Riverside Stage** at this year's **Cornbury Festival**.

The Riverside Stage traditionally gives local and emerging acts the chance to share a festival bill with big name acts. **Tom Jones, Razorlight, Roger Hodgson, Martha Reeves, Lulu, Chas & Dave, The Fratellis, Billy Ocean** and **Blue** are among the acts playing the festival's two main stages over the weekend of the **10th-12th July** at **Great Tew Estate**.

Other acts confirmed for the Riverside Stage include **Larry Reddington, Brightworks, Dance a la Plage, King B, Lloyd Grossman & The New Forbidden, Hope & Glory, Zurich, Debbie Bond, Brickwork Lizards, ToLiesel, Les Clochards** and **Slainte**.

Tickets for Cornbury Festival are on sale now from **www.cornburyfestival.com**

DIZZEE RASCAL, Example, Roots Manuva and Maxi Jazz have been added to the line-up for this year's Big Feastival. The food and music festival, organised by Alex James and Jamie Oliver, runs over the weekend of the 28th-30th August

at James's farm near Kingham, west Oxfordshire. The new names on the bill join **Paloma Faith, Groove Armada** and **Grandmaster Flash**. Visit **www.thebigfestival.com** for more news and ticket details.

THE JAMES STREET TAVERN hosts four days of free live music over the May Bank Holiday weekend. Mayfest runs from Friday 1st – Monday 4th. Friday sees sets from this month's *Nightshift* Demo of the Monthers Monkfish, alongside Grandma's Hands, The Jesters, Gemma Moss and Comfort Zone. Saturday features The Tom Ivey Blues Band, Tony Batey, Blackthorn, Cosmosis, Bewarethisboy, Firegazers and Wednesday's Wolves. On Saturday you can see Goin' Loud, Last Rites, Strike One, Pipeline, Dirty Valuables, The Shapes, Mad Larry, and Rory Evans, while on the Monday it all rounds off with String Project, The Balkan Wanderers, Beard of Destiny, The Tom Ivey Funk band, Auralcandy, The Pink Diamond Revue, Reckless Sleepers and Waterfall. We're guessing there'll be loads of booze and stuff too, so that's our bank holiday sorted.

BLAIR DUNLOP headlines this



TREMBLING BELLS, NECRO DEATHMORT and CHARLES HAYWARD are among the first batch of acts to be announced for **Supernormal Festival**. The artist-curated music and arts festival, which runs over the weekend of the 7th-9th August at **Braziers Park**, near Wallingford, returns for its sixth outing this year, boasting a new audio-visual stage that will provide an immersive multi-media experience.

Other names announced include Anonymous Bash, Arabot, Benjamin Finger, A&E, Bonnacons of Doom, Blood Sport, Blown Out, Broken DC, Crying Lion, Emma Tricca, English Heretic, Father Murphy, Ghold, Guapo, Hirvikolari, Hoofus, Jennifer Walshe, Lower Slaughter, Mind Mountain, Laura Cannell & Andre Bosman, Paddy Steer, Negra Branca, Rhodri Davies, Sharon Gal, Spectres, Stephen Cornford, Trash Kit, Stargazers Assistant and WTVR.

With its adventurous approach to music bookings, and its old fashioned festival vibe, Supernormal has been welcomed as one of the most exciting and unusual events in Oxfordshire. Earlybird tickets for this year's event sold out in a matter of days. Tickets are on sale now, priced £80 for adults, from **www.supernormalfestival.co.uk**.

year's **Halfway To 75** mini-festival. The annual one-day celebration of Americana and roots music takes place on Saturday 25th July at the Isis Farmhouse. Dunlop – son of Fairport Convention's Ashley Hutchings, and who played the young Willy Wonka in Tim Burton's *Charlie & the Chocolate Factory* – won the Radio2 Folk Awards Horizon Award for his 2013 debut album 'Blight & Blossom'. He is joined at Halfway To 75 by a cast of local acts, including The Long

Insiders, Ags Connolly, The Oxford Gospel Choir, Great Western Tears, The August List, Francis Pugh & the Whisky Singers, and My Crooked Teeth. Tickets for the event are on sale now, priced £12, or £7 for under-13s, with under-7s free. Ahead of the festival, award-winning Nashville country star **JP Harris and the Tough Choices** play a rare UK show at the Bullingdon on Thursday 21st May. Visit **halfwayto75.com** for more details.

RIDE returned to action with a special fanclub show at the *O2 Academy on Easter Sunday*.

The local legends announced the show in the O2's upstairs venue - the room where they played their first major local headline show back in 1989 when it was *The Co-Op Hall* - with an email to fans on the 1st April. Tickets sold out in a few hours.

The band played a 90-minute set of songs drawn almost exclusively from their early EPs and first two albums, starting with 'Polar Bear', and closing the set with 'Chelsea Girl' from their debut 'Ride EP'.

The gig was their first full show since they split in 1996, with the quartet flying out immediately afterwards for a tour of the States. On an emotional night, other set highlights included a stunning version of 'Drive Blind' as well as fan favourites 'Dreams Burn Down' and 'Seagull'.
Read the full gig review on page 18.

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photo: Johnny Moto



NEWS

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UNDERSMILE play their only Oxford show of the year this month. The doom metal stars play at The Wheatsheaf on Saturday 9th May with support from Essex sludge crew Earthmass, and gothic songsmith D Gwalia. Recent *Nightshift* cover stars Undersmile released their acclaimed second album, 'Anhedonia' in March and have been touring around the UK and Europe, including a set at Roadburn Festival in The Netherlands. Go to www.facebook.com/Undersmile for all your doomy Undersmile newsie stuff.

NON-STOP TANGO release their new album, 'Unnatural Selection', this month. The band, formed by members of Oxford Improvisers, including Jon Seagroatt, Malcolm Atkins, Sam Kidel, Chris Hills and singer Stavroula Kounadea, have imagined a journey, based on Homer's *The Odyssey*, along Cowley Road, from The Plain to Divinity Road, by Stravroula, in the company of composer Erik Satie, visiting various east Oxford landmarks along the way. The band will be playing music from the album at this month's Klub Kakofanny at The Wheatsheaf on Friday 1st May. Get your copy of 'Unnatural Selection' at nonstoptango.com.

IRREGULAR FOLK host their annual summer festival over the weekend of the 20th-21st June at the **Perch** in Binsey. No line-up details as yet but it'll be quality, don't you worry about that. Last year's event featured sets from The Irrepressibles, The Maybirds, You Are Wolf, Jess Hall and Duotone. Tickets are on sale now, priced £35 for the weekend or £20 for day tickets, from Wegotickets. Visit www.irregularfolk.co.uk for news as it happens.

Irregular Folk also have their own dedicated record rack at **Blackwell's Music** on Broad Street, selling vinyl and CDs of acts who have played the club, including Laura Moody, who played Blackwell's Norrington Room in April.

SOFAR SOUNDS are looking for film makers keen to work on live music filming. Promoters Paul Wightman and Stornoway's Oli Steadman are part of a global

community of promoters who put on secret shows in intimate venues in over 100 cities around the world, including Oxford, each gig filmed and edited by volunteers. They are looking for film makers to join the growing community. You can get in contact at oxfordsofar@gmail.com, or find out more and hear about forthcoming gigs at www.sofarsounds.com.

TANDEM FESTIVAL returns for a second year over the weekend of the 19th-20th June at **Hill End**, near Wytham. The two-day festival features jazz, folk, gypsy and Afrobeat music as well as talks, workshops, films, poetry and theatre, with an emphasis on environmentalism. The festival was inspired by organiser Nicholas O'Brien's five-month cycle trip around Europe, recording over 200 unknown acts from different countries. As well as having an international slant to music, Tandem encourages festival goers to arrive by bike. Find out more at www.tandemfestival.com

FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS headline the third **Yardfest**, which takes place at the Courtyard Youth Arts Centre in Bicester on **Friday 17th July**. The all-ages event is looking for local young (under-25s) bands and solo acts to play. Anyone interested should email a bio and sound links to Jeremy Leggett at courtyardgigs@gmail.com

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.

Regularly updated local music news is available online at 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.



SWERVEDRIVER play their first Oxford show since 2009 this month, with the band out on tour to promote their fifth album, 'I Wasn't Born To Lose You' – their first in 17 years.

The local pioneers, who emerged from the Oxford scene at the same time as Ride in the late-1980s, and signed to Creation Records after Ride's Mark Gardener gave a demo of 'Son Of Mustang Ford' to label head Alan McGee, moved to London but frontman Adam Franklin regularly returns to Oxford, and told *Nightshift* that he still regards the city as home.

"Oxford certainly feels like home to us," said Adam as Swervedriver completed a tour of the States in April, "but I guess Swervedriver's name isn't quite as wrapped up in Oxford's music history as Supergrass, Ride or Radiohead because we all moved to London in 1989 and were based there when things took off. Our links here are still massively strong though; our old band Shake Appeal was voted best band of the year in 1988 or something, and Ed from Radiohead once laughed that On A Friday couldn't get a gig back then because they didn't sound like us! I apologised, but pointed out that things had worked out alright for them in the end."

While Swervedriver split in 1999, they reformed in 2008 to play Coachella Festival and made their Oxford return in 2009 with a show at the Academy – a venue they return to on Friday 22nd May. Since then the band have toured Australia as well as America. The new album was recorded in Melbourne and in Ray Davies' Konk Studio in London.

"We couldn't be happier with the new album and feel it sort of touches on ground covered in all the previous records," says Adam. "People have said it's like the engine just started up again and Swervedriver condensed the 17 year gap into what sounds more like two. We brought the album back to Oxford to finish, by the way: I sang the vocals round at Mark Gardener's place and Tim Turan mastered it. Back in 1989 Tim recorded the very first Swervedriver demo down Union Street, which Mark gave to Alan McGee." Asked if he envisaged Swervedriver still going seven years on from their 2008 reunion, Adam says even he is surprised it's been such a success.

"It's been great because people thought they were never going to hear us again and we also thought we were never going to play those songs again. I would definitely say it's exceeded expectations. We played the Jimmy Fallon show in the US when we didn't even have a record out and debuted a new song there and then."

Adding to the Oxford heritage side of things, Swervedriver currently have ex-Supergrass man Mick Quinn playing bass for them on tour.

"Mick's stepped in because our bass player Steve George couldn't do this bout of touring. It's been great being on the road with him; he's from Wheatley, the same as (guitarist) Jimmy Hartridge and myself and we've known him since we were kids. The first band I was ever in was with Mick's older brother Si and we used to rehearse in their basement. The first time I ever played electric guitar was down there in fact; I played the riff to 'Silver Machine'! Years later Swervedriver played with the Jennifers in Amsterdam and then came the Supergrass phenomenon. We just finished our US tour with three sold out shows in New York and were laughing about Wheatley bringing it to NYC!"

Swervedriver and Ride were closely linked back in the 80s and early 90s, so what did Adam think of their reunion?

"I haven't seen them, because I stayed out in New York after our tour and so missed their O2 show. And they're currently on the west coast; they played last night with the band we had opening for us on our tour actually, Gateway Drugs from LA. I knew their reunion was brewing; Mark was getting a craving for just stamping on some pedals and making a lot of noise again and so I'm really made up for them! We'll probably miss all their bloody shows again though because we always used to be on the road at the same time as them back in the day, but there's a chance we might both be playing the same festival later this year, so fingers crossed on that."

Swervedriver play the O2 Academy on Friday 22nd May. 'I Wasn't Born To Lose You' is out now on Cobraside Records.

THE COMPLETE SUMMER WEEKEND

THE ORIGINAL CORNBURY MUSIC FESTIVAL

10TH, 11TH, 12TH JULY 2015 THE GREAT TEW PARK OXFORDSHIRE

RAZORLIGHT

TOM JONES

THE FRATELLIS

CHAS & DAVE

THE FELICE BROTHERS

WARD

THOMAS

ROGER HODGSON

FORMERLY OF SUPERTRAMP

BILLY STAR

OCEAN

JACK SAVORETTI

PAPER AEROPLANES

Aisling

JOE

Katherine

BEA LYCETT

RYAN

THE JAMES HANK WANGFORD

HUNTER SIX

THE SHIRES

CC SMUGGLERS

HEADNORTH

JOEL RAFAEL

ROTHWELL

THE TREVOR HORN BAND

ONLY THE YOUNG

MOULETTES

SCOTT BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX

JESS & THE BANDITS

THE HARBOUR

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RELEASED

VIENNA DITTO

‘Circle’

(Self released)

It’s either an artfully-placed sideswipe or a slightly misjudged piece of sequencing that ‘Oh Josephine’, the first track on Vienna Ditto’s debut album ‘Circle’, is both the album’s most traditional track, and its weakest.

In itself, it’s a fine slice of upbeat, synth indie rock, but this is a band that’s been one of Oxford’s weirdest and most inventive over the past couple of years, and so, well, it’s easy to expect more. Consider expectations delivered pretty much from track two, ‘This Is Normal’, onwards; it kicks off with the excellent lyric “Your smile wiped all over my face,” and leads into the catchy vocal refrain “This is... fucked”.

While Hattie Taylor’s excellent vocals are possibly the most important part of Vienna Ditto’s sound – sounding as much like Martina Topley-Bird circa Tricky’s ‘Maxinquaye’ as a drug/drink/other-influenced combination of cabaret, blues and pop – the octopus-talented Nigel Firth runs a fiendishly close second. Previous singles ‘I Know His Blood Will Make Me Whole’, ‘Hammer And A Nail’ and ‘Liar Liar’ – the latter as a ‘quiet’ reworking – showcase impressive chops with guitar, electronics, light and shade and good old fashioned songcraft.



ALPHABET BACKWARDS

‘Fingertips’ / ‘Indian Summer’

(Self-released)

Early in 1984, in an interview on London’s Capital Radio, George Michael announced a plan to release four singles throughout the spring and summer of that year, aiming for all to reach Number 1 in the charts. Such gimlet eyed ambition may not have been quite matched by Alphabet Backwards but with what used to be called a double A-side, ‘Fingertips’ / ‘Indian Summer’ forms the opening salvo of a similar bid for stardom. For it is the band’s intention to make this one of three separate releases in calendar year



Over the course of the album there are elements of surf guitar, early Pink Floyd-esque psychedelia, twisted torchsong honesty, sly blues-based electronica and all manner of sultry glimpses into a unique world of oddity. What prevents things falling apart is the combination of the aforementioned singing voice and songcraft; and hence, ‘Circle’ is one of the strongest Oxford albums in recent times.

Selfishly, one hopes Vienna Ditto will in future steer clear of the trad sounds of its first track; it’d be nice for them to stay weird, stay special and stay *ours*.

Simon Minter

2015, following on from a period of quiet since debut LP ‘Little Victories’ arrived in 2013. The band are chiefly renowned for pop of an impossibly shiny hue, fully designed for Gap adverts, whose oeuvre is ever cursed with the description ‘catchy ‘ – as faint praise as can ever be damned with and the kind of note of approval one’s octogenarian nan would sound. This is a slightly more low key release than usual and while comparisons to Scouting for Girls and even S Club 7 remain unavoidable, ‘Indian Summer’ at least provides a degree of melancholy that is most welcome after the cloying jauntiness and handclaps of ‘Fingertips’. The video sees the band stretching out in the Devonian farmhouse in which the material was presumably recorded, replete with images of handstands and a gambolling pooch; it won’t be used as inspiration by Lars Von Trier any time soon. There are more larks on the ‘Indian Summer’ video with post-it notes affixed to foreheads, handily placed for any stray punches – but the mood is sombre and the song at times captures the disappointment that comes with attending parties as a twentysomething – it’s a long way from tracks such as the well-nigh unlistenable ‘Elton John’ – but for all its professional execution, doesn’t really stand out from the crowd. One can imagine the track might stand a chance of soundtracking Sky Sports’ closing credits of a play-off final between Plymouth Argyle and Bury but it’s hard to think of a venue in Oxford for which this is truly appropriate. A move away from the zaniness of previous releases is welcome but we wait to be truly entranced.

Rob Langham

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TUFTHUNTER

‘Deep Hits’

(Self released)

Pete Momtchiloff always seems to be in at least three different bands. Most recently the Talulah Gosh and Heavenly guitarist has trodden the boards with The Would Be Goods, Les Clochards and Hot Hooves, but Tufthunter is both a studio-only affair and very much his own project, the sixteen tracks here (available to download for free from tufthunter.co.uk) featuring no less than 18 guest vocalists, many, including Amelia Fletcher, Karen Cleave, Jessica Griffin and Ian Nixon, drawn from his myriad other bands, while another cast of old friends help out on anything from percussion to violin.

In truth often you wouldn’t guess it was a different singer on many of the tracks, Pete’s polite, airy 80s indie jangle providing a comfortable base for so many of the guests to occupy similar space. Stand-out performances come from Lois Maffeo on album opener ‘Lit Up’, her sultry delivery reminding us of Miaow singer Cath Carroll; Would Be Goods’ Jessica Griffin’s coy ‘Cleopatra’ very much in keeping with her full-time band, while Amelia Fletcher’s duet with Lupe Núñez-Fernández is quite lovely as they plan ‘My Future Band’. The much travelled Deborah Greensmith brings a gutsier vocal performance to the driving ‘We Fly By Night’, while Richard Ramage’s ‘Pirbright’ echoes the sepia-tinted balladry of his Relationships work.

On the opposite end of the scale ‘Low Life’, featuring Kevin Younger, is simply awful – a tuneless, pedestrian dirge, and Jeffrey Underhill’s ‘You’re All Going to Die’ could be a student band’s attempt to capture some of Frank Sidebottom’s quirky magic and failing miserably. ‘Lullaby of Fitzrovia’, with Alice Healey, is shrill in that old-time English folk way, and Hot Hooves fella Mac’s drawling, country-flavoured ‘Goodbye’ might have better suited to Lee Marvin.

Overall, ‘Deep Hits’ is polite and polished and for all its starry contributors, brings few musical surprises. Committed fans of Pete’s many other projects will find something to love here, but everyone else would be better looking elsewhere first to hear the man at his creative best.

Dale Kattack



CASSELS

‘Hating Is Easy’

(Big Scary Monsters / Idiot King)

Aging music bores who go on and on about young bands having nothing to say these days obviously haven’t listened to Cassels, teenage brothers Jim and Loz Beck from Chipping Norton who were, apparently, inspired by the boredom of living in west Oxfordshire and have several large bees in their collection of bonnets.

Having spent the first few months of their existence playing in London, the pair are now winning a growing army of fans locally for their dirty, nasty mix of grunge riffs and ennui, a sense of frustration and disgust uncoiling from each of the four songs on this new EP.

Musically they go for the straight-down-the-line approach, rolling riffage coming with gnarly lo-fi shards of something unhygienic sticking out of every surface, somewhere between Drengé, Slaves and the more brutish side of Arctic Monkeys, while lyrically their targets range from social media hate and desensitisation (‘I Swipe Right’), to the callous divide and conquer blame politics of the right (‘666 Feet’, with its choice lines “666 feet below our streets / Is where we’ll hide the corpses of the benefit cheats / And turn their flesh to meat to feed this hardworking country”). Hardly Chomsky or Klein but plenty

SEABUCKTHORN

‘They Haunt Most Thickly’

(Self released)

It takes patience to understand some music, or even play it. There is precious little of that these days. ‘They Haunt Most Thickly’ is an aptly titled collection of ten such instrumentals, recorded by local auteur Andy Cartwright, while living in Paris. Apart from the obvious delicate and refined musicianship on show here, there is also the astonishing variety of sounds he can extract from just two instruments: an open C tuned resonator guitar, and open A tuned 12 string acoustic guitar. A frame drum, which sounds like a train with wooden wheels slowly going over points, does appear in support on ‘When Those Lights Come On For You’, but other than that it’s a masterclass in the very finest finger picking and bowing of the

SALVATION BILL

‘The Glamour’s Off’

(Idiot King)

Most if not all of the six songs on this new EP have already been released in some form or other, but Idiot King are obviously looking to collate the best of Salvation Bill’s songs for a wider new audience, and anyway it’s always worth revisiting one of the more idiosyncratic singer-songwriters in town.

Ollie Thomas is possessed of an enthrallingly untidy voice that seems to be a muddle of strangled yelp and drunken slur, simultaneously strung out and plaintive, like Thom Yorke having a few beers and singing Tom Waits songs in the shower.

Lyrically Ollie’s no less perverse, ‘Dead Dog’ an oddly jaunty ode to poisoning a neighbour’s noisy dog in what’s not far from musical hall. “I



of succinct snottiness and attitude here to fuel a sizeable riot, and the closing paranoid line of “All the digital clocks look like a countdown these days” on ‘Sights For Sore Eyes’ itself feels like the start of a ticking time bomb. Cassel’s strength, though, is their simplicity and sense of melody, all that anger delivered in a bottle with its cork firmly plugged in, moments of contemplative narrative standing out against the meaty riffmongering and voices rarely raised beyond a contemptuous snarl.

The revolution may not start here, but it’s decanting the petrol in preparation.

Ian Chesterton

guitars, sometimes onomatopoeic, as in ‘Eve Of Rains’, that comes and goes like an April shower, or lulling waves of rhythm as in ‘Heavy Calm’. At every stage you are given the chance to just lie back and turn your mind into an IMAX and transport yourself around byroads on all points of the compass. ‘His Way Becomes Lost’ does feel like setting off east of India without any belongings, but always, far off on the horizon, there is the threat of a storm cloud, an eerie feeling of being watched, or the notion of something left undone that we all carry. This is brought to a head in the creepy, lupine or undersea cries of the title track.

As with great guitarists like John Renbourn and Gustavo Santaolalla before him, Seabuckthorn blends atmospheric beauty, nature and the small pleasures of life all together, effortlessly and profoundly, like drops of ice coming to life. It’s an understated spiritual experience to sink into his music and interpret it beyond mere notes.

Paul Carrera

THE GREAT WESTERN TEARS

‘The Great Western Tears EP’

(Self released)

If we have reached peak beard here in Oxford, can peak Americana be far behind? Where once Goldrush were once sole flag-bearers for Shire-flavoured country, increasingly the space between the Cotswolds and Chilterns resemble the Catskill mountains, log shacks replaced with east Oxford terraced houses.

The Great Western Tears are the latest addition to the local plaid army, though singer Dava Waterhouse, alongside Garry Richardson, are already established faces on the local scene as part of country-blues outfit Swindlestock. This is their full-on roots journey though, inspired, apparently, by Dava’s time labouring on farms in Australia’s Outback. It’s classic American trad, though – growling vocals and pedal steel leading up to Willie Nelson and Steve Earle’s front porches, nights spent propped against crackly old jukeboxes in neglected bars where they serve only sourmash and play both types of music – country *and* western.

And it’s done with rich, authentic style, Dava’s voice in particular, like Witney Ameripolitan singer Ags Connolly, sounding like all of a long life’s troubles have come to rest at the back of his throat where no amount of Wild Turkey can dislodge them. Lonesome harmonica waltzes around his tales of lonely old guys and broken down pick up trucks, and of course, women are always gone, leaving the empty husks of men behind to drink more, think too much and try to forget via the bottom of a bottle.

‘Bid Her Well’ in particular is a worthy addition to the local Americana catalogue, a lost sweetheart lament with a ghost at its heart, though ‘Emily’s Eyes’ is a tad country-by-numbers and lacks substance and emotional punch. It makes you wonder too, if this particular local sub-scene can continue to grow at the rate is has over the past decade, and if the age-old English folk sounds that have always been a part of the local landscape will eventually secede to this more American-style cousin.

Ian Chesterton

beyond so many other so-so singer-songwriters around.

Dale Kattack



G I G G U I D E

FRIDAY 1st
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf (6.30am) – May Morning gig in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar with the local swamp-blues party starters for all you early bird revellers.
ROOTS RAMBLE: Various venues (6am) – The travelling roots ramble returns for a May Morning special, Francis Pugh & the Whisky Singers, Swindlestock and Great Western Tears bringing some rootsy Americana to various hostelryes and street corners around Oxford. Meet on the corner of Longwall Street at 6 before heading off to the Angel & Greyhound and the Port Mahon for beer and breakfast.
SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar – Count Skylarkin hosts a bank holiday reggae, dancehall and bass special. Bristol’s bass bin

Saturday 2nd
WHISKEYDICK / MOTHER CORONA / INDICA BLUES: The Wheatsheaf
“We’re just a train-robbin’, gun-totin’, dope-smokin’, guitar-pickin’, muthafuckin’ good time band, taking hillbilly music and spreading it across the land,” is how Fort Worth, Texas duo Whiskeydick describe themselves, which is as good as anything *Nightshift* can conjure to describe their soulful blend of outlaw country and metal, played by two big, bearded, heavily-tattooed blokes armed with acoustic guitars and sat on wooden folding chairs for the duration of their shows. With deep, rich, rootsy vocals and plenty of guitar heroics, the pair – Fritz and Reverend Johnson – sound like a cross between Pantera and David Allan Coe, and if it’s not the kind of thing you’d normally expect to see at a Buried In Smoke show, the fact that Whiskeydick have shared a stage with Honky, Weed Eater and Nashville Pussy shows they can hold their own in the heaviest company. Which is good since tonight’s local supports are Didcot’s Super-heavyweight groove crew Mother Corona, and new local stoner-metal outfit Indica Blues, two bands who bring classic rock sounds into the modern age with extreme force.



MAY
botherer Mr Benn joins the Count on the decks for reggae party anthems into the wee small hours.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with EMPTY VESSELS + NON-STOP TANGO + BEAVER FUEL: The Wheatsheaf – Getting May off to a big ol’ rocking start at Klub Kakofanney tonight are Empty Vessels – big-riffed heavyweights kicking it out in the style of Hendrix, Led Zep and Blue Cheer. They’re joined by improv supergroup Non-Stop Tango, launching their new album, ‘Unnatural Selection’, which takes a prog/jazz/eclectronica journey down Cowley Road, and caustic indie-punk noisemakers Beaver Fuel.
BALLOON ASCENTS + AUTUMN SAINTS + OSPREY + LES CLOCHARDS + MOGMATIC: O2 Academy – Mayday show from It’s All About the Music promotions, with rising local indie starlets Balloon Ascents, with their eclectic mix of electronica, dub, blues, folk-pop and alt.rock. They’re joined by REM and Tom Petty-inspired Anglo-American rockers Autumn Saints, funky bluesman Osprey, Francophile rock’n’roll crooners Les Clochards, and blues-rockers Mogmatic.
SHUSHIANS: The Bullingdon
MAYFEST: James Street Tavern – Opening of the James Street Tavern’s four-day free music fest, today featuring sets from this month’s *Nightshift* Demo of the Monthers Monkfish, plus electric folk from Grandma’s Hands, acoustic folk from Jesters, striking punk-inspired cabaret from Gemma Moss and country jazz swing from Comfort Zone.
SPECIAL KIND OF MADNESS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Two Tone classics.
DISCO MUTANTES: The Library – Disco, funk, afrobeat and acid house club night.

SATURDAY 2nd
WHISKEYDICK + MOTHER CORONA + INDICA BLUES: The Wheatsheaf – Outlaw country heads down metal’s Highway to Hell in Whiskeydick’s acoustic heavyweight world – *see main preview*
MAYFEST: James Street Tavern – Second day of the free bank holiday weekend festival, today with blues from Tom Ivey’s Blues Band and Tony Batey, different shades of folk from Blackthorn, Beware This Boy and Firegazers, and Cajun-flavoured space-rock from Cosmosis.
THOMAS TRUAX + RAINBOW RESERVOIR + FACEOMETER: The Cellar – Thomas Truax is once again the guest of Pindrop Performances, the eccentric singer and musician well known round these parts for his array of bizarre, self-created instruments, like the Hornicator, and his richly poetic roots-pop, out

touring his new album, ‘Jetstream Sunset’. Great support from punk-pop cheerleaders Rainbow Reservoir and wordy Jeffrey Lewis-styled alt. folk storyteller Faceometer. Followed by Garage, grime and bass club night, What You Call it, Garage?
BLOODSTOCK METAL TO THE MASSES SEMI-FINAL I: The Bullingdon – First semi-final of the contest to win a place at this year’s Bloodstock Festival.
BOOTLEG ZEPPELIN: O2 Academy – The long-running Led Zep tribute band recreate the 70s rock titans’ classic Earl’s Court 1975 concert.
SWITCH with WILKINSON: O2 Academy – The London producer comes to the O2’s weekly house and electro club night.
ZURICH + REDHEAD + JACK LITTLE: The Jericho Tavern – Dark, elegant 80s-inspired indie from Banbury’s Zurich, leaning towards The National scheme of things at tonight’s Strummerroom show, alongside Bicester’s acoustic singer-songwriter Jack Little.
TELLING THE BEES + CHARLIE HENRY: Albion Beatnik Bookstore – Album launch show for the local folksters in the suitably rustic and intimate setting of Jericho’s bookstore, the quartet mining the traditions of local and British folk music, with its gothic storytelling, pagan leanings and occasional psychedelic edge, to create a sumptuous and arcane sound.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: Cricketers Arms, Temple Cowley – Rocking blues from the eccentric local veteran.
HONOLULU COWBOYS: St Giles Church Hall (6pm) – Hawaiian tea party with traditional tunes from Honolulu Cowboys.
OXFORD ACOUSTIC CLUB: The Marsh Harrier (1pm) – Unplugged sets from Purple May, Beard of Destiny, Lewis Scott, Ben Avison, Samuel Edwards and Phil & Sue.

SUNDAY 3rd
MOBB DEEP: O2 Academy – Slice of life rap from the acclaimed East Coast duo – *see main preview*
MAYFEST: James Street Tavern – Day three of the free bank holiday festival, with sets from Rory Evans, r’n’b man Mad Larry, classic pop crew The Shapes, rock’n’rollers Dirty Valuables, rockers Pipeline, punk-pop outfit Strike One, metallers Last Rites and blues-rockers Goin’ Loud.
MOON LEOPARD + BEARD OF DESTINY + RIVERSIDE VOICES + JUKEBOX: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free evening of acoustic music with Jeremy Hughes’ Moon Leopard and one-man blues army Beard of Destiny.
ROCK SOLID + RAISED BY HYPOCRITES: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Witney’s pre-teen rockers – average age just 12 – launch their debut EP, mixing up anthemic rock and punk.

MONDAY 4th
MAYFEST: James Street Tavern – Fourth and final day of the Tavern’s bank holiday festival. Rounding things off are acoustic duo Waterfahl, psych-folkies Reckless Sleepers, acid-surf techno-psych duo The Pink Diamond Revue, funk-rockers The Tom Ivey Funk Band, bluesman Beard of Destiny and eastern European folk-pop crew Balkan Wanderers.

TUESDAY 5th
JAZZ CLUB with THE HUGH TURNER BAND: The Bullingdon – Funky jazz from Hugh Turner and band at the Bully’s long-running jazz club.
MIKE & THE MECHANICS: The New Theatre – Sadistic Soviet-sponsored Cold War laboratory experiment designed to prove that, yes, it was possible to make music more unbearably vapid and soul-crushing than Phil Collins back in the mid-80s.
FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS: O2 Academy – Suffolk’s schlocky, floppy-fringed death-pop crew Fearless Vampire Killers creep out of their castles once again to tour second album ‘Unbreakable Hearts’.
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 6th
UFO: O2 Academy – The heavy rock behemoths continue to bring the noise, with original members Phil Mogg and Andy Parker

Sunday 3rd
MOBB DEEP: O2 Academy
A darkly nihilistic masterpiece was how Mobb Deep’s now classic debut album ‘The Infamous’ was described upon its release back in 1995, and its power hasn’t diminished in the intervening 20 years. If anything its mix of gritty, violent lyrics, heavy samples and atmospheric beats become a template of how to write hard-edged hip hop. Since that impressive opening gambit The pair – Prodigy and Havoc, from Queensbridge in New York – have worked with the cream of East Coast hip hop, including Jay Z, Nas, Raekwon and 50 Cent, who they enjoyed a Number 1 hit, ‘Outta Control’, with in 2005. They were also sampled by Eminem on *8 Mile*. As well as being the twentieth anniversary of ‘The Infamous’, tonight’s show will be part of Mobb Deep’s first UK tour in ten years and they’ll be performing that classic debut in its entirety, alongside their catalogue of hit singles. In a good month for hip hop greats in Oxford, tonight’s show is essential listening, and a lesson in the power of rap.



still helming proceedings, the band playing favourites from their 1970s commercial peak albums, ‘No Heavy Petting’, ‘Phenomenon’ and ‘Lights Out’, as well as their recent twenty-first outing, ‘A Conspiracy of Stars’.
SUNSET SONS + THE BEACH + ZIBRA: O2 Academy – BBC Sound of 2015 longlisters Sunset Sons head out on a headline tour, the shaggy Anglo-Australian surfer dudes’ slacker grunge coming in somewhere between Kings of Leon, Killers and Doves. Support from London’s glitchy electro-rockers Zibra.
SWEET PINK + AMORAL COMPASS + WARDENS + ALIAS: The Wheatsheaf – It’s All About the Music showcase show with lo-fi industrial pop crew Amoral Compass, plus heavyweight alt.rockers Wardens, warming up for the Punt with their QOTSA-inspired rumble.
BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar – 80s alternative classics, new wave, disco, synth-pop and glam club night.

THURSDAY 7th
ARCANE ROOTS + BLACK PEAKS + GALLERY CIRCUS: O2 Academy – Polished, heartfelt riffmongery in a Biffy Clyro vein from London’s Arcane Roots, adding an anthemic stadium-pop sheen to the post-hardcore template, alongside Brighton’s similarly anthemic and poppy alt.rockers Black Peaks.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest-running and best open club night continues to showcase local singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every week.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf – Free unplugged set in the downstairs bar from the veteran local swamp-rock / ska-funk crew.
GAZ BROOKFIELD + LITTLE RED + WATER PAGEANT: The Jericho Tavern – Folky pop sounds from Water Pageant ahead of their Punt performance, and acoustic folk from Little Red.
ISIS PRESENTS: The Cellar – Jihadi hip hop club night.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst

FRIDAY 8th
BUNTY + ESTHER JOY LANE + MARY JAMES: The Bullingdon – Rearranged from last month: inventive and playfully oddball dub-infused electro-pop from former-Resonators singer Bundy at tonight’s Tigmus show, the singer looping her voice via assorted made-up languages, while throwing all manner of toys, synths, ukuleles and more into a summery and infectious mix that occasionally sounds like a wonderful hybrid of Lily Allen and You Are Wolf. Great support from new local electro starlet Esther Joy Lane, keeping it trippy in the style of Grimes.
INVISIBLE VEGAS: The Wheatsheaf – Bluesy roadhouse rocking from the local band.
THE ONE HUNDRED + THE REAPER + DEAD A THOUSAND TIMES + EVAVOID + BEING EUGENE: The Courtyard, Bicester – All-ages gig at Bicester’s Courtyard youth arts centre with London’s frenetic electro-core crew The One Hundred, mixing alt.rock and electronica with rap, supporting Papa Roach and Hacktivist on tour last year and now warming up for this year’s Download. Local support comes



Sunday 10th
THURSTON MOORE: O2 Academy
A good month for musical legends in town but few people have changed the way music is made or understood as Thurston Moore. As guitarist and joint frontperson of Sonic Youth, he helped revolutionise rock music in ways the rest of the music world is barely starting to comprehend 30 years on, never mind catch up with. That band’s sad demise in 2011, the result of the break-up of alt. rock’s golden couple, Thurston and Kim Gordon, broke more hearts than the two people at the centre of it, but following on from his excellent Chelsea Light Moving project, Moore’s new band is recapturing some of Sonic Youth’s magical power. He’s aided in this by My Bloody Valentine’s Deb Googe on bass and Oxford’s own James Sedwards on guitar, the Nought man one of the few guitarist who can provide Moore with not just a talented foil but push him on to greater heights. ‘The Best Day’, the album which came out of those meeting of minds (and featuring SY drummer Steve Shelley) won’t disappoint long-term fans, featuring that characteristic melding of taut, discomfoting experimentation and simple pop melody. Expect mass note-taking from an army of axe-wielding acolytes, and raw devotion from everyone present.

from teen metal titans The Reaper, metalcore merchants Dead A Thousand Times in the vein of Cancer Bats and Everytime I Die, and virulent tech/hardcore newcomers Being Eugene.
BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Dancefloor Latin, Afrobeat, Balkan beats, global grooves and nu jazz club night, tonight with a live set from 13-strong Balkan and gypsy dance ensemble The Destroyers, plus host Dan Ofer on the decks.
KAIRO 4TET: St John the Evangelist – Freewheeling, melodic jazz improv from the acclaimed quartet, led by tenor and soprano saxophonist Adam Waldmann, managing to bridge the gap between crossover success and serious jazz credentials, incorporating heavy grooves and elements of world music into their complex but accessible sound.
MARTIN CARTHY: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Founding father of the English folk revival of the 1960s and still a leading man of UK folk returns to Oxfordshire, a renowned interpreter of traditional tunes, as well as political protest songs.
SACK SABBATH: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Black Sabbath tribute.



Friday 15th – Sunday 17th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park

Just as Truck was the modestly-proportioned godfather of small festivals across the land, its younger sibling WOOD pioneered eco-friendly boutique weekenders long before green credentials became *de rigueur*. Brothers Robin and Joe Bennett responded to the devastating floods of 2007 with a festival based on environmentally-friendly principles, from renewable energy sources and organic food to compostable toilets and eco workshops and activities. So music stages, discos and cinema onsite are run on solar and cycle power and used chip fat, while your food won't come in a nasty polystyrene tray. It's still very much about the music though and this year's headliners are a strong bunch, particularly Mali's **SONGHOY BLUES**, whose debut album, 'Music In Exile', on Transgressive, is one of the best albums to come out of Africa in recent years. The group have toured with Damon Albarn and collaborated with Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Nick Zinner after being forced to flee their homeland by Islamic extremists. They're joined by restless, inventive folksters **TUNNG**, and London's delicate 60s-flavoured indie folk and Americana crew **TREETOP FLYERS** atop a bill that also features **SPIRO**, **CC SMUGGLERS**, **DUOTONE**, **DREAMING SPIRES**, **JALI FILY CISSOKHO**, **TAMARA PARSONS-BAKER**, **GILL SANDELL & CHRIS TT**, **THOMAS TRUAX**, **JOHN JOSEPH BRILL** and **BRICKWORK LIZARDS**. Loads more besides, from campfire sing-alongs to junk craft and talks, plus this year's festival has been designated the Year of the Bee, so don your finest yellow and black striped jumper and buzz off down to Braziers.

SATURDAY 9th

UNDERSMILE + EARTHMASS + D GWALIA: The Wheatsheaf – Undersmile play their first, and possibly last, Oxford gig this year, following the release of their second album, 'Anhedonia', whose meaning – the inability to experience happiness – is a neat reflection of the Witney quartet's monolithic doom onslaught, taking the downtuned, tectonic noise of Earth, Swans and Codeine and giving them a haunted dollhouse makeover. The album was a doom masterpiece without question and live Undersmile are one of the most uncompromising bands on the planet and you should worship them. Support tonight comes from Essex doom/sludge terrorisers Earthmass with their creeping

dread hellcore dynamics, and gothic songsmith D Gwalia, whose highly atmospheric songs come in somewhere between John Cale and Sisters of Mercy.

DUB FX: O2 Academy – Hip hop, drum&bass and reggae from the Melbourne street artist and producer Benjamin Stanford, whose adherence to live performance techniques – using live looping and effects pedals as well as singing – has earned him word of mouth cult status.
BRYAN FERRY: The New Theatre – Flamboyant king of glam rock, turned smooth lounge crooner and father to the awful Otis returns to town to promote last year's 'Avomere' album, recorded with Ronnie Spector, Nile Rodgers, Johnny Marr and Flea, and whose title gives you a serious clue that it follows on from classic Roxy Music album 'Avalon', featuring Ferry's trademark blend of classic covers and original songs.
THE BLUES BROTHERS SHOW: The Bullingdon – Live classics from the cult r'n'b musical.
VAGUEWORLD + STORYTELLER + RUSSIAN COWBOYS + THE AUREATE ACT + THE HAZE: The Cellar – It's All About the Music local bands showcase with punk-pop crew Vaguestworld, jazz, ska and grunge types Storyteller, funk-pop people Russian Cowboys, and prog rockers The Aureate Act.
THE LONDON BULGARIAN CHOIR + VOICES UNLIMITED: St. Barnabas Church, Jericho – Traditional Bulgarian voices choir playing in aid of Hope & Homes For Children, with support from English vocal ensemble Voices Unlimited.
EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar – House, garage, and bass club night with Cropper, Remi and Djenga.
BREEZE: Fat Lil's, Witney
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Red Lion, Eynsham
NIKKI LOY: The Ashton Club, Bicester – First of a handful of shows around the county's less travelled gig venues for Nikki this month, the singer playing piano ballads and jazzy soul stompers in the vein of Paloma Faith.

SUNDAY 10th

THURSTON MOORE: O2 Academy – That there Sonic Yoof fretmeister brings his solo album to the Oxford stage – *see main preview*
GRANDMA'S HANDS + COSMOSIS + THE BOATERS BOX + MATT SEWELL & JULES MOSS + THE JESTERS: The Wheatsheaf (3pm) – Klub Kakofanney host an afternoon of free live music in the Sheaf's downstairs bar.

MONDAY 11th

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: Nettlebed Folk Club – The Godfathers of English folk-rock return to the intimate setting of Nettlebed's historic folk club.
THE TEDDY WHITE BAND: The Jericho Tavern – Upbeat Louisiana-style r'n'b and boogie at tonight's Famous Monday Blues.

TUESDAY 12th

JAZZ CLUB with BIG COLOURS: The Bullingdon – The Bully's free weekly jazz club hosts local 16-strong jazz big band Big Colours.
INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth, industrial and

ebm club night with residents Doktor Joy and Bookhouse.

OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 13th

THE OXFORD PUNT: Various venues – The annual showcase of Oxford's best new music – *see main Punt pullout for details*
THE SHAPES + INDICA BLUES + CASSELS + WARDENS: The Purple Turtle
THE BALKAN WANDERERS + RHYMESKEEMZ & BUNGLE + PEERLESS PIRATES + ZAIA: The Cellar
GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + CAMERON A.G. + LITTLE BROTHER ELI + MAIIANS: The Wheatsheaf
MY CROOKED TEETH + KATY JACKSON + DESPICABLE ZEE + ADAM BARNES: Turl Street Kitchen
WHITE BEAM + WATER PAGEANT + ESTHER JOY LANE + RAINBOW
RESERVOIR: The White Rabbit
WILLIE J HEALEY: The Library – The local singer-songwriter launches his new EP with a free gig at The Library.

THURSDAY 14th

THE COOLING PEARLS + THE FAMILY MACHINE + MAYBUG + TRUE ADVENTURES: Modern Art Oxford – Divine Schism continue their MAO residency with local alt.folksters The Cooling Pearls, mixing a rich, romantic Orcadian folk sound with the dark contemplation of Joy Division. They're joined by local indie veterans The Family Machine, delicate Bristolian acoustic-popster Maybug and Norfolk folksters True Adventures.
TORN LIKE COLOURS + GET LOOSE + CHRIS GILLET: The Bell, Bicester – Grungy pub rocking and girl band balladry from local rockers Torn Like Colours at tonight's Strummerroom promotions, plus blues rocking from Get Loose.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf – Free gig in the downstairs bar from the veteran local bluesman.
SUPERMARKET: The Cellar – Pop, disco, UK garage and 90s house club night.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst

FRIDAY 15th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park – Opening day of the annual eco-friendly festival, with Tunng, Songhoy Blues and Treetop Flyers headlining, plus the usual array of live music, workshops, discos, cinema and more – *see main preview*
NOVANA: O2 Academy – Yes, we have no vanas.
PEERLESS PIRATES + THE SECATEURS + THE MILITARY ACADEMY + 31 HOURS: The Wheatsheaf – Rollicking indie and rockabilly fun from seafaring local stars Peerless Pirates, taking The Smiths on a high seas adventure, with much grog to fuel the fun. Scuzzy garage rock, post-punk and indie rocking support from Secateurs.
THE PORTRAITS: The Cornerstone, Didcot – The folk duo return to the Cornerstone after

supporting India Electric Company here last summer.

TERRAFORMS: The Cellar – Drum&bass club night with Hospital Records' Logistics, plus Bolo, Greencode, Vyper, Joicy and host MCs KB and Sandman.

SATURDAY 16th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park – Bee-themed festival funnage from the pre-eminent eco-fest – *see main preview*
THE GREASY SLICKS + MONKFISH + COSMOSIS: The Cellar – Mountain-sized blues riffage, classic rock and funk from London's rising stars Greasy Slicks, the band taking classic influences like Led Zep, Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, BB King and John Lee Hooker and giving them a grunge-conscious kick up the rump. Darkly gothic country rocking in the vein of Lee Hazlewood and Thin White Rope from Monkfish, plus Cajun-spiced space-rock from Cosmosis.
JACK GARRAT + BILLIE BLACK: O2 Academy – Bass-heavy balladronica from hotly-tipped producer and singer Jack Garratt, who's worked with Rick Rubin and signed to

Friday 22nd

VIC GODARD & SUBWAY SECT: The Wheatsheaf

A night for veterans of the original punk wars to savour as one of the movement's greatest if less celebrated prime movers returns to town. Vic Godard was the original wave of punk's overlooked hero, possessed of a more poetic leaning than most of his contemporaries; he played the 1976 100 Club festival with The Clash, The Pistols and The Banshees, but Subway Sect manager Bernie Rhodes sacked the entire band on the eve of their debut album, which was subsequently lost to the world, and a lack of recorded material meant they never got their dues. Godard subsequently formed a new band around himself, exploring rock'n'roll, rockabilly and Ratpack chic long before it became fashionable to do so, and, increasingly disillusioned, retired from music to become a postie in the 1980s. Reissues of those rare early Subway Sect recording, though, reignited interested in a man who was musically well ahead of his time and Godard came out of retirement to play in bands alongside Mark Perry and Paul Cook before returning to re-record those old lost songs and is now a prolific songwriter as well as an enduring cult hero whose influence is better appreciated than ever.



Island Records, melding elements of Pharrell, Ed Sheeran and Jamie Woon.

RED SEAS FIRE + I CRIED WOLF + DEATH REMAINS: The Wheatsheaf – Big riffs and electronica from tech-metallers Red Sea Fire, out on tour, with support from Banbury's Dillinger-inspired metalcore crew I Cried Wolf.
SUPER SQUARECLOUD: The Bullingdon – Clever, complex, angular and decidedly oddball pop from Swindon's Super Squarecloud, out on tour to promote debut album 'Soupeater', drawing admiring comparisons to Deerhoof, Micachu and Heavenly for their playfully crazed mix of twee-pop, electronica, tropical fun and, oh yes, meowing.
BEDROCK: The Bullingdon – Skeletor's monthly rock and metal club night, playing classics and new releases from across the genre.
CELTIC FIDDLE FESTIVAL: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Ireland's Kevin Burke, Brittany's Christian Lemaitre and Quebec's André Brunet celebrate the global reach of celtic fiddle music.
BREAKER 1-9: Fat Lil's, Witney – Truckin' greats.
JAMES BELL + TROUBLESHORT & TURNIPSEED: The Swan, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club hosts local singer and guitarist James Bell, part of the Half Moon Allstars folk collective.

SUNDAY 17th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park – Final day of the eco-fest – *see main preview*

MONDAY 18th

VIRGIL & THE ACCELERATORS + HELL'S GAZELLES: The Bullingdon – Hard rocking, riff-heavy blues-rock and classic rock'n'roll from the young band discovered by Otis Grand when Virgil was only 12 years old and subsequently mentored by Joe Bonamassa as well as touring with Joanne Shaw-Taylor. Inspired by the likes of Led Zep, ZZ Top and Alvin Lee, theirs is a frenetic but cleverly textured take on classic sounds. Support from High Wycombe's teenage heavy rockers Hell's Gazelles.
CHRIS AND KELLIE WHILE: Nettlebed Folk Club – The veteran folk singer and former-Albion Band frontwoman reunites with daughter Kellie for an intimate show at Nettlebed's famous folk club.
SOFAR SOUNDS: Combibo Coffee, Gloucester Green – Secret gigs in unusual venues from Sofar Sounds. Instead of the venue being secret this month, it's the line-up they're hiding from us. Join their mailing list to find out more.

TUESDAY 19th

JAZZ CLUB with GUITAR SUMMIT: The Bullingdon – Jazz guitar fun at tonight's weekly jazz club.
ROCKSOC: The Wheatsheaf – University rock society night with live bands.
CHILI & THE WHALE KILLERS + SVAVA: Art Jericho – Tigmus host Icelandic-Austrian upbeat power-pop outfit Chili & the Whalekillers, out on tour to promote new mini-album 'A Dot in the Sky'. Atmospheric dreampop support from Sweden's Svava.
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern



Saturday 23rd

EX-EASTER ISLAND HEAD / LEE RILEY: The Cellar

Experimental music can sometimes be an impenetrable trawl and often isn't even that experimental, but Liverpool's Ex-Easter Island Head genuinely seem to determined to do something new and innovative with rock's most familiar instrument, the electric guitar. Whether performing as a massed ensemble of guitars and percussion, or as a stripped-down trio, they explore group interplay, rhythm and repetition through the use of guitars played with mallets, adding assorted effects and additional bridges etc. to alter the sounds that emerge. A series of 'Mallet Guitars' albums has taken that central idea into different musical territories, from hypnotic drone to organic ambient music and onto Krautrock, Brian Eno, Philip Glass and in particular Steve Reich being the touchstones of their polyrhythmic meditations. As far as contemporary experimentalism goes, it's extremely inclusive. Local dronemeister Lee Riley, meanwhile adds his own exploration of guitar music's darkest borders, lurking in the shadows between soothing ambience and a sense of dread, with often disorientating volume one of his chief musical weapons.

WEDNESDAY 20th

DECOVO + PUPPET MECHANIC + THE AUGUST LIST + RAYZO: The Wheatsheaf – Indie-funk and grungy riffage between Foals and Biffy Clyro from Decovo, alongside indie-Americana types Puppet Mechanic and backwoods porch folk from the excellent August List.
BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar
SPARKY'S JAM NIGHT: The James Street Tavern – Open mic and jam night.

THURSDAY 21st

JP HARRIS & THE TOUGH CHOICES: The Bullingdon – Honky tonk ballads, barroom anthems and old time country from Nashville's fantastically beardy JP Harris, the much-travelled troubadour bringing back the classic roots side of country on acclaimed new album 'Home Is Where The Hurt Is', and playing as part of the build-up to this year's Halfway to 75 Americana festival in July.
AS IT IS + THIS WILD LIFE + SEAWAY + BOSTON MANOR: O2 Academy – Whiny, wimpy, laughingly self-described pop-punk slurry from Brighton's As It Is, out on tour to

infect debut album 'Never Happy Ever After' on our children. Support from the ironically-named This Wild Life, California's acoustic rockers who are the musical equivalent of a mug of weak, milky tea round at Bring Me The Horizon's house. Crazy times in the moshpit tonight, people.

HODGEPIDGE: The Cellar – Beatbox, loops and sax club night with Mr Woodnote & Lil Rhys featuring Eva Lazarus.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon

ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure

BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst

FRIDAY 22nd

SWERVEDRIVER: O2 Academy – One of Oxford's original breakout bands return to town for the first time since 2009, promoting their first album in 17 years, following a tour of the States. From their origins as Stooges and MC5-inspired garage rockers Shake Appeal, the band remain local heroes, guitarists Adam Franklin and Jimmy Hartridge, along with bassist Adie Vines, formed the band back in the 1980 and were signed to Creation after Ride's Mark Gardener presented Alan McGee with a demo of 'Son of Mustang Ford', a collision of Sonic Youth and Dinosaur Jr with nascent shoegazing noise. They

Thursday 28th

DE LA SOUL:

O2 Academy

Back in the late-1980s, as hip hop was taking the sounds of the street onto the global stage, led by the firebrand Public Enemy, De La Soul introduced an element of playful rebellion into proceedings by insisting on spreading good vibes and bringing the party at every opportunity. As rapper David Jude Jolicoeur so wisely states, "It don't mean shit if you don't party," and it's a message they kept to since their massive world wide hit debut album 'Three Feet High & Rising', earning themselves the tag of daisy age rappers. Nine albums in, including their new 'And The Anonymous Nobody', the party keeps on going, Jolicoeur alongside Kelvin Mercer and DJ Vincent Mason, remaining a tight unit, one that isn't afraid to goof around on stage and have an actual laugh. Add to that their eclectic approach to sampling – from Funkadelic to Liberace – and a cheery pop-friendly take on jazzy hip hop and it's easy to see how they stood out against more political golden age protagonists, and why they became such a huge global success. Cos who's gonna say no to a party?



toured with Smashing Pumpkins, Soundgarden and Monster Magnet and released three albums on Creation before singing to Geffen and splitting in 1999. Having reformed in 2008, they now feature former Supergrass bassist Mick Quinn in their ranks, and in the wake of Ride's rapturously-received reunion, it's a good chance to reacquire yourself with another of Oxford's formative acts.

VIC GODARD & SUBWAY SECT + LES CLOCHARDS: The Wheatshaf – Cult punk hero and postie Vic keeps the magic alive – *see main preview*

BLOODY KNUCKLES: The Bullingdon – Classic house club night.

FREEFALL: Fat Lil's, Witney

SATURDAY 23rd

EX EASTER ISLAND HEAD: The Cellar – Hitting guitars with mallets with surprisingly pleasant results – *see main preview*

DEATH OF HI-FI + HALF DECENT + TIGER MENDOZA + KID KIN: The Jericho Tavern – Quality line-up of local hip hop and electronica at tonight's Strummerroom Project show. Witney's DOHF bring a sci-fi sensibility to hard-edged hip hop, sultry trip hop and old skool rave. Machine gun rap delivery from Half Decent; industrial hip hop and atmospheric techno from Tiger Mendoza, plus volume-heavy shoegaze and electro ambience from Kid Kin.

BLOODSTOCK MUSIC TO THE MASSES SEMI-FINAL II: The Bullingdon – Second semi-final to win a slot at Bloodstock Festival.

EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar

WAM: Fat Lil's, Witney – Ska punk covers.

NIKKI LOY: The Elm Tree, Witney

SUNDAY 24th

OZRIC TENTACLES: O2 Academy – First visit to town for many years from the long-standing instrumental space-rockers, still led by guitarist Ed Wynne, who formed at Stonehenge Free Festival in 1983 and have gone on to sell over a million albums worldwide despite never having a record contract. Influenced by Gong, Steve Hillage and Hawkwind originally, they've taken in elements of trance, psychedelia, dub and eastern traditional music along the way, becoming possibly the quintessential festival band. 'Technicians of the Sacred', their 29th album, is out now.

CANTALOUPE + MODEL VILLAGE + ALNEGATOR: The Wheatshaf – Upbeat instrumental electronica from Nottingham's Cantaloupe, drawing on Krautrock, kosmiche, disco and Afropop for their lively sound. Indie-folk support from Cambridge's Model Village.

DESMOND CHANCER & THE LONG MEMORIES + CLARK WISEMAN + SEAN BROOKES: The Jam Factory – Gutter blues and jazz in the style of Tom Waits from Desmond Chancer.

MONDAY 25th

JAMES ARTHUR: O2 Academy – The 2012 *X-Factor* winner continues to stretch his fifteen minutes to breaking point.

DELLO GRANT + STEAMROLLER: The Jericho Tavern – Famous Monday Blues show.

TUESDAY 26th

JAZZ CLUB with ALVIN ROY & REEDS



Friday 29th

TINARIWEN:

Oxford Town Hall

Plenty of rock bands might think they're hard, but they'd fall to the floor weeping like babies if they had to face the hardships Mali's Tinariwen have gone through to get to their current level of global recognition. They are a collective – not really a band – born out of the nomadic Tuareg people's battle for independence and come from the deserts that are ruled by rebel warlords. They're tough old cookies for sure. Their music, by contrast, is a warm, psychedelic mix of ancient desert roots music and western blues and rock, with nods to Hendrix, Fleetwood Mac, Santana and King Tubby. Having attracted attention from the outside world with their appearances at the Mali desert festival, they released their debut album proper, 'Radio Tisdas Sessions', in 2001 and played at WOMAD Festival. Over the years the collective's music has leaned further and further into classic British and American blues, until 2009's 'Imidi: Companions', where they returned to their roots, all spaced-out grooves, drones, chants and ululations that capture the eerie atmosphere of their homeland. Given the nebulous state of the group, what you see on the night dictates what you hear, although with founder Ibrahim Ag Alhabib (who made his first guitar out of a tin can, a stick and bicycle brake wire) present, they'll hopefully be at their psychedelic best.

UNLIMITED: The Bullingdon – Trad jazz, bop and swing from veteran clarinettist Alvin Roy and his Reeds Unlimited at tonight's weekly jazz club.

OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 27th

SLAID CLEAVES: The Bullingdon – Good natured country-folk from the Texan songsmith at tonight's Empty Room show, the veteran singer over in the UK to tour 'Still Fighting the War', his twelfth album in a 20 year career, inspired by country and folk greats like Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams and Johnny Cash as well as Bruce Springsteen.

INDIANA: O2 Academy – Wispy, minimalist, slightly trippy electro-pop from Nottingham's Lauren Henson, out on tour to promote her recent Top 20 debut album, 'No Romeo', following last year's hit single, 'Solo Dancing', inspired by Joanna Newsom and Gary Numan, while leaning towards Portishead and Lykke Li at times.

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 OXFORD PUNT 2015

Oxford Punt

2015

Wednesday 13th May

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THE PURPLE TURTLE

The Tony Jeppard Stage

7pm THE SHAPES

8pm INDICA BLUES

9pm CASSELS

10pm WARDENS

THE WHEATSHEAF

8pm GHOSTS IN THE

PHOTOGRAPHS

9pm CAMERON A.G.

9.45 LITTLE BROTHER ELI

10.30 MAIANS

THE WHITE RABBIT

8.30 WHITE BEAM

9.30 WATER PAGEANT

10.30 ESTHER JOY

LANE

11.30 RAINBOW

RESERVOIR

THE CELLAR

7.30 BALKAN WANDERERS

8.15 RHYMESKEEMZ &

BUNGLER

9.15 PEERLESS PIRATES

10.15 ZAIA

TURL STREET KITCHEN

8pm MY CROOKED

TEETH

9pm KATY JACKSON

10pm DESPICABLE ZEE

11pm ADAM BARNES

The Oxford Punt runs from 7pm through to midnight, starting at the Purple Turtle and finishing at the White Rabbit. Entry to each venue is £5, except Turl Street Kitchen and White Rabbit, which are free.

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The Oxford Punt 2015 - who, what and where

THE PURPLE TURTLE

(The Tony Jezzard Stage)

The Purple Turtle is where we traditionally kick off Punt proceedings, and where traditionally everything falls apart and needs gluing back together at the last minute before rocking off on its crazy musical journey through the night. It's also the Tony Jezzard stage. Why? Tony Jezzard was a legendary local sound engineer and guitarist as well as a mentor to local young musicians. Tony did the sound for us at pretty much every Punt since it started in 1997. Sadly he passed away in 2013, and we wanted to remember his presence at the Punt. Tony was a huge fan of volume abuse; he played loud and liked others to do the same, so in his honour we've gathered some of the noisiest bands on this year's Punt. We've also got **THE SHAPES**, the band Tony was playing with right up to the end, and they will doubtless be a worthy tribute in their own right as they open the Punt with a lively blend of 60s-flavoured r'n'b, soulful rock and new wave pop that's seen them compared to Van Morrison, Squeeze and Elvis Costello. Ratcheting up the volume immediately after will be **INDICA BLUES**, half of the fall-out from the demise of the mighty Caravan of Whores. You want riffs as big as mountains? They got riffs as big as mountains. Fans of Led Zep, Sabbath, Electric Wizard and Blue Cheer will find much good cheer here. Less monolithic but no less noisy are fast-rising teen duo **CASSELS**, trying to undo all the harm David Cameron, Rebekah Brooks and Jeremy Clarkson have done to the reputation of Chipping Norton in recent times. Taking the spirit of Joy Division for a bruising ride down Drenge and Slaves' militant post-punk, they're modern malcontents with a message, and they're gonna spread it at top volume. Musical bruises too courtesy of **WARDENS**, a band to whom the word solid could easily be applied. That's not solid as in safe pub rock solid, but solid as in if you drove a bus into them the bus would collapse like an undercooked soufflé on impact. Queens of the Stone-Age with the niceties filleted and replaced by iron girders. Yes they are. *The Shapes – 7pm; Indica Blues – 8pm; Cassels – 9pm; Wardens – 10pm*

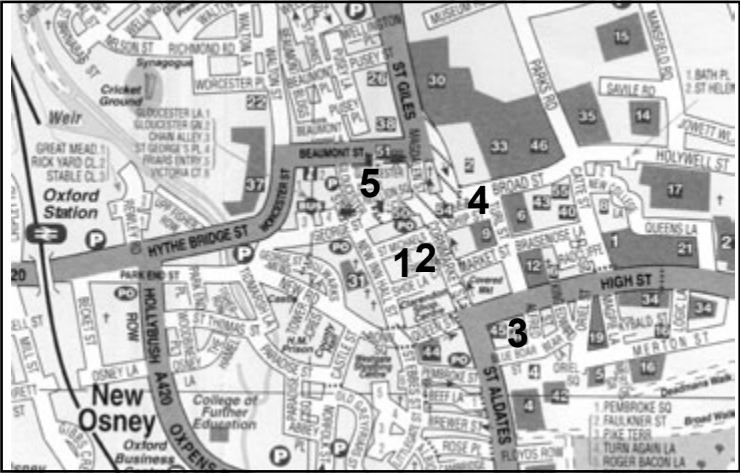


THE WHEATSHEAF

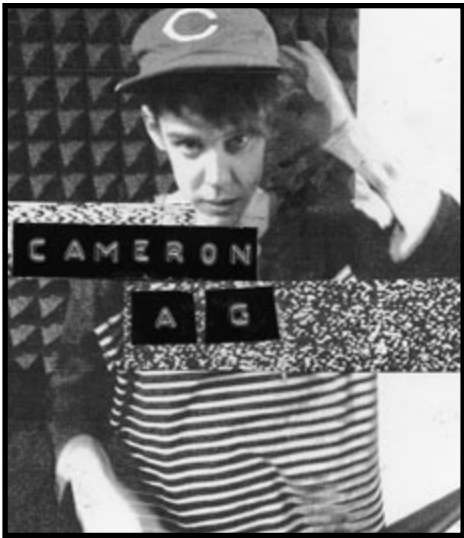
The WheatSheaf is, alongside the Cellar, one of the two mighty pillars that hold up the roof of the Oxford music scene, and something of a second home to many *Nightshift* scribes who can often be found draped or slumped over one of its many sticky surfaces, and we'll probably come back to haunt the place when we die. Maybe we'll come back as **GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS** in that case, though the wailing of the undead would doubtless be drowned out by the noise storm of this particular band whose shoegazey fuzzstorm comes by way of jarring post-rock that's invited comparisons to the mighty Godspeed You! Black Emperor already for their debut single, 'Our Memories Are Here To Haunt You'. Haunted by memories being something **CAMERON A.G.** almost certainly is if his delicately desolate acoustic songs are anything to go by. Once a tub-thumping sticksman for rock beasts like Warhen and The Delta Frequency, now he carves out monuments to melancholy that exist wraith-like between Thom Yorke and Jonsi from Sigur Ros. And mighty pretty all that sadness is. Earthier by far are **LITTLE BROTHER ELI**, a band who once found themselves in *Nightshift's* Demo Dumper but dusted themselves down and got good. Better than good. These boys have got the blues, and dirt under their fingernails, like White Denim living in a Mississippi shack and hosting whisky parties for Jack White. You should join them for a dram or five. By which time you should be in a fit state to dance the rest of the evening away to **MAIIANS**, though a few Tequila Sunrises or a very fat spliff might be more in order as the double drummer-propelled electro-groovers take a turn off Kraftwerk's Autobahn and along a winding Ibiza coastal road with Holy Fuck blasting out of the stereo. Where this trip takes you is anyone's guess, but believe us, you won't want to come back down. *Ghosts in the Photographs – 8pm; Cameron A.G. – 9pm; Little Brother Eli – 9.45; Maiians – 10.30*

THE CELLAR

The Cellar was Oxford's chief contribution to this year's Independent Venue Week, and with good reason – the subterranean gig room celebrated 40 years of live music last year and the spirit of rock and roll is so ingrained into the building's brickwork that it will remain for all eternity. The Cellar has built its reputation on its eclectic, open approach to music, and so it's appropriate tonight it hosts a genre-mashing bill that kicks off with some dancefloor-busting Eastern European folk in the form of **THE BALKAN WANDERERS**, whose trad sounds come spiked with punk, ska and indie influences, to make damn sure your dancing shoes will be smokin' by the end of their set. And after that we're off into the world of classic hip hop in the company of **RHYMESKEEMZ & BUNGLE**, the rapper/producer duo's slick, sharp, stripped-down style having its roots in hip hop's golden age as well as the best of the UK underground, all wrapped up with a sense of fun that's infectious. Fun being something **PEERLESS PIRATES** were born to spread. If The Smiths had got the girl, and the grog, and been pirates, and starred in spaghetti westerns then they might have sounded like Peerless Pirates. And really, if that isn't your idea of fun, you probably died of scurvy sometime in the 18th Century. Still, if you've stowed away on Peerless Pirates' galleon maybe you'll wash up on some sun-kissed tropical beach where **ZAIA** are hosting an all-night reggae party, which isn't far off what the expansive local troupe are doing tonight, taking this particular leg of the Punt into the wee small hours on the back of some seriously laidback party grooves and a whole lotta soul. Don't say we don't treat you proper right on Punt night. *The Balkan Wanderers – 7.30; Rhymeskeemz & Bungle – 8.15; Peerless Pirates – 9.15; Zaia – 10.15*



- 1 - The Purple Turtle
- 2 - The Cellar
- 3 - The WheatSheaf
- 4 - Turl Street Kitchen
- 5 - The White Rabbit



TURL STREET KITCHEN

Intimacy is the order of the day at Turl Street Kitchen, The Punt's quieter venue but home to a whole sackful of soul in the form of four solo artists of very different styles, if very similar high quality. **MY CROOKED TEETH** is the solo work of Jack Olchawski, who may be more familiar as the frontman with cinematic country-rockers ToLiesel, but in this guise he offers a more intricate and idiosyncratic take on those rootsy sounds, songs that sound charmingly heartbroken. Possibly the youngest performer at this year's Punt is Banbury's only-just-18-years-old **KATY JACKSON**, a girl and a guitar, but so much more, possessed of a rather wonderful voice that sounds like it's lived through many more than those tender years but pure as a freshly plucked pearl. Another familiar face playing in an unfamiliar set-up is Zahra Tehrani, who brings her **DESPICABLE ZEE** project to the live arena for the first time ever. The one-time Baby Gravy drummer, and Young Women's Music Project co-ordinator has long been at the forefront of Oxford's hip hop scene and with Despicable Zee, Zahra mixes electronics and live instrumentation into a trippy, atmospheric soundscape that brings in samples and maybe even some guest live vocals to create the dark, edgy ambience of urban twilight. **ADAM BARNES** is a man with a heart full of soul, the singer / guitarist's simple, sombre songs reflective and plaintive and often utterly beautiful, managing to balance melancholy with an uplifting feel in the vein of Ray LaMontagne and Bon Iver. Adam is also possessed of almost certainly the finest beard on this year's Punt, and that's up against some stiff competition given that our friend Spike Holifield is doing the sound at the Turl Street Kitchen tonight.

My Crooked Teeth – 8pm; Katy Jackson – 9pm; Despicable Zee – 10pm; Adam Barnes – 11pm



THE WHITE RABBIT

The White Rabbit has been part of the Punt for just two years but we can't imagine ending the night anywhere else these days. Its intimate gig space perfect for creating a great atmosphere as the party reaches its peak. With assorted local musician types involved in the running of it, this family-owned pub is as welcoming as you can hope for. A good place to see **WHITE BEAM** then, fronted as they are by something of a Punt veteran in Jeremy Leggett who by our calculations is celebrating his Punt hat-trick tonight. His place is well earned, though, as White Beam, his new band, kick some life back into the beast that is indie rock, harking back to 80s alt.rock acts like The Chameleons and Comsat Angels at times – harmonies, reverb and plenty of shimmering guitars; indie rock as God intended it. **WATER PAGEANT** describe themselves as the offspring of Kate Bush and Tom Waits and boast a Christchurch chorister in their ranks, which should be enough to pique any music lover's interest, and the trio's rich, warm mix of folk and chamber pop doesn't disappoint. In fact you might love them so much you'll want to have offspring with the band by the end of their set. Now that'd be a Punt love story to recount in years to come. And in years to come you can tell people you saw **ESTHER JOY LANE** here tonight before she was famous. Very much a newcomer on the local scene, Esther has already found herself handpicked to play alongside Stornoway at Independent Venue Week, her bass-heavy electro/r'n'b drawing admiring comparisons to Grimes, Jessie Ware and even Sade and winning some serious fans in the BBC Introducing office. And, finally, rounding off the Punt for another year are **RAINBOW RESERVOIR**, a band centred around American ex-pat singer Angela Space who emit the sort of feelgood vibes every party should end on, punchy cheerleader pop-punk and quirky anti-folk that finds a pleasingly uneasy meeting point between Ben Folds, Moldy Peaches and Le Tigre. As you wander off into the night, you will have a smile as wide as Frideswide Square, guaranteed. *White Beam – 8.30; Water Pageant – 9.30; Esther Joy Lane – 10.30; Rainbow Reservoir – 11.30.*



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Hello and welcome to this year’s Oxford Punt.

This is the bit where we try to explain what it’s all about to those of you what haven’t been to a Punt before. If you have, and we know some of you have been coming back for years and even look forward to it, then please skip this bit: you’ll only start getting a sense of déjà vu, when what you should be getting is a nice, cold pint of something dangerous from the bar before you poddle off round town having the time of your life. We’ll have two large gins and two pints of cider, ice in the cider, since you’re asking.

For those of you less familiar with the concept, the Oxford Punt started off in 1997 as a way of showcasing the best up and coming unsigned acts in Oxfordshire in one night. Because we know it’s hard sometimes to keep up with everything. Just looking at the gig guide every month can make you feel dizzy – so much to see, so little time. So we have the Punt, so you don’t have to turn up at half seven every time you go to a gig in the hope of catching the next big thing in town, unless your name is Leon Stiles, in which case that’s exactly the kind of thing you enjoy doing. We won’t go over the list of great Oxford bands who have cut their teeth at the Punt over the past 18 years again, suffice to say it’s where reputations can be made, and there have been some spectacular shows from those nascent stars.

This year’s Punt will not only showcase what’s fun and brilliant about new Oxford music, it will also benefit a couple of excellent local causes: all profits will be split equally between **Tiggywinkles** wildlife hospital in Haddenham, and the **Oxford Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Centre**, and we hope you will endeavour to learn a



bit more about the fantastic work both institutions carry out. We are also able to remember a very good friend of The Punt, and Oxford music in general. The Purple Turtle is, once again, The **Tony Jezzard** Stage. Tony did the sound for us at the Punt pretty much every year from its beginnings and he liked a bit of volume, did Tony, so in his memory we’re putting some of the very loudest acts on at the Turtle in the hope Tony can hear them up there as we raise a glass to his memory.

The best way to get the most out of the Punt is to get yourself an all-venue **Punt Pass**. There are only 100 of these available and they’re a mere £8 (plus a quid or so booking fee), which is a bargain when you consider just how many acts you could potentially see. You can get one from **Truck Store** on Cowley Road, or **Blackwell’s Music** on Broad Street. Support local independent businesses while you’re about it.

If you don’t get a pass, don’t worry, you can pay on the door at any of the venues. It’s only a fiver each, while Turl Street Kitchen and The White Rabbit are free. This here handy pullout guide can be your friend for the evening, guiding you through the myriad musical styles on offer. Please don’t buy your Punt guide a pint though – we know from experience it can’t take its drink. Think that’s all. Let’s be off shall we – lots of music to hear, stuff to discover and new favourite bands to love. Plus there’s already a queue for the bar and all this enthusing is making us thirsty. Have a fantastic Punt, may all your musical dreams come true.

| | 7pm | 8pm | 9pm | 10pm | 11pm | |
|--|------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Purple Turtle The Tony Jezzard Stage | The Shapes | Indica Blues | Cassels | Wardens | | |
| Cellar | | Balkan Wanderers | | | Zaia | |
| Wheatsheaf | | | Rhyme-skeemz & Bungle | Peerless Pirates | Maians | |
| Turl St Kitchen | | | Ghosts in the Photographs | Little Brother Eli | | |
| White Rabbit | | | My Crooked Teeth | Despicable Zee | Adam Barnes | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | White Beam | Water Pageant | Esther Joy Lane | Rainbow Reservoir |

+ **FLUORITE + PIPELINE: The Wheatsheaf** – Hoary, heavy rocking in a vaguely Nickleback vein from Ottawa’s Double Experience.
NIKKI LOY: The Cotswold Arms, Carterton

THURSDAY 28th

MATT EDWARDS: The Bullingdon – The Haven Club hosts the launch party for local electric bluesman Matt Edward’s new album, ‘Four Berry Jam’.
POKEY LA FARGE: O2 Academy – Hot swing, early jazz, ragtime blues, bluegrass and country from St Louis string band revivalist LaFarge, who’s drawn acclaim for breathing new life into traditional American roots music. Jack White is a big fan, having produced the band as well as inviting them to open for The Raconteurs.
DE LA SOUL: O2 Academy – The Daisy Age hip hop heroes continue to bring the party vibes – *see main preview*
SMASH DISCO with TENTH LISTEN: The Library – The Library’s monthly free gig night continues to bring the noise, tonight in the form of local skate-punks Tenth Listen, recent *Nightshift* Demo of the Monthers, looking back to 80s bands like Firehose, The Descendants, The Replacements, and Husker Du at times.
THE EPSTEIN + PAUL McLURE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Alternately epic and melancholic alt.country from the local favourites.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Half Moon
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: Ampleforth Arms, Risinghurst

FRIDAY 29th

CHUCK PROPHET & THE MISSION EXPRESS: The Bullingdon – A return to town for cult Americana hero and former-Green On Red frontman Chuck Prophet at tonight’s Empty Room show, the Telecaster master having played alongside Jonathan Richman, Warren Zevon and Lucinda Williams since going solo, earning critical praise rather more than commercial success for his unwillingness to play it safe, while mixing up blues, country, rock’n’roll, punk and hip hop at times, and earning favourable comparisons to Ray Davies, Tom Petty and Alex Chilton along the way.
BOSSAPHONIK presents THE DELE SOSIMI AFROBEAT ORCHESTRA: The Bullingdon – Latin jazz, Balkan beats, world grooves and nu jazz club night, tonight featuring a return visit for Dele Sosimi after his appearance at Bossaphonik’s tenth birthday bash. Sosimi is the UK’s chief ambassador for Afrobeat, taking in West African hi-life, funk and

jazz, to create a richly polyrhythmic music. Dele played for seven years with the legendary Fela Kuti before leading his own band, signed to the hip WahWah45s label and fresh from their Hackney residency where epic four-hour sets are the norm.
TINARIWEN: Oxford Town Hall – Mali’s nomadic psych-rockers return – *see main preview*
THE AMORETTES + 13 BURNING + SERTRALINE + TOADSTOOL: The Wheatsheaf – Classic rocking at OxRox’s birthday party gig, Scotland’s Amorettes kicking out the old-school riffage and sounding like Joan Jett cheerleading a bust-up between The Ramones and Airbourne, plus classic metal from locals 13 Burning.
ADAM BARNES: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Soulful heartbreak from the local singer-songwriter, fresh from his showing at this year’s Oxford Punt.
OSPREY’S PIRATE SOIREE: The Corridor – Swashbuckling soiree with It’s All About the Music host Osprey and guests, including local pirate pop heroes Peerless Pirates, plus The Ska Mysers, The Other Dramas and Kieran Alexis.
SMALL FAKERS: The Northcourt, Abingdon – Tribute to The Small Faces, launching a new venue for Abingdon on the grounds of Abingdon Utd FC, the band having previously been joined onstage by Kenny Jones as well as PP Arnold.
GORDIE MacKEEMAN & HIS RHYTHM BOYS: Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington – Old-time roots music from Canadian fiddler MacKeeman and his outfit

SATURDAY 30th

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with SUGAR DARLING + JEEP + SPECTRA: The Wheatsheaf – GTI’s monthly music sessions continues to mix and match, tonight pitting Sugar Darling’s angular grunge and hardcore noise up against Ant Kelly from The Shapes’ new side project JEEP, the band also featuring members of Swindlestock, plus one-man ambient electronic project Spectra, drawing inspiration from Art of Noise, Detroit techno and the Radiophonic Workshop.
EXTRA CURRICULAR: The Cellar – Techno, house and groove with Kamil Maczewa plus residents.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The James Street Tavern

SUNDAY 31st

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Intimate show from the godfathers of English folk-rock, building up to this summer’s Cropredy Festival.
BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm) – Open blues jam.

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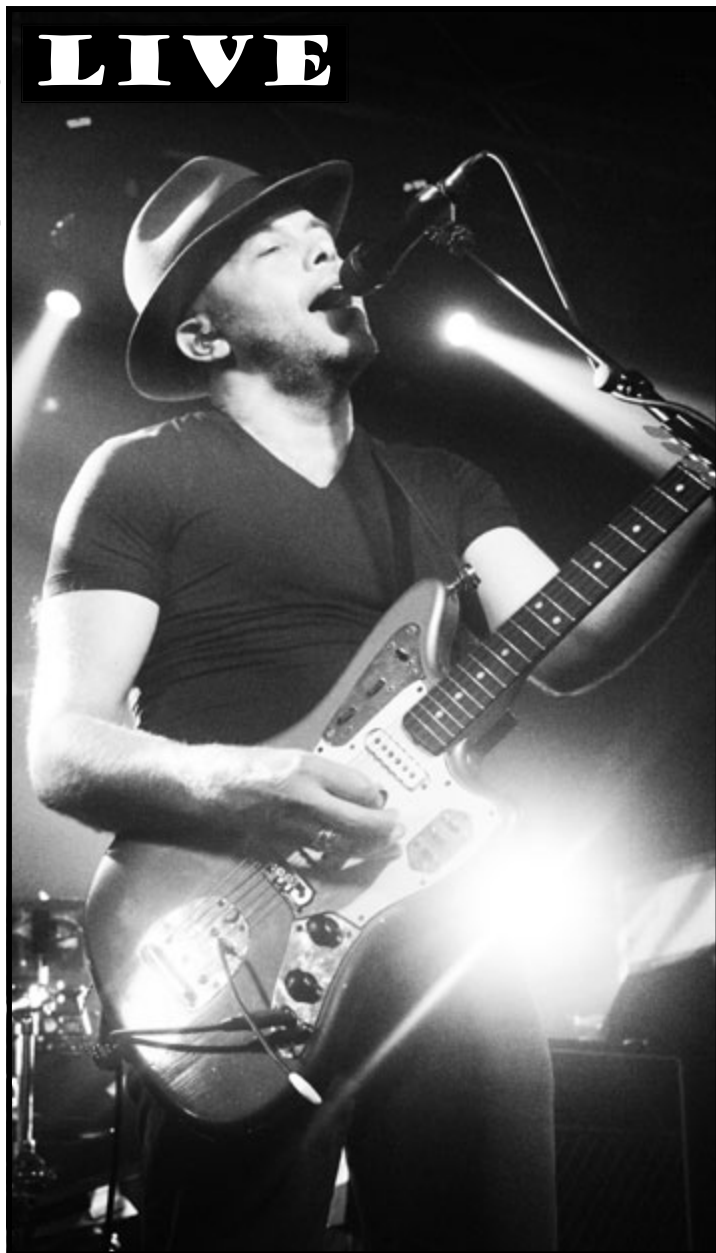
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RIDE O2 Academy

The biggest cheer tonight, on a night awash with pride, nostalgia and raw excitement, comes not when Ride arrive on stage – their first time on this stage in a quarter of a century – nor even for that magical moment when the crazed, cacophonous breakdown of ‘Drive Blind’ kicks back into its glorious, chiming finale, but at that point in the band’s sauntering signature tune ‘OX4’ when Mark Gardener sings “I’m going home”. A well of emotion from the packed house overflows into a single ecstatic proclamation of joy; Ride are back. Ride really have come home.

Of course the band were always going to relaunch a career that came to an abrupt halt in 1996 in the venue where they came of age in 1989, changing everything about Oxford music forever; how could they not? Anticipation was at fever pitch from the moment

fanclub members received an April Fools’ Day email telling them about this invite-only gig, anticipation that barely subsides as the show unfolds, until it manifests as a warm buzz of exhilaration as the crowd dissolves into the night at the end. Reunions always run the risk of being a disappointment, but this is nothing short of triumph from the opening notes of ‘Polar Bear’, with its soaring sense of longing, to the shrapnel-coated cherry blossom shimmer of ‘Chelsea Girl’ 90 minutes later. Tonight’s set is, as promised, almost exclusively drawn from Ride’s classic early EPs and first two albums, ‘Nowhere’ and ‘Going Blank Again’, only ‘Black Nite Crash’, a singular high point from their disappointing coda ‘Tarantula’, breaks with this mission, Ride’s Motorhead moment, an onward rush of ferocious rock energy that had



photo: Marc West

started to fade by that point.

The fringes are less floppy than they once were, and maturity and experience has tempered some of the nervy, wired energy onstage but otherwise, it’s like the Ride of 25 years ago has never gone away, songs that are both familiar and half forgotten, returning to thrill all over again – Andy Bell’s solemn, almost hymnal ‘Paralysed’ a stately lament, sat alongside the sci-fi love story of ‘Chrome Waves’, twin peaks of a set crammed with memories and magic. ‘Dreams Burn Down’, with its scouring, pitch-bending debt to My Bloody Valentine increasingly feels like ground zero for shoegaze and dreampop, one of the most influential songs of the last 25 years with its cascade of icicle notes and wave upon wave of glorious noise, while ‘Drive Blind’ is a sunbeam bulldozer amid a blizzard of strobe lights

and feedback. By contrast ‘Twisterella’ and ‘Like a Daydream’ are all jangle and spangle, the band’s love for The Beatles and Stone Roses evident in the delicate melodies and giddy psychedelia. ‘Time of Her Time’ feels slightly stilted and awkward, but it’s a rare mishit, and the only minor gripe we have is they don’t close the set with an excoriating 20-minute version of ‘Nowhere’ like in the old days.

Instead it’s the heady tumble and squall of ‘Seagull’ that makes the hairs on the back of your neck bristle once again as Ride roll back the years and bloom and billow skywards. “We know there’s no limits,” chant Mark and Andy in harmony, sheer noise and pure melody locked in passionate embrace.

Ride are home; Ride are back. Once again, watch them rise.

Dale Kattack



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FUZZY LOGIC BABY / VIENNA DITTO / PUNCH DRUNK MONKEY CLUB

The Wheatsheaf

Tonight is Klub Kakofanney co-founder Sue’s birthday and she can be seen inflating balloons and passing a large bowl of Doritos around the crowd, the sort of unfussy friendly touch that’s made the Klub’s reputation over the last 20 years.

The room is packed tonight, with the front few rows immersed, as is usual for a Klub Kakoffanney night, throwing shapes with conviction and admirable disregard. Youthful four-piece Punch Drunk Monkey Club are playing energetic and occasionally discordant indie rock, struggling with sound levels as the bass shakes the walls downstairs and a guitar solo deafens

passersby on the opposite side of the High Street. Besides lacking in subtlety their set packs a good punch, each track catchy, exuberant and a lot more succinct than their name.

Admitting to have been drinking since 2pm, Vienna Ditto produce their usual high calibre of multi-tasking, guitar faces and heavily layered samples. Guitarist and generally everything-ist Nigel Firth has found a friendly pair of shoulders in the rabble and plays a sporadically accomplished solo sitting atop the dancing member of the crowd. Singer Hatty Taylor taps back a few balloons as she harmonises with

dislocated electronic voices in front of their usual evocative projections of cowboy shoot-outs and moving cityscapes.

Then their crunching beats and haunting swirl of keys make way for headliner Fuzzy Logic Baby’s bubbling fusion of punk, ska, reggae and anything else you can move to. Their act is a musical and physical rush of energy with bright guitars, trumpet and mischievous lyrics. Frontman Darwood Grace points out how much they’ve changed since the band returned from London: “Our bassist’s got more handsome,” he says, pointing at Daniel King who is trying to work out whether he should be flattered or insulted. As the band wind up proceedings the last balloon is burst underfoot, signalling the end of this month’s typically messy, loud and brilliant mix of music.

Celina Macdonald

CHARLI XCX

O2 Academy

Charlotte Aitchison started work on her (unreleased) first album at 14, was signed in 2010, delayed her second album (‘True Romance’) until 2013 to work on it with the now ubiquitous Ariel Rechtshaid, and is accompanying the UK release of her third (‘Sucker’) with this, her first full tour. However, despite four top ten hits to date, collaborations with Iggy Azalea and Rita Ora, and songs on YA film adaptation soundtracks, she says she didn’t know how many people would turn up tonight as she doesn’t usually play outside of London and Manchester – and, indeed, the O2 Academy isn’t full.

‘Sucker’ is apparently an attempt to give girls a sense of empowerment by the way of a punkier pop sound, and those who had this sort of thing thrown at them twenty years ago will find the Shampoo vs Republica vibe of the title track familiar, while ‘Breaking Up’ and ‘Body of My Own’ display a distinct Bow Wow Wow influence.

Charli doesn’t care what she looks like on stage. Her dancing is energetic,

aggressive even, but she always looks like she’s having fun; there’s no Lady Gaga-style disingenuity. It feels like the newer stuff is deliberately anthemic, which makes an interesting contrast with some of the odder offerings from ‘True Romance’ (‘Nuclear Seasons’ and ‘You (Ha Ha Ha)’), and I don’t suppose anyone here tonight cares that ‘Hanging Around’ is the stropky teenage offspring of New Kids On The Block’s ‘Hanging Tough’ and Five’s ‘Everybody Get Up’, or that ‘So Over You’ sounds a Let Loose cover. I can see why so many young kids like Charli – something she cheekily acknowledges when she tries to get everyone clapping with “Come on, you parents!” in ‘Break the Rules’ – and she’ll develop and reinvent her image and sound as they grow up. But she’s quite inspiring for the older audience too, and if she keeps churning out bangers like ‘SuperLove’ and ‘Boom Clap’, I’ll still be on board.

Kirsten Etheridge

GEORGE CLINTON & PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC

O2 Academy

Legend is a word much over-used but few musical figures deserve the label better than George Clinton. In the 50s he was singing doo wop in New Jersey with friends; the 60s found him as a staff writer for Motown, then in the 70s he created a number of bands, Funkadelic and Parliament being the most successful, believing he stood less chance of being ripped off by the music industry with more than one deal to his name. Parliament were more funk aimed at the dancefloor but Funkadelic was where his psychedelic side took over, combining rock, funk and other diverse elements, heavy on surrealism and long, screeching guitar solos over horns and percussion, always laced with his infectious groove. Now 73 he still tours as Parliament Funkadelic, playing the best-known numbers from his long career.

Presiding over a fine and tight eleven-piece band, Clinton spends most of the gig just wandering around keeping the groove tight, not that they need much reminding, and contributing occasional vocals. His 70s gigs were always more of a party than a conventional concert and fortunately he’s recreated that vibe perfectly for this tour: Songs start with a backing track providing the basic rhythm, while three vocalists provide the familiar

call-and-response harmonies and a horn player switches between saxes and trumpet, always an essential element of any P-Funk song. Alongside bass and drums the two guitarists are the real crown jewels, taking turns to provide solo after solo of truly epic proportions.

‘Flashlight’ is about as perfect as we could wish, though ‘One Nation Under A Groove’ could have done with more of the complex yet subtle percussion that made the original such a timeless gem. Various guests start wandering on and off, but Clinton is having too much fun to bother introducing them. ‘Cosmic Slop’ becomes the show’s highlight, a perfect wild funk workout topped with a note-for-note recreation of the late Garry Shider’s classic guitar solo.

At 11pm the house lights come on and the sound and lighting engineers leave their stations, but the band aren’t going anywhere. Playing on for another twenty minutes they stop just short of the three-hour mark, still looking as fresh as the moment they emerged. Let’s hope some young bands look up from their online profile and take note of how George Clinton and his amazing band give their audience a proper night out.

Art Lagun

LARKIN POE/ JESS MORGAN

The Bullingdon

We tend to celebrate rich and complex voices, but sometimes there’s something to be said for simplicity and clarity. Jess Morgan’s tones are sweet and instantly likable, less single malt smoke, more Baileys sweetness, and she has a winning way of delivering a lyric or melodic line (the latter of which her country-tinged ditties are far from short on). ‘Connecticut’ might be her best tune, a gritty but uplifting tale of low-rent hotels like a slightly morose Sheryl Crow, and if the show tends towards the airily forgettable, affable young ladies with acoustics swarm the circuit in their hordes, and Morgan clearly outstrips the majority. Despite its tin-eared title, the Ameripolitan movement is a fine thing, saving US roots music from vapid cabaret chicks and Republican pinups looking like fireman strip-a-grams and whose only link with country is outsized headgear, but that’s not to say all commercially-minded Americana is bad.

There are many definitions of “populist”, but one of them is the neo-Benthamite desire to bring pleasure to as many people as possible, which is hard to argue against. Atlantan sisters Larkin Poe could be ambassadors for this ethos, clearly determined tonight that the entire Bully should have as much fun as they do, and

while their bluesy country pop might sometimes bring to mind the smooth stadium roots of Alannah Myles, it’s equally aligned with AC/DC – the opener ‘Wade In The Water’ develops into a joyously huge dumbass rocker that could soundtrack a Southern fried reboot of *Bill & Ted*, and gospel groove ‘Hey Sinner’ stretches stickily like cooling toffee, before mutating into a funkily minimal take on ‘Black Betty’. The playing is sharp, especially Megan Lovell’s molten lapsteel solos, and the vocals impressive, but the duo never veer off into empty melisma or fiddly chops if the songs would suffer (and kudos to the one-man backing band, on drums and synth-bass, a clinically relentless mixture of Meg White and Mantronix).

Their three-cover encore might be the sort of thing to win over Terry Wogan’s listeners (“He’s *so* English” – hilarious), but sells an intelligent, creative and infectiously hedonistic duo short. Tellingly, they make a point of celebrating the single dancin’ fool in the room vainly trying to turn a polite Oxford crowd into a moshpit: Larkin Poe aren’t afraid of commercial trappings, but beneath beats a heart of purest musical fire.

David Murphy

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LEE SCRATCH PERRY / DUBWISER / ZAIA

O2 Academy

Zaia’s sunny soulful roots reggae and the easy, cheery demeanour of singer Amy McKown sets the mood for tonight’s evening of reggae. Tracks like ‘Zaia Sound’ and ‘Zoo’, with their sparkling brass flourishes and cavernous basslines, go down well with the early arrivals.

While Zaia have been around for less than two years, quickly developing from an instrumental dub outfit to something more streamlined, Oxford

roots veterans Dubwiser have well over twenty years on the local scene (they’re still mere striplings compared to headliner Perry with close to sixty years in music). Singer/percussionist/ trombonist Jonas may no longer sport the ankle bothering dreadlocks of yesteryear, but he still has the presence and charisma that make him and the band a force to be reckoned with. They are clearly enjoying it; while Tads throws bass warrior

shapes, keyboardist Eddie doesn’t stop smiling, and singing drummer Spider, the band’s powerhouse, keeps up a funky barrage. The set is business-like and up-tempo, including ‘Eye Popper’ from their ‘Dancehall’ EP and ‘A Ton on U Boombox’, the standout track from their last studio album, before they close with Marley’s ‘Soul Rebel’.

The Upsetters take to the stage for an instrumental ‘Satta Massagana’, before the diminutive Mr Perry wanders on, bedecked in badges, patches and assorted Rasta paraphernalia. This is not Lee’s first visit to Oxford, nor this reviewer’s first time in his company, and he is greeted as the venerable dub royalty he has long become. Tonight’s set is a mix of old classics (‘Zion Blood’), some material from his last album ‘Lee Scratch Perry Back on the Controls’ (‘Rastafari on Wall St’), and a lot of material from his days with Marley (‘Jah Live’, ‘Exodus’ and ‘Sun is Shining’). His incredible band is a well-honed dub machine, and he is in a mischievous mood tonight. His microphone has a mirror attached, making it hard to make out his face when he is singing (or croaking random rhymes semi-tunefully before Rasta rapping). He makes anti-royalist comments during ‘Crazy Baldheads’, and talks about a girl at the front getting a “cocky for her fanny.” He’s back on the wine too; his son Noel occasionally ventures out to refresh his glass as well as deftly catching an empty tossed at the curtain. His band wait patiently each time he goes off on a tangent between ‘songs’. Not for nothing is he known as The Upsetter. But yet, as he approaches his 80th year, legendary status still intact and still making great music, Lee Perry is hard not to love.

Leo Bowder

INDICA BLUES / BROMIDE

/ MOOGIEMAN & THE

MASOCHISTS

The Wheatsheaf

Tonight’s show is, as usual for a Gappy Tooth Industries line-up, an eclectic mix, but there seems to be a theme of evolution that links tonight’s bands. Moogieman And The Masochists open the bill with a kind of anti-folk set that can best be described as ramshackle. There’s an inspired wit underpinning Moogieman’s songs as he croons paeans to ice cream vans, specific types of camera, and considers the emotional damage of a relationship breakup on a psychopath (surprisingly, breaking up is easy to do). It’s all delivered in a deadpan voice, floating on a wonky sea of folk-pop and feels as if it could fall apart at any moment. Somehow it’s glorious.

Bromide’s spiky punk-pop is similarly literate but considerably tighter. A fusion of Husker Du, The Replacements and Elvis Costello, their set is stuffed full of hooks and melodies that are impossible to ignore, or get out of your head

for days. ‘Wheels’ in particular fizzes with aggression, Simon Berridge’s vocal hooks, delivered with a curious mix of resignation and anger, giving it a peculiar dichotomy.

After the ramshackle and the spiky, Indica Blues take the next step and buff any sharp edges from their low-slung, blues-inspired stoner sludge. Once they hit their stride, they’ve got the sound of a high performance executive car, purring with a low rumble, disappearing towards a vanishing point that only their internal cosmic navigation system knows. Their riffs are delivered with precision and conviction, hitting hard constantly and they serve as a launch point for their deviations into psych-prog territory. Dispensing with humour and pop-nous, because such things are mere frivolities, Indica Blues are a well-oiled dream machine providing a smooth ride to the other side.

Sam Shepherd

GIRL POWER / HIGH FIGHTER /

SUNNATA

The Wheatsheaf

Even among dedicated stoner-groove merchants there can be a disappointing tendency to let songs run their course over a too-brief four minutes when the nodding throng in front of you just wants that repetitive riffage to keep rolling forever. So it’s to Sunnata’s credit that for the most part tonight they simply lock into a simple, brutal groove and go for it until abstract concepts like time fade into meaningless. What the Warsaw-based band are doing is nothing particularly original – big meaty stoner riffs and vocal incantations harking back to Sabbath via Electric Wizard – but as riff piles upon riff piles upon riff, the music’s rich texture begins to envelope you until they finish on a squall of jet engine noise that reminds us of A Place To Bury Strangers. There’s little light or shade, but, like time, when you’ve got that groove, nothing else matters. Hamburg’s High Fighter promise to continue this simple, sludgy assault, a jagged, almost punky edge giving their rolling riffs an extra sense of energy, while singer Mona Miluski’s rasping, bluesy voice is as raw as Death By Crimpers’ Karen Nolan. But soon they’ve become

repetitive in the wrong kind of way, each song a clone of the last, the set blurring into a mulch of metal cliché, a dirty, scuzzy makeover of Lita Ford’s 80s rocking. Girl Power, by contrast, aren’t prepared to let anyone, least of all themselves, get comfortable. Theirs is a high-tensile hardcore of a particularly virulent vintage. Hardcore, in fact, from an age when the term didn’t just mean going at it full pelt without a thought to clever ideas of what really constitutes menace. Oh sure they can do rocket-fuelled Discharge punk blitzkrieg. They do it a lot in fact, but they know when to stop or veer off at an angle, the belligerent harmonies from hell replaced by yapping gibberish or short staccato bursts of vitriol as the guitar and bass replicate the sound of metal into flesh, much like Shellac at times. They’re militant but occasionally moody too – Minor Threat and the odd Motorhead moment slashed across the chest by sinewy straight-edge post-hardcore as everything tumbles across the line in a tangle of elbows and sheet metal guitar noise. Grrr, and, indeed, grrr.

Dale Kattack

THE SELECTER

O2 Academy

After more than thirty years it feels time to reconnect with The Selecter and see what I’ve been missing since their early-80s heyday.

As part of the Two Tone movement they ignited my interest in music for the first time. However, I lost track of them after the first album, and didn’t hear their second album until many years later. They only lasted two years in reality, until Pauline Black put a new version of the Selecter together in 1991, which has operated on and off since.

Some of the legacy Black has left on women in music can be seen in tonight’s hand-picked support band, all girl trio The Tuts. This is the band the Libertines could have been; they have some fantastic tunes and rock really hard.

The Selecter hit the ground running, from the moment Pauline and ‘Gaps’ Hendrickson arrive on stage, ‘The Avenger’ and ‘Fuck Art, Let’s Dance’ warming things up for ‘Three Minute Hero’, which sounds as fresh now as it did 35 years ago. There’s new stuff aplenty, as the band are promoting their new

‘Subculture’ album, and it holds up really well against the older tunes. When things are slowed down, it’s done with purpose and the title track from second album ‘Celebrate The Bullet’ sounds as sinister as the inner city can. The personally political ‘My England’ and ‘London Burning’ extol all the love and troubles of a multi-racial society with great fervour, the former in particular should be required listening with Black on indestructibly confident form. ‘On My Radio’ and ‘Missing Words’ sound as wonderful as ever, the former greeted like a homecoming hero. An oddly chosen cover of ‘Because The Night’ doesn’t quite work, but no matter as a version of ‘Train To Skaville’ is swiftly along to rescue things and provide opportunity for a good skank.

The encore isn’t full of the more obvious choices, but the atmosphere and crowd are on such a high by this point, the tunes are a delight. All told, after a thoroughly enjoyable gig, I’m left wondering why I’d neglected the Selecter for so long.

Russell Barker

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DR SHOTOVER

Larges it

Hello my vertically-challenged pals. Why don’t you pull up some tiny pews and buy me some very large drinks. You’ll probably all have to shout at the same time to attract the bar-steward’s attention, mind, such is the hubbub here in the East Indies Club bar. BEDINGFIELD, I say BEDINGFIELD – some service please for my titchy friends. Turn *The Hugest Hits of Meat Loaf* down on the jukebox, there’s a good chap – my new companions only have piping voices, and they will apparently be getting a few rounds in today. Seven, to be precise, including this one. What’s that, Happy? No, no Carling for me, old boy. In the words of the Great Man, I would do anything for booze, but I won’t do THAT. Make mine a pint of Bitter Old Bastard with some horseradish sauce on the side. Ah, much obliged, Doc [*glugg, glugg*]... Say what, Sneezzy? Got some ‘Snow White’, have you? Aha, good news, let us repair to my office aka cubicle no 3 in the Ladies toilet. [*Five minutes later*]... Yes [*sniff*] I know exactly what you mean, we are both just so f***ing brilliant, funny and interesting aren’t we? [*sniff*] – But now let’s talk more about me me [*sniff*] me me ME... Speak up, Bashful? Ah yes, time for the ahem *lowdown* on the local music scene, the view from ground level, as it were. I hear you have a new band, Grumpy. Doom metal featuring elephantine riffs, fronted by a small but perfectly-formed comedian with an acerbic line in gallows humour. What’s the name of this mythic combo? Ah, should have guessed...
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cassels

Who are they?

Cassels are a two-piece noise-pop band from Chipping Norton formed by brothers Jim (vocals, guitar) and Loz (drums, vocals) Beck. They started playing together aged 12 and 8 respectively (they’re now 21 and 17). After various school band incarnations the pair played their first gig together in a pub in Acton in 2013, continuing to gig in the capital before releasing their debut single, ‘Seasick’, on Tip Top Records, and a follow-up, ‘We Wander In The Night’, on Grebo. At the end of 2014 the brothers began playing in Oxford and were invited by Colin Greenwood to play the Independent Venue Week show at the Jericho Tavern in January. The band are set to release a new EP on Idiot King and this month play The Oxford Punt at The Purple Turtle.

What do they sound like?

Stripped down and pissed off for starters. ‘We Wander...’ in particular is a gnarly, stuttering slice of prime punk-inspired ire, not a million miles from very early Joy Division, while their tumbling, riotous racket could stand shoulder to shoulder with Drenge on the rock and roll barricades.

What inspires them?

“Most recently it’s been the troubling things which have been going on with the country and society. The latest two songs I’ve written are sort of pseudo-political rage-filled ramblings about the ongoing privatisation of the NHS and the desensitising nature the media, and more specifically social media, has had on our reactions to atrocities occurring around the globe. It amazes me how so many new bands don’t seem to be writing about anything.”

Career highlight so far:

“Being picked by Colin Greenwood to play that show at The Jericho – bit of a head fuck, that. And also supporting Eagulls and Bad Breeding, again at The Jericho, was ace as they’re two of our favourite bands at the moment.

And the lowlight:

“Playing for just my mate and the sound guy at The Rhythm Factory in London was dire. We also had our set cut short so only played two songs as

the band before us had overrun. And then our cab home didn’t arrive. We always use that as a yardstick for when things are going a bit shit.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“Foals. Not really a massive influence but they were a big deal for us when we were still at school and getting into music.”

If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:

“Impossible question, but I’m going to say ‘Marquee Moon’ by Television, because I remember telling someone once that that was my favourite album.”

When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?

We’re playing The The Punt on 13th May, which should be really fun. People should expect to see two skinny chaps sweating a lot.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Favourite would be the amount of influential and amazing bands that Oxford has spawned. For such a small city it’s mad really. Least favourite is that there doesn’t seem to be masses going on music-wise in Oxford at the moment.”

You might love them if you love:

Drenge; Joy Division; Iceage; Slaves; Queens of the Stone-Age; The Wytches.

Hear them here:

soundcloud.com/cassels-official

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

It’s not often a city the size of Oxford can boast it’s produced a world-conquering album, but in May 1995 we saw the second such release in three months as **Supergrass** followed up **Radiohead**’s epoch-making ‘The Bends’ with their debut ‘**I Should Coco**’. Produced by **Sam Williams** and released on Parlophone – the same label as Radiohead – **Gaz, Mickey and Danny**’s exuberant, punk-infused flurry of simple guitar pop was perfectly timed for a summer when Britpop-fuelled optimism was at its peak, the trio’s blend of youthful effervescence on the album’s big hit, ‘Alright’, backed up by Buzzcocks’-style buzzsaw guitar and The Kinks’ romantic slice-of-lice storytelling. It proved infectious and irresistible, hitting the number 1 spot in the album charts and going on to sell over a million copies worldwide. It spawned five singles, including the classic ‘Caught By the Fuzz’ and ‘Mansize Rooster’, as well as ‘Lenny’ and ‘Lose It’. While it caught the wave of Britpop just right, it’s proved to be an enduring album, with Arctic Monkeys in particular crediting Supergrass as a primary influence. Meanwhile, another wave of local bands was rising, led by **The Mystics** (fronted by Sam Williams), **Thurman** and **Wonderland**, attracting small armies of record company A&R scouts to town, back in a time when there were such things as A&R scouts. And record companies.

10 YEARS AGO

“It’s funny to see us being called ‘hot new band

The Young Knives’, and I imagine it’s funny to people in Oxford too who see us as part of the furniture,” said **Henry Dartnoll**, in his band’s front page interview with *Nightshift* back in May 2005. Having topped *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 20 twice already, The Young Knives were already huge local favourites but now they were getting some serious attention from further afar, including coolest label of the moment back then, Transgressive, who released the trio’s ‘Junkie Music Make My Heart Beat Faster’ EP this month. They were being touted alongside Franz Ferdinand and The Futureheads as part of a new wave of great British bands, but a life of glamour was yet to catch up with then, apparently: “The most revolting things so far this year are watching House crack on to some 18-year-olds and having to sleep in the same bed as his feet on tour,” claimed Henry, about their travels around the UK. “House also stabbed the singer from The Noisettes in the eye with a guitar string when she went to kiss him. Our van is beyond roadworthiness, the suspension doesn’t work anymore. We played in a big old hotel in Leeds last week. The promoter took us to the top of the building and told us about how people had heard funny noises and seen children at the windows. Then he showed us the unused rooms with no lights, and then he left us. Shortly afterwards the knocking started and I shit myself.” So, you see kids, being in a rock and roll band is all drugs, groupies and limousines. Coming to town this month were **The Go! Team**, **Yourcodenameismilo** and **Million Dead** at the **Zodiac**, with **Futureheads** and **Super Furry Animals** up at **Brookes**.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

Fifteen years to the month they released their debut album, **Supergrass** announced they were splitting up, citing “a 17-year-itch.” A final UK tour was announced. But while one great local band passed into memory, others were stepping up to take their place, with **Foals** gracing the cover of May 2005’s *Nightshift*, for the third time in fact as they prepared to play a sold-out hometown show at the O2. **Yannis** spoke on the line from Bourges in central France, where the band were in the processing of conquering the globe with second album ‘Total Life Forever’. He talked about the new album but also a lot about Oxford and the friends Foals had here, including **Jonquil** who were supporting them on tour. “It’s only natural to support those who have shown us the same love,” he said, before praising the recently split **Youthmovies**: “We wouldn’t exist without Youthmovies; they’ve been an inspiration to us and many other bands in Oxford over the years.” **Stornoway** too were continuing to sow the seeds of success, announcing three acoustic shows at the **A1 Pool Hall** in east Oxford as part of the campaign to promote debut album ‘**Beachcomber’s Windowsill**’. This month’s Introducing band were newcomers **Spring Offensive**, a local band who had definitely benefitted from Youthmovies’ influence and who would go on to become one of the leading lights of the Oxford scene before their split last year. Gig-wise, **Hurts**, **Darwin Deez** and **Everything Everything** came to town as part of the *NME* Radar tour at the O2, while grunge monsters **Dinosaur Jr** and punk legends **The Slits** were also at the venue.



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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

MONKFISH

It says a lot about the quality of this month's demo pile that top of the heap by a head, shoulders and dusty stovepipe hat is a bunch of old goths who split up about ten years ago before reforming last year to carry on exactly where they left off, without a single concession to the march of time. And this in a week where the sun has shone and blossom has cascaded prettily from the trees that *Nightshift*'s hovel-like office looks out onto. Exactly where Monkfish left off all them years ago was making sparse, doomy country-tinged music inspired by Lee Hazlewood and Thin White Rope (one of the most underrated bands ever – FACT). Monkfish even used to cover 'Some Velvet Morning', Hazlewood's classic opus that Thin White Rope themselves covered back in the late-80s. Age hasn't mellowed them much, nor cheered them up at all; they still mope about like lost stragglers from a Fields of the Nephilim convention, but they manage to evoke the husky lawlessness of frontier saloons, or the sort of benighted outpost towns you get in films soundtracked by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis. Kevin Riddle has a marvellously gruff, dusky voice that makes him sound like he's brushed his teeth with whisky every morning for the last 20 years, and the spaghetti western rockabilly rumble of tracks like the charmingly-titled 'Cadaver' has a primitive energy about it that nothing else in this bunch of offerings comes close to. 'Landlocked' even sounds a bit like 'Spirit In The Sky' given a particularly morose make-over by a supergroup formed by Willie Nelson, Nick Cave and Andrew Eldritch. Two listens through and we've developed a craving for some chewing tobacco and a spot of grave robbing. Sod spring and sod summer right up the backside, the best parties always take place in the darkest dead of night.

THE GEORGE BONES REVOLUTION

With a name like that, they just gotta be goths too, right? Ah, if only. If they were goths they wouldn't be so fey and ineffectual and we wouldn't have to crush them like dying blossom petals under the mighty boot of musical tyranny. Oh,

Demo of the Month wins a free half day at Soundworks studio in Oxford, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift

they cruise in with some purpose, we'll give them that, a neat, driving guitar line sounding like some soon to be soaring shoegazey noisemakers, but as soon as the voice comes in, like weak, milky tea when you ordered a bottle of finest Shiraz, we're reminded of the sort of wafty indie incompetents that used to blight the first on the bill slots at Sarah Records showcases back in the day. The singer bleats like a man-boy whose hard knock lessons in life have amounted to little more than finding a small scratch on his Field Mice flexi disc, and not being able to get a girlfriend, but by god he's going to make sure you know how much he's suffered. If we had to sum this up in a word it'd be non-committal, though we aren't entirely sure that counts as a single word, which kind of leaves us floundering in a sea of indecision much like this demo. Someone called George Bones should really be the types of chap who'd be mayor of one of those benighted frontier towns we were just talking about. If these guys turned up in the saloon the locals would be using their guts to restrng their banjos before the night was out.

ÒKINA

And it almost happens again – great intro, then someone starts singing and what we'd hoped for fails to emerge. There's also the whiff of bongos about Òkina, which is something that tends to happen as soon as the weather turns. That and students playing Bob Marley's 'Legend' at top volume while hoping the smell of skunk will have washed out of their clothes before they head home for the summer holidays. So, yes, anyway, Òkina – neat violin drone intro, gets us thinking about John Cale and stuff, but when it breaks into song it's a slightly timid, tip-toeing folkly skitter that eventually resolves as some kind of ambient Mark Knopfler workout. Further in, on 'Too Far Up', some wyrdy wobbly violin and guitar interplay promises something a bit more psychedelic than the hushed, reflective folk-pop that peeps out of the speakers. Not unpleasant really, just lacking a bit in the sort of vim or invention we'd initially hoped for, instead opting for an almost proggy journey through the local meadow, pausing regularly to smell the flowers, or inhale whatever herbal relaxant it's chosen to accompany this gentle wee stroll. Said relaxant does seem to have played havoc with the band's ability to stick to a set course mind, and we're pretty certain they currently have as much idea of exactly what they want to be as we do. Time, hopefully, will bring them some kind of cohesion. Until then, who wants to order a pizza?

BERNIE HANAWAY

Talking of all things proggy, you know that clichéd image of 1970s prog rock you always get of Rick Wakeman wearing a mediaeval cape? Well he's a pathetic amateur compared to Bernie Hanaway here, who's dressed in a suit of armour on his Soundcloud profile. We'd bow down before him and declare him a true warrior hero of rock and roll if he hadn't opened his mouth and started singing. We say singing, but what we really mean is a slightly pathetic quavering keening noise that could be a badly injured dog trying to impersonate Neil Young in the most half hearted fashion possible. If Bernie wields a broadsword with the conviction he sings, he'll be sliced down the middle before battle has even commenced, his steaming heap of innards doubtless possessed of more melody and excitement than his songs. Musically this is a wafty, whimsical prog of the most pastoral kind, Marillion re-imagined for the new *Teletubbies* remake. It's all wispy synth curlicues, barely-there beats and for-the-sake-of-it guitar solos and a creeping sense of the world slowly fading into entropy. And it all seems to go on for absolutely fucking ever. He does, however, manage to rhyme "Can't get a decent chicken pie" with "There's a distant look in her eye," so maybe on some strange level the guy's a genius. But if it's a choice of him or Lemmy next to us in the trenches, we're with the Motorhead man all the way.

SOLA FIDE

Staying with the battlefield imagery – we're in that kind of mood now, the sun has metaphorically set good and proper on *Nightshift*'s day – this ain't so far off the dying sighs and groans of a peasant conscript who's just had his extremities hacked off by some giant lump of a bloke armed with a halberd. Sola Fide is the solo work of a bloke called Peter Jones and his one and only song is a lovelorn ballad called 'Reach Out And Touch Someone', which probably isn't the sort advice you'd give out to people on crowded public transport, not unless you want a repeat of that extremity hacking we mentioned a second ago. Anyway, here's the deal, Peter's got lady trouble ("Take my life, my love and put it on the tracks"). He's also got an acoustic guitar and a Beginner's Guide To Nick Drake songbook and there ain't no stopping him. Out it all comes, all that raw emotion, blended into a watery slurry of misery and barely decipherable moaning that reaches a peak of wailing intensity by way of what is undoubtedly someone with severe anal itching. And we can only deduce that however bad a time he's having of it, Peter's determined that someone else is going to suffer even more than him. And today, that someone is *Nightshift*. Cheers Peter, we appreciate the gesture.

Send demos for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk, clearly marked Demos. IMPORTANT: no review without a contact address and phone number; no more than four tracks on a demo please. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your demo. And don't fucking whine about your review on Twitter either, else we'll print a screenshot and make you look like a prize tit.

DAVID TUDOR

And of course, just what we need right now is another maudlin solo acoustic singer-songwriter to raise the roof and fill that dancefloor. We're starting to get an inkling that this month might just be National Keening Month, such is the level of castrato-level whining going on. We also get an inkling we've reviewed David Tudor before, since at least one song here is oddly familiar, and not because he sings "I want my MTV" over and over again during it. Like a mousy little ghost, 'Party House' has returned to haunt us, too timid to jump out from the wardrobe rattling its chains and screaming like a banshee, preferring to whisper its refrain endlessly down the back of your neck until you go insane with the creepiness of it all and throw yourself in front of whichever fast-moving vehicle is first along. "You remain at the pardy house," squeaks David. Which is obviously different to a party house, since we can't imagine any fucker's having fun here. We decide to blame absolutely everything this month on the existence of James Bay. What we'd give for some banging techno right now.

THE DEMO DUMPER

LEO STEEL

Despite going under a name that sounds like a fictional lower league centre half, Leo Steel seems to be an actual band, with actual noisy electric guitars and actual nasty effects pedals to make them sound like someone who might have shared the stage with Deep Purple back in the early 1970s. Which at least makes a noisy change from the last few demos. We're starting to feel positively liberated, right up to the point about seven seconds in to their opening song, 'Ljubljana', which sounds like a toddler's made-up word for lady bits, when we realise it's actually irredeemably awful, rock music that's failed utterly to evolve in 40 years other than to accidentally overhear a Skunk Anansie song on Classic Rock FM once and thought an alien had landed in the radio. And then they play a song called 'Funk Revolution', which for the most fleeting of moments might have fallen off the back of an old Faith No More album, but is really a pub rock Red Hot Chili Peppers tribute with any semblance of subtlety hacked off with that blessed halberd that seems to be hanging around. Leo Steel describe themselves, without even a hint of irony, as "sexy rock". We'll leave it up to you, dear reader to ponder our thoughts on just how hot and horny they are. You had one job, Leo Steel – to bring the rock and rescue us from self-pitying mimsies. One job and you fucked it up.



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