

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 251
June
2016**



Little Brother Eli

Oxford's funk soul brothers
bring the party

also in this issue

GLASS ANIMALS return

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WIN TRUCK TICKETS!

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All your Oxford music news and reviews
and six pages of local gigs for June.

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THE BULLINGDON

JUNE 2016
GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

COCKTAIL BAR

OPEN 4PM | £10 PROSECCO & 2.4.1 COCKTAILS EVERYDAY FROM 4PM - 8.30PM | £2.50 COCKTAILS ALL DAY SUNDAY

Wednesday 1st June
Malcolm Middleton (Arab Strap)

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 2nd June
The Hunna

Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd June
Dot's Funk Odyssey

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 4th June
Tuskens
High Tides
Better Than Never
Le Pub

Doors: 7pm

Monday 6th June
Lera Lynn
George Cosby

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 8th June
Lucy Spraggan

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 9th June
The Cult of Dom Keller

Doors: 7pm

Friday 10th June
Big Deal

Doors: 7pm

Friday 10th June
Bloody Knuckles:
One More Time

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 11th June
Police Dog Hogan
Paul McClure

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 11th June
Free Range Roots

Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 15th June
Sari Schorr
& The Engine Room

Doors: 8pm

Friday 17th June
Club Soda
Dear Hero
Ocean Ruins
Rose Segal
Luke Almond

Doors: 6.30pm

Friday 17th June
Keep Hush 90's Rave

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 18th June
The Cheesegraters

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 18th June
Simple & Playground Present
Hunee

Doors: 11pm

Monday 20th June
Kaz Hawkins Band

Doors: 8pm

Wednesday 22nd June
The Deslondes
Twain

Doors: 7.30pm

Saturday 25th June
Little Brother Eli
Nine Miles South
NeverInd

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 25th June
Ox Hip Hop

Doors: 11pm

Monday 27th June
Moreland & Arbuckle

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 30th June
Brickwork Lizards
Faith I Branko

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 2nd July
Dead Belgian
Les Clochards

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 2nd July
Botts and Burns Festival
Zed Bias (2HR Set)
Real Connoisseur
Spectre

Doors: 11pm

Monday 4th July
Easy Star All-Stars
Celebrating 10 Years of Radiodread

Doors: 7pm

Friday 8th July
Kanadia

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 9th July
Evarose

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 10th July
Simple's Cowley Road Carnival
After Party

Doors: 5pm

Monday 11th July
Albany Down

Doors: 8pm

Friday 15th July
The Corsairs

Doors: 7pm

Friday 15th July
The Hip Drop Live...
The Tropics ft. Holly Lawson

Doors: 8pm

Saturday 16th July
De:Formed Presents
Dibz & Aliman, Ironlung, Audio Sonic
Sinista B2B Dubz, Mblaze + MCs

Doors: 11pm

Friday 22nd July
Bossaphonik
Mankala

Doors: 11pm

Monday 25th July
The Black Circles

Doors: 8pm

Thursday 28th July
The Rev Peyton's
Big Damn Band

Doors: 7pm

Friday 29th July
Honkey
(FT. Members of Down, Molvins, Butthole Surfers)
Desert Storm
The Grand Mal

Doors: 7.30pm

Thursday 18th August
Matt Edwards Band

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 27th August
P.Y.T (Pretty Young Things)
Disco for the Next Generation

Doors: 10pm

Thursday 15th September
Saiichi Sugiyama

Doors: 7pm

Monday 19th September
Giles Robson

Doors: 8pm

Monday 26th September
Stevie Nimmo

Doors: 8pm

Wednesday 28th September
Loyle Carner

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 18th October
Meilyr Jones

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 15th October
What Became of Us Festival
Line-up Announcement Coming Soon

Doors: 7.30pm

Thursday 29th October
Pat McManus

Doors: 8pm

Friday 21st October
The Stray Birds

Doors: 7pm

JAZZ
AT THE BULLINGDON
FREE EVERY TUESDAY 1 8.30PM

21st May
Martin Pickett Organisation

7th June
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited

14th June
Hugh Turner Band

21st June
Stuart Henderson Quartet

28th June
Bullingdon Hot Club

5th July
Groove Alchemy

12th July
Blake's 7 Funk

19th July
Oxford Jazz Quintet

24th July
Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited

9th August
Ewan Baird Quartet

16th August
Martin Pickett Organisation

23rd August
Hugh Turner Band

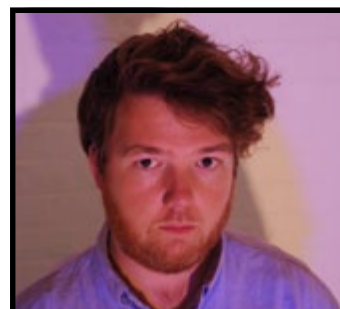
NEWS

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CHAD VALLEY were forced to cancel their homecoming show at St Barnabas in May in the wake of the break-in of their van that saw them, along with tourmates Shallow and Blackbird Blackbird, lose all their equipment, clothes and passports in San Antonio during their recent American tour. A Gofundme.com campaign raised £10,000 towards replacing all the equipment lost but while the Stateside dates were mostly able to go ahead, planned UK gigs were called off.

Everyone who contributed to the campaign received a thank you message from Chad Valley's Hugo Manuel (pictured), as well as a free download of a new song, 'Sweet Town'. "Thank you to every single one of you that donated," wrote Hugo, "I can't begin to express the gratitude I have for the kindness that we have felt from you. This experience, whilst completely shocking and awful, has completely restored my faith in humanity. I never thought that I could be the subject of such generosity, and I hope you will be pleased to know that I am starting to use this money to

buy new clothes, a replacement laptop, synths and samplers and many other things. As a token of my thanks, I am giving you this small gift in return... a new song called 'Sweet Town', dedicated to all of you and the people of San Antonio, Texas. Pass it on to your friends and enjoy it. I will make it available to everyone to hear at some point in the future, but for now it's just for you. See you on the next tour. Bigger and better!" Hear 'Sweet Town' at soundcloud.com/chadvalley.

BEAR ON A BICYCLE release a new label sampler this month. 'Bear on a Bicycle #4' features 12 tracks, including cuts from Waltz in the Shallow End; Be Good; Sier Pin Sky; After the Thought; Paddox; Jordan O'Shea and My Crooked Teeth. Get it at boabrecords.bandcamp.com

RACHEL RUSCOMBE KING releases a new EP next month. 'Vivid' features five new songs from the former Ragdoll singer. Rachel launches the EP with a show at Art Jericho on Saturday 16th July, with support from Trev Williams. Hear her at rachelruscombeking.bandcamp.com

INTRUSION celebrates its 15th anniversary this month with a special Myths, Fairytales and Legends birthday party. The long-running club night has been flying the flag for goth, industrial, cyberpunk, ebm and darkwave



GLASS ANIMALS return to action with a new single, 'Life Itself', this month. Released via Paul Epworth's Wolf Tone label it is the first track to be taken from the Oxford quartet's second album, 'How To Be A Human Being', due for release at the end of the summer. 'Life Itself' was debuted on Annie Mac's show at the end of May and made Radio 1's Hottest Record In The World.

Singer and producer Dave Bayley said, "Things have changed a lot for us over the past two years, so much has happened. Instead of sitting in the studio we've been in a different city every night, making friends, hearing crazy stories, getting in crazy trouble. All of it made me want to think about people and write something rawer and more human. 'Life Itself' is one of those. It's about a guy who was born a bit strange and struggles to become part of society. Because of that he spends more time alone in his own head, getting stranger, and it becomes an awful cycle of doom.

"Sound and production-wise we've been buzzing off the amazing energy of the crowds we've been playing to. As the crowds grew, they got more feral... and so did we. We found ourselves going wilder on-stage and playing heavier, grittier, high-energy versions of our songs, changing them every night. Now we've tried to put some of that energy, spontaneity and sound on tape."

Glass Animals' debut 'Zaba' has so far sold nearly half a million copies worldwide and enjoyed 200 million Spotify streams to date. The band have performed at festivals around the globe, including Coachella, Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, and Glastonbury, as well as two sold-out headline shows at LA's 2000-capacity Wiltern and NYC's 3000-capacity Terminal 5. They will play at Wilderness Festival in west Oxfordshire in August.

As well as the new single, the band shared a brief teaser for their forthcoming album on social media while announcing that they will play two shows this month, including at London's ICA.

Hear 'Life Itself' at po.st/LifeItselfYT

for a decade and a half now at its suitably subterranean home of The Cellar, running on the second Tuesday of every month. The party take splace on Tuesday 14th June, with DJ sets from regulars Doktor Joy, Bookhouse, Simon Penguin

and Krieg, plus guests.

The Cellar's regular bass, garage, grime and drum&bass night **Fluid**, meanwhile, celebrates it fifth anniversary this month with a party on Saturday 18th June. Masp is your host, plus myriad guests.

STEALING SHEEP AND BASTARDEIST have been confirmed as the headline acts for this year's Irregular Folks Summer Session.

Liverpool's psychedelic old-worlde wyrd folk collective Stealing Sheep make their first appearance in Oxfordshire for over four years at the all-day mini-festival, which takes place at **Hogacre Eco Park** on **Saturday 2nd July**. Experimental folktronica chap Bastardgeist returns after his showing at last year's Summer Session, which also featured C Duncan, who went on to be shortlisted for the Mercury Prize.

This year's Irregular Folks session also features sets from singer **Jessica Slighter**, who has recently toured with Jenny Hval; **Waitress For The Bees**; **Water Pageant**; **Whisky Moonface** and **Jess Hall**. A second stage, **The Odditorium**, will be hosted by the people behind Sing-Along-A-Wicker-Man, plus a very special host for the day. Tickets for the event, priced £15, are on sale at www.irregularfolk.co.uk.



NEWS

TRUCK FESTIVAL has opened the voting on acts to be chosen from its band app applications. Festival goers can vote alongside a panel made up of members of Mystery Jets and Blossoms as well as Alcopop and Big Scary Monsters Records, BBC Introducing in Oxford and more to choose which bands will play the festival over the weekend of the 15th- 17th July in Steventon. Some 35 acts from Oxfordshire are in contention with over 150 acts from around the UK. Vote for your local faves at www.truckfestival.com

BETA BLOCKER & THE BODY CLOCK have split. The local psych/noise-pop crew, who played at Truck Festival in 2013 and The Oxford Punt in 2014, announced their split on Facebook with a brief message, saying, "We still love each other and will be continue to collaborate creatively on new projects. Thanks a bizzilion if your one of the many lovely people who helped us in any way. Peace and Love forever and ever." The band's 'Inside the Pickle Jar' EP is free down to download at reeksoneffort.bandcamp.com.

THE INAUGURAL THAME GUITAR & MUSIC FAIR takes

place on Sunday 5th June. The event, organised by Southern Guitars and sponsored by Bak Trak, takes place at the Spread Eagle Hotel on Cornmarket Street in Thame, from 10am through to 4pm. As well as exhibitions there will be a live stage run by Premium Light and Sound, with sets from 14-year-old local classical fingerstyle guitarist Billy Watman, plus country duo A Little Bit Country, and Exeter cigar box guitar and didgeridoo duo Windslide. Entry is £3. Visit www.southernguitarshows.co.uk for more details.

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.

OXFORD GIGBOT provides a regular local gig listing update on Twitter (@oxgigbot), bringing you new gigs as soon as they go live. They also provide a free weekly listings email. Just contact oxgigbot@datasalon.com to join.



NEVERLND, THE EPSTEIN AND SAEDLY DORUS & THE HOOLIE BAND are among the acts confirmed for Charlbury Riverside Festival.

Riverside – the biggest free live music festival in Oxfordshire – takes place over the weekend of the 23rd and 24th July at **Mill Field in Charlbury**. Neverlnd follow their showing at Common People with a headline set on the Saturday night on the main stage and are joined by The Epstein; Leader; The Knights of Mentis; Bright Works; Crystallite; Fuji, and The Aureate Act. Disc-ceilidh crew Saedly Dorus top Sunday's main stage bill, with support from The Wonder Beers; Dave Sutherland; Speedbuggy USA; Peerless Pirates; The Mighty Redox; Headington Hillbillies and Dungeon Wolf. Over 40 acts will be performing across three stages at the festival, now in its 21st year. The second stage, curated by Rapture and Truck stores, features Cherokee; Lucy Leave; Russell Morgan; Muddy Johnson; The Black Hats, and Sylva Kay on Saturday, plus The Lottery Winners; The Hummingbirds; The Beckoning Fair Ones; Paprika Blues Band; Charlie Leavy, and A Reluctant Arrow on Sunday, with more to be added.

As well as the music there are the usual kids activities, while the Wychwood brewery has again produced an exclusive bitter for the festival, with fans invited to name the new ale and win a year's supply.

"Riverside has always had a special feel and atmosphere to it," said festival organiser Andy Pickard; "People return every year because they had so much fun there as youngsters and now want to share that experience with their children. Being held on an idyllic island in the Cotswolds always helps, as well as being free!"

More info and news at www.riversidefestival.charlbury.com.

WIN TRUCK TICKETS

It's summer, so it must be time for **TRUCK FESTIVAL**, an institution now as synonymous with Oxfordshire as Tolkien and May Morning.

As ever set in the south Oxfordshire idyll of **Hill Farm in Steventon**, this year finds Truck back bigger and longer than ever before. Boosted by a succession of sold-out years, they've supersized to a capacity just under 10,000, and the festival takes place across three days, running over the weekend of the 15th-7th July.

They've gone big on headline acts too: **Manic Street Preachers** are one of the biggest names in Truck's enviable 18 year history, and are joined by **Catfish & the Bottlemen** (pictured) and **Everything Everything** atop a bill that also features **Jurassic 5**; **Kodaline**; **Mystery Jets**; **Circa Waves**; **Jack Savoretti**; **Young Fathers** and **We Are the Ocean**.

Other acts across the weekend include **SOAK**; **Rathboy**; **Swim Deep**; **Gnarwolves**; **Sundara Karma**; **The Magic Gang**; **Coasts**; **Neck Deep**; **Norman Jay**; **Clean Cut Kid**; **Spring King**; **Eliza & the Bear**; **Black Honey** and **Public Access TV**, while one of the best bands **Nightshift** has witnessed over the last year, **Pumarosa**, will also be there. Don't miss them.

The joy of Truck Festival is strength in depth and across myriad stages large and small, you'll



unearth all sorts of musical treasures. There will be, as ever, a strong local showing, with **Cassels**, **Esther Joy Lane**, **Willie J Healey**, **Pixel Fix** and **The Dreaming Spires** among those already announced, and more to come.

Despite expanding to three days, tickets for the weekend have been kept to a more than reasonable £86.50, with concessions available. You can get yours, along with finding out more line-up details and what's going on beyond the music stages – from comedy to kids activities – at truckfestival.com.

And thanks to our good chums at Truck, **Nightshift** has not one but two pairs of weekend camping tickets to give away, free, in one of our

splendidly awesome and generous competitions.

To stand a chance of winning, **TELL US WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAS NOT A HEADLINE ACT AT LAST YEAR'S TRUCK FESTIVAL:**

- a) The Charlatans b) Super Furry Animals
- c) Basement Jaxx

Email entries, clearly marked Truck Competition, to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk, or send entries on a postcard to **Truck Competition, Nightshift Magazine, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**. Please include full name, address and a daytime phone number. Deadline for entries is the 21st June. The editor's decision is whoop loudly and enthusiastically about Pumarosa, even during other bands' sets.

Irregular Folks Summer Session

Hogacre Eco Park

SATURDAY 2ND JULY 2016

1:00pm - 11:30pm

Bastardgeist
Stealing Sheep
Waitress For The Bees
Jessica Slighter
Whiskey Moonface
Jess Hall
Water Pageant
Haus Khas
Connection



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 +
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Bar & Food available
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www.irregularfolks.co.uk



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Little Brother Eli



“Alex is clearly the best conventional dancer, but Adam is the one you want at a wedding reception because after a couple of scotches he’s like John Travolta on the dance floor.”

JOSH RIGAL, BASSIST WITH Little Brother Eli, is answering *Nightshift’s* question about who is the best dancer in the band. We ask because Little Brother Eli are a band who don’t just inspire outbreaks of jigging and frugging and general moving and shaking, but like to get in on the act too. Here is a band who quite obviously love performing. Singer Alex Grew in particular likes to cut a few shapes up on stage, an alternately elegant and gangly mover with the unselfconsciousness of a true showman.

Faced with the enthusiasm levels coming from the band, it’s nigh on impossible not to enjoy a Little Brother Eli gig. Even the notoriously two-left-footed *Nightshift* has been known to let go a little in their presence.

IT WASN’T ALWAYS THE case, mind. Our first encounter with Little Brother Eli, formed in west Oxfordshire by Alex and Josh back in 2013 while the pair were at universities in London and Sheffield,

resulted in the band being hurled unceremoniously into the Demo Dumper. The review described the nascent group as sounding like Jamiroquai playing nursery rhymes and suggested they were destined to appeal to chin-stroking *Later... with Jools Holland* aficionados.

A FEW MONTHS LATER THE band – the line-up completed by guitarist Adam Stowe, drummer Benji Page, and lap steel specialist Tom Williams – found their league position, so to speak, reversed as they were awarded Demo of the Month, the turnaround in their musical quality astounding. In between they played at The Oxford Punt and pretty much every local venue and festival going, quickly becoming one of our favourite, and most fun, live acts.

NOW, AS LITTLE BROTHER ELI prepare to launch their debut album, ‘Cold Tales’, with a headline show at the O2 Academy on the 25th June, *Nightshift* chatted to Alex and Josh and asked them how that initial slating affected them and whether it changed the way they made music. ALEX: “Our old band got demo dumped too so it felt like protocol by that point. As much as I’d like to say it did, I don’t think that it changed how we make our music.

However, after some initial feelings of disappointment, we did make a conscious decision to make more of an effort in the Oxford music scene, which up to that point we hadn’t really done. That’s a decision which has paid dividends. The music scene in Oxford can be unforgiving if you don’t put the effort in. We began playing more shows in town, working hard to get involved with the scene and we have reaped the rewards. Oxford is now our homestead, and we have been rewarded with a fantastic, enthusiastic little fan base. That support is vital for a band like us, moving forward. So for that we can thank *Nightshift* for the demo dump. Your next recording then got demo of the month; was there a feeling of relief or vindication? How do you think the band changed between those two recordings? JOSH: “To be honest we expected to hit the Demo Dumper again. I’m not sure vindication is the right word; we certainly felt like the hard work we’d put into the songwriting, and into playing shows in town, had paid off. “The band had definitely evolved by that point and our material was much stronger. The first demo was written before we’d even started playing the songs as a band. We have a really dedicated management team who pushed us to write better songs for

this album - even when we felt like we couldn’t. I think that’s what has made the biggest difference to our songwriting.” So now Little Brother Eli have joined a very select group of local acts who’ve been in the Demo Dumper, then Demo of the Month and finally the front front cover – Dustball, Asher Dust, Twizz Twangle, and Tristan & the Troubadours are among the few who have been there. What would they say to a band who’d just got a critical kicking? JOSH: “History is full of examples of bands getting bad reviews and the then rising to success: from Elvis to The Beatles to Nirvana, so my advice to any artist would be to carry on doing what you love. A review is just one person saying ‘I like this’ or ‘I don’t like this’; you have to find the people who do like it because they’ll buy your records and turn up to your shows: they’re the people that really matter. But when you’re trying to make a living, it’s better if there are more of those kinds of people!” **SO, WHAT CHANGED IN** Little Brother Eli’s music between those two demos? That last review stated, “Get better being something Little Brother Eli have done with giant bells on. Where once was a band who reminded us of Jamiroquai

singing nursery rhymes, is a rough-hewn gang of Delta roughnecks, rocking it up in a Mississippi shack after several bottle of moonshine, having accidentally trashed their record player while dancing like loons to White Denim,” before suggesting that Jack White and Red Hot Chili Peppers might be swinging round to join the party. Quite simply Little Brother Eli have got the blues. And the funk – lots of funk. And the soul. Chuck in a whole heap of garage rock and some hip hop sensibilities and you’ve got a good-time, livewire band for whom a party is what they exist to make.

IN FACT, WE WONDER HOW a bunch of young white dudes from Witney learned the blues. ‘Hanging’ in particular from the album has got a raw White Stripes feel to it. Have any of them spent much time in the American south? ALEX: “I don’t think any of us have ever ventured that far. We tend to steer away from describing our music as blues. Mainly, because I think we’d have a lot of disappointed blues fans turning up at our shows. None of us are real blues nuts either; I think you can hear that in the music.

“But you’re completely right: Jack White’s blues influenced projects have been a far bigger direct influence on our songs than traditional 12 bar stuff. I think that Jack’s kind of neo-fuzz-garage-rock-blues thing has definitely paved the way for a load of cool bands like The Black Keys, White Denim, Rival Sons and Royal Blood. I’d even go as far as to say he’s provided a bit of a revival for bluesy garage rock bands. I feel like he’s done that thing of making people feel like it’s okay to be in a rock band again, in the kind of way that Nirvana, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Blink 182 and Foo Fighters have done in the past.” There’s a boldness and a rawness in your funk and soul, though; where do you draw main inspiration from? JOSH: “A huge influence on our music comes from an album by The Raconteurs called ‘Consolers Of The Lonely’. It’s one of the reasons we started the band. Everything from the production to the songwriting is what we aspire to achieve in our own music. However, each member of the band has their own influences. Benji applies a lot of hip hop and 70s soul grooves to his playing; Adam loves new country music; Tom loves old country music; I love Motown and Alex’s favourite band is ELO. I think all these things come together to help us sound unique.” Why do you think so many bands go so wrong when they try to play soul and funk and come across as sterile and timid?

JOSH: “I guess it’s a matter of taste really. One person’s sterile and timid is another person’s understated and groovy; that’s the great thing about music. What I see around the local music scene is that the majority of local bands are still kids, and when you’re in a band when you’re a kid you inevitably end up imitating the stuff that you really love the sound of. That’s part of the creative process and learning to grow as an artist. Aside from some exceptional individuals, that real understanding and expression of originality really only comes later on once you’ve learnt a bit more about yourself and about creating music.” **AS WELL AS EARNING AN** enviable reputation for the gigs, Little Brother Eli are renowned as one of Oxford’s most sartorially elegant bands; how important is image to them? JOSH: “I must admit, I had to look up sartorially when it was first

mentioned. Pretty sure none of us have any of our clothes tailored. Although that might become more of a necessity as Benji and Alex continue to wrestle with the ill-fitting issues of being long but not large. “Image is something that all popular music artists have to consider. It’s not something we’re ever in pain over, but it is important. More than anything, it’s all part of making it as easy as possible for new listeners, viewers and audiences to digest what it is they are experiencing. Alex always says that it’s an important part of the show – being in character.” You’ve got a reputation now as one of the liveliest live bands in Oxford; what do you think makes you such a good live band, and how do translate that to the album? JOSH: “We love playing live. One of the reasons people keep coming to our shows, we hope, is to see our ever evolving performance on stage and if people have taken the time to buy a tickets and leave their homes we need to give them a show to remember.” ALEX: “We also try to work really bloody hard. I think there is often pressure on bands to only play the ‘right shows’. Our ethos however is more in line with ‘the only bad show is the one you refuse to play’. We gig a lot and put a lot of time into rehearsing; all that practice really allows us to cut loose with the dancing too!

“I think the most important factor in translating our energy on to the record was that the songs were all gig ready. Before every recording session, the songs had already been in our set for a number of shows, so they were really nailed down, which felt like it gave us way more room to express ourselves and focus on getting the right energy into the performance in the studio.” **YES, THE ALBUM. GIVEN** Little Brother Eli’s ability to get a room moving, here’s always a worry such infectious energy won’t translate to record. Thankfully it does, not least due to a production that really packs a punch. “We recorded the album in three sessions over the course of a year. As I mentioned before, our manager had pushed us to write better songs, so the gaps in between recording allowed us to get back to the drawing board a few times and add in new material. It also allowed us to develop the kind of production we’re going for. We recorded it at The Animal Farm in London, a tiny little studio with an

awesome producer who really nailed our sound. We wanted the album to be as accurate reflection of us live as possible, so energy was key when recording. I think we got it.” The album ends on a bit of a downer, mood-wise, when most of it’s a party, a riot. Is that your way of telling everyone to drink up and go home, or are you just good at hiding the sadness in the other songs? ALEX: “The majority of the album is quite intense and ‘Cold Tales’, the last track, is probably the most heartfelt of the bunch. It’s a reflection on the acute feelings of loss when your long-distance loved one leaves you standing alone on the platform as the train pulls away. In the live set, it sits right in the middle, and serves to break up the set into two energetic halves, a chance for the audience to collect their thoughts and digest what they’ve hopefully enjoyed so far. It’s a song that also gives the guys an opportunity to really show off more nuances to their playing and musicianship. On the album, it shows a different side to the band and leads on nicely to the first track, ‘Oceans’, when the album’s on repeat. So maybe rather than ‘drink up and go home’ it’s ‘take a break because we’re about to go again...’” You finished recording last year; does it still reflect where you are now, and what’s the plan for the rest of the year?

ALEX: “We’re already busy writing album number two and seeing how our music is developing is an interesting process. We’re still playing the full album live, so I think it definitely still reflects where we are now; we’re extremely proud of it. It is a reflection of us, so when number two rolls around, in the words of bop-it, ‘we’ll do it again, but better’.” JOSH: “We’ve got a lot of plans for the summer: our album launch is at The Bullingdon on the 25th of June. We’ll be hitting up tons of festivals and in September we have booked a two week tour in Europe to promote the album.” **ON THE ROAD AND UP ON** stage is obviously where Little Brother Eli belong. As well as regular local shows they’ve gigged extensively outside of Oxfordshire over the last couple of years; what have been the particular highlights – and any great gig disasters to report? JOSH: “There have been so many highlights so far, most of them local like Truck Festival, where we got to do a live session for Whispering Bob Harris. “Beyond that, we performed at Reeperbahn Festival in Germany last year, which was an amazing experience. We’re heading back out Germany during the European leg of the tour this September. “I think the only gig disaster we’ve had was when Benji our drummer broke his collar bone last year after falling off his bike. Luckily he healed quickly and we weren’t without him for too long.”

THANKFULLY NOT, AND SO the Little Brother Eli party goes on... and on. In fact there’s a line in the album, “Grab me by the shoulders, we can dance all night.” Who in the band would last longest at an all night blues party and who’d be first to fall unconscious under a table? Who’d pull and who’d be found in the kitchen? JOSH: “Who would last longest? If we were talking handled mug and tankard, then Alex would win hands down, as you’ll often find him in the nearest ‘proper’ pub to the venue, enjoying the ‘proper’ real ales.” ALEX: “Would be first to fall unconscious? Definitely Josh because he has the alcohol tolerance of a small child. Who’d be first to pull? That’d be Tom because he’s the best looking, almost too good looking. Who’d be in the kitchen? Adam and Benji might be playing table football, swapping notes on the best spectacle lens cleaner or perhaps teaching people regional dance practices of the Middle East. Whatever they’re doing, you’ll always find them in the kitchen at parties.” *‘Cold Tales’ is released on the 24th June. Little Brother Eli play the O2 Academy on Saturday 25th June. Hear them and find out all the latest news at littlebrothereli.com*

RELEASED

LITTLE BROTHER ELI

‘Cold Tales’

(Self released)

A bunch of white kids from a provincial Oxfordshire town playing a funky kind of blues rock shouldn’t, on paper at least, have got *Nightshift*’s pulse racing. If it did to start with it was for the wrong reasons. Little Brother Eli’s first demo was unceremoniously dumped with a “And don’t come back!” message rammed up its backside. A year later they were playing the Oxford Punt and sat proudly atop the demo pile, proclaimed as the best funky blues party in town.

It’s not difficult to see why. The west Oxfordshire quintet have built their reputation on constant gigging, with a live set that invites everyone in the room to ditch inhibitions and dance. Their lively, upbeat blend and bake of Jack White, White Denim, Black Keys, Red Hot Chili Peppers and plenty of old time blues and funk wears its influences as well as its heart on its sleeve. Strange then the band open and close their debut album with their two most downbeat



numbers: the hazy, almost grungy ‘Oceans’, and the (by their standards) solemn lament that is the album’s title track.

Guess that’s the nature of blues, though: when the party’s over real life is there to be lived. In between these downbeat bookends though, Little Brother Eli’s sense of positivity holds firm. High points are long-time live favourite

edge of harshness to the much more bitter than sweet boy/girl vocals. At one point we wonder if maybe Alphabet Backwards have unleashed their dolorous twin upon the world to balance out all their positive vibes.

In fact it’s strange that the bands that most instantly spring to mind by way of comparison – Heavenly and Bis – were similarly buoyant in mood, while Robot Swans rarely let the sun shine on their cute, DIY pop world. ‘Islands’ might be Huggy Bear ditching the feisty militancy and seeking solace at the bottom of a whisky bottle (“There will always be whisky,” intones Matt Bradshaw solemnly at one point), and further in, on the nominally jingly jangly ‘Something in the Water’, the line “There’s dogshit on the statue” is on hand to suppress any errant ideas about cutting loose.

That’s not to say the album is an unrelenting barrel of misery. Robot Swans’ songs are good naturedly bare bones, bordering on nursery rhymes at times, and a sort of cover of ‘My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean’ is positively singalong until you realise it’s actually a pretty gruesome internet-age tale of woe.

The album’s high points come with opener ‘Pricks of the Trade’, a moody but driving synth-pop number that reminds us of the mighty Ladytron with its scouring texture, and closer ‘Winter Kill Grass’, a vehicle for Laura Theis’ wonderfully dreamy/desolate voice.

The main misfire is ‘Iron in the Fire’, an ugly, misshapen attempt at punking things up that doesn’t suit them. Mostly though the trio make a virtue of unassuming gloominess layered on lo-fi pop tunes. There are those who’ll recoil at Robot Swans’ none-more indie stylings, but never forget – Lego is way tougher than it looks, and anyone tries stamping on it is gonna get hurt.

Sue Foreman

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Who Do You?’ with its dirty funk groove, and ‘This Girl’, singer Alex Grew in full freewheeling Anthony Kiedis form, performing vocal acrobatics over the band’s epic stadium riffage. The Chili Peppers remain a touchstone for the band’s sound throughout, alongside Jack White’s post-grunge take on the blues, but while the influences are obvious it rarely detracts from a band who can kick it out like they were born to the big stage. They can take the action out of the stadium and down to the banks of the Mississippi too when they want – the pedal steel-led ‘Hanging’ in particular a nod to the southern blues roots of their sound.

A rare mistep, ‘Shake Me’ is too much bluster, too little substance but ‘Roll Away’ shows their versatility, retaining that air of euphoria even on more considered tracks.

Whether ‘Cold Tales’ fully captures the energy of Little Brother Eli’s live set probably depends on how loud you play it and how many mates you surround yourself with, but it’s an assured debut that packs enough of a punch to suggest they’re a band with a foot in music’s past but eyes on a bigger, brighter future.

Dale Kattack

CABSTARS

‘The World To Me’

(Self released)

Boasting their roots in the UK’s ska capital, Coventry, but featuring members from Oxford, Cabstars make no bones about their huge debt to that city’s favourite sons and daughters, the lead track a slow skank that shuffles maybe too close to The Specials’ ‘Do Nothing’. It carries its languid groove comfortably, but singer Ben Hugh’s voice sounds like its straining to fit the style, and we’re increasingly reminded not of Neville Staples or Terry Hall but UB40’s Ali Campbell.

The phrase cod-reggae has drifted out of favour, but once it was used to deride (mostly) white guys trying to ape Jamaica’s greatest cultural export with decidedly mixed results. It’s a phrase that creeps back into our consciousness listening to ‘Pinch Me To Wake Me Up’, which again coasts on a smooth groove but struggles to sound authentic, and the lasting impression of Cabstars is a tight, effective band in need of a singer to do them justice.

Dale Kattack



GLASS ANIMALS

‘Life Itself’

(Wolf Tone)

To paraphrase that legendary Elvis album title, 200 million Spotifier listeners can’t be wrong. Okay they could; they could all be addicted to Years & Years or James Blake, but for the sake of this argument we’ll assume they’re all imbued with incorruptibly good taste.

200 million Spotify plays. That’s what Glass Animals have racked up since they stepped out into the public glare in 2013. They’ve also sold half a million copies of their debut album, 2014’s ‘ZABA’, on Paul Epworth’s Wolf Tone label. In an age when most bands would celebrate selling a few hundred records it’s a phenomenal achievement. It makes them Oxford’s most successful current band after Radiohead and Foals, albeit a gang of local heroes who remain barely recognised in their home town. The success of



their woozily psychedelic r’n’b came through internet word of mouth, much of it abroad, where they’ve toured more extensively than in the UK. Their return to action with new single ‘Life Itself’, perhaps predictably came with an exclusive

STRAY DOG

‘Soap EP’

(Self released)

It seems half a lifetime since Iona Roisin was fronting brilliantly precocious prog-punk-hip-hop-pop crew Baby Gravy, and given the ages of the members of that band when they started, it kind of is half a lifetime ago.

Iona’s moved on something since then, this new EP, again produced alongside London’s Bare Beats, a similarly crepuscular mood piece to the pair’s ‘Cling’ EP back in 2014, the spooked sparseness of the production, all trippy textures and barely-there beats, a languid fog that wisps around Iona’s fantastically sultry, smoky voice, sounding at times like Esther Joy Lane’s twenty-a-day delinquent sister.

Lead track ‘The Wander’ is aptly titled, a drift through deserted late night streets that recalls London Grammar’s sense of isolated romance. In fact, like the cat in Kipling’s classic poem, this is music that likes to walk by itself. When Iona croons “I’m sure you’ll both be very happy,” on the dark, desolate, organ-led ‘With Without’, you know such goodwill is entirely ironic.

The more urgent ‘Second Thought’ could be a brooding, gothic Ms Dynamite and overall this is music that wants to be left alone with its darkest thoughts.

Let it brood, let it ruminate, but ultimately, let it into your heart.

Victoria Waterfield



play on Annie Mac’s show and precedes new album ‘How To Be A Human Being’ this summer.

While ‘Life Itself’ doesn’t herald a radical new departure for a band whose music comes from those moments between sleep and wakefulness, it’s a more rhythmic, less somnambulant piece, something approaching a Burundi beat underpinning silken psychedelia, sleigh bells, even a Chinese motif at its start, while David Bayley’s intense, whispery voice provides a counterpoint to the euphoric harmonies of the song’s chorus.

There’s an almost regimented, machine-like feel to the song, driven ever onward by that beat, but the languid fluidity Glass Animals specialise in brings everything to organic life, and the result feels a little like a good-natured, late-night jam session involving Mbongwana Star, Radiohead, Tame Impala and The Weeknd, powered by unending mugs of tea and joss sticks. A suitably ambitious heroes’ return for Oxford’s most unassuming heroes.

Dale Kattack



PUNCH DRUNK MONKEY CLUB

‘Images of You’

(Self released)

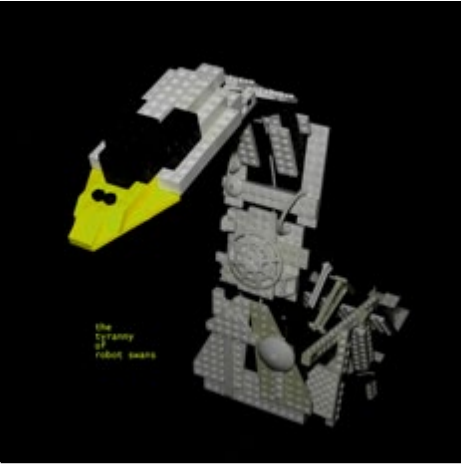
Formed in Banbury back in 2010, the members of Punch Drunk Monkey Club are still only just out of their teens now and, as is the way with bands of such an age, they’ve gone on university-based hiatus in the wake of this debut release.

Having started out mainly as a covers band they’ve grown into themselves over time, with this EP featuring four self-penned songs. There’s a strong feeling, though, that any or all of them could have been swiped from other bands.

Lead track ‘Images of You’ is the strongest here, kicking in with admirable bombast, like something from mid-80s Simple Minds, before it slunches into standard indie rock territory, the singer’s strangled mumble-cum-howl dragging everything towards the throng of post-Arctic Monkeys bands even as the violinist does his best to inject some invention into proceedings.

From here they tick all the requisite pub-rock boxes, from a modicum of funk that could have been half inched from either Red Hot Chili Peppers or Reef, to an elongated guitar solo on ‘Feeling Alright’ that seems to be included for the sake of it. ‘Nightmare’ ups the blues rock quota but while there’s energy aplenty here it seems to be at the expense of any real character of their own.

Dale Kattack



ROBOT SWANS

‘The Tyranny of Robot Swans’

(Self released)

The cover of Robot Swans’ debut album features a delicate but rudimentary model of a swan made from Lego bricks. It’s pretty but looks fragile and slightly melancholy. It’s an appropriate reflection of the band that built it. Formed three years ago Roboto Swans remain one of the most ramshackle live bands *Nightshift* has witnessed, but this album shows how far they’ve come since then and just what they’re capable of.

The trio describe themselves as “twinkle rock” and their music as “superficially happy,” both of which show a keen self awareness. The keyboards do twinkle on occasion, and a cursory listen might suggest simple, upbeat songs, but ‘The Tyranny of Robot Swans’ is overwhelmingly maudlin and reflective, noisy guitar stabs occasionally at hand to lend an

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G I G G U I D E

WEDNESDAY 1st

COASTS: O2 Academy – Polished tropical pop in the vein of Foals and Friendly Fires from Bristol’s Coasts, out on tour to promote their eponymous debut album, co-produced by Duncan Mills (Jake Bugg) and Fraser t Smith (Adele / Sam Smith).

MALCOLM MIDDLETON: The Bullingdon – The former-Arab Strap chap returns with more of his joyous gloom. Having previously described himself as sounding like “a fat child throwing a Casio keyboard down a flight of stairs and hitting an old man at the bottom who’s playing Verve songs badly on an over-priced guitar,” it’s fair to say he doesn’t take himself too seriously even as he explores the dark nights of his soul, and he’s a master of underplayed observational pop, nearly nabbing the 2007 Christmas Number 1 spot with his wry ‘We’re All Going To Die’ ditty. Having

Thursday 2nd

THE HOT 8 BRASS BAND: O2 Academy Formed in 1995, New Orleans’ Hot 8 Brass Band earned their reputation playing the jazz clubs and festivals of their native city, as well as local jazz funerals, but it was in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that they achieved worldwide recognition, featuring in Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levee Broke: A Requiem in Four Parts*. As a result they became the first American act signed to Tru Thoughts, their fusion of New Orleans marching brass and jazz with hip hop and funk spicing up a traditional style. Their endurance and increasing success, though, hasn’t been without tragedy. No fewer than three of the group have suffered violent deaths: trumpeter Jacob Johnson shot dead aged just 17; 22-year-old trombonist Joseph Williams gunned down by the police, and drummer Dinerral Shavers killed in a gang shooting when his stepson was the intended target. Such tragedies might have brought an end to lesser groups but in 2013 The Hot 8 released their second album, ‘The Life & Times of the Hot 8 Brass Band’, which took their roots yet further into new territories, the brass backing up commentaries of injustice and violence in New Orleans and adding a new twist on The Specials’ ‘Ghost Town’ and Basement Jaxx’s ‘Bingo Bango’. Back in Oxford for the first time since 2014, they’re touring their ‘Vicennial – 20th Anniversary’ album.

JUNE

declared his ‘Waxing Gibbous’ album to be his last, he’s still with us, his last outing ‘Electric Blue’ released under his Human Don’t Be Angry alter ego.

THE VIM DICTA + GRUB + BEAVERFUEL: The Wheatsheaf – OxRox’s very wonderful host Sam celebrates her birthday in some style with an Oxford debut for Los Angeles psychedelic power rockers The Vim Dicta, the young trio earning themselves an enviable reputation in the States for their raw, riff-heavy blend of Led Zep, Janis Joplin, The Doors and Jefferson Airplane, and set to release their new album to coincide with this UK tour. Local psych-grunge support from Grub and splenetically witty noise-pop outfit Beaverfuel. Happy rocking birthday, Sam.

BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar – Fortnightly club night mixing up 80s pop, disco, new wave, glam and synth-pop.

THURSDAY 2nd

MOULETTES: Truck Store – Back in town after their show at The Cellar in April, Glastonbury’s proggy psych-folksters play an instore set as they promote new album ‘Pternatural’.

THE HOT 8 BRASS BAND: O2 Academy – New Orleans street brass given a hip hop sensibility from the stars of Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levee Broke: A Requiem in Four Parts* – *see main preview*

THE HUNNA: The Bullingdon – Anthemic indie/boy band crossover from Hertfordshire’s Hunna, out on a headline tour after supporting Coasts and a string of sold-out shows around the country, winning a fanatical teenage following on the back of singles ‘Bonfire’, ‘She’s Casual’, and ‘You & Me’.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest running open club night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers, performance artists and more every week.

SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon – Open mic night.

ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure – Unplugged open mic night.

BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford – Open blues jam.

FRIDAY 3rd

CANCER BATS: O2 Academy – RAAAAAAAAAGHHHHH! Yeah, that learned ya – *see main preview*

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SINFICTION + THE COUNT OF 3 + MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS + ROSE SEGAL: The Wheatsheaf – Klub Kak host another merry mixed bill, with punky indie rockers Sinfiction, classic beat band The Count of Three, wobbly electro-pop from Moogieman and wistful acoustic folk-pop from Rose Segal.

DOT’S FUNK ODYSSEY: The Bullingdon – Soulful tunes, Latin vibes and funky grooves from the local funk and soul band, playing Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye and Michael Jackson among other classics and originals.

MIRACLE LEGION, MARK & RAY DUO SHOW: The Jericho Tavern – Ahead of a full band reunion tour later in the year, Connecticut indie legends Mark Mulcahy and Ray Neal play a series of acoustic shows across the UK as a duo. Often compared to REM in the early days, the band’s rootsy take on 80s alt.rock has proved to be prescient, although, as is ever the case, they were beloved of critics more than record buyers at the time. Time is ripe to rediscover a great overlooked band.

THE DREAMING SPIRES: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Quality Americana and 60s-inspired rocking from the local heroes, recently nominated for a slew of UK Americana Awards, the band, helmed by brothers Robin and Joe Bennett, inspired by The Band, Big Star, The Beatles and The Byrds.

SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM: The James Street – Renowned local open mic host Sparky helms his monthly bands, jam and open gig, with Chris Browne, Richard Brotherton and Cosmosis.

JIMBO 40: The Cellar – Drum&bass club night with Greencode and Bolo from Terraforms, plus more.

SATURDAY 4th

PEERLESS PIRATES + DEAD PHEASANTS + THE STANDARD + ACOUSTIC JOURNEY: O2 Academy – Oxford’s swashbuckling rock buccaneers launch their debut album, carving out a niche as one of the most entertaining live bands in Oxford with their pirate-themed mix of Smiths-y indie, rockabilly, Tex-Mex and eastern European folk-punk. They’re joined tonight by Chippenham’s political ska-folk-punk crew Dead Pheasants; ten-piece covers band The Standard, and country trio Acoustic Journey.

TUSKEN + HIGH TIDES + BETTER THAN NEVER + LE PUB: The Bullingdon

13 BURNING + NOT TOO SHABBY + RAISED BY HYPOCRITES + SOCIAL DISCHARGE: The Cellar – Church of the Heavy keeps it riffastic with old school metallers 13 Burning recording their set for a live EP. They’re joined by Witney metallers Raised By Hypocrites and punk/grunge outfit Social Discharge.

WHAT YOU CALL IT, GARAGE?: The Cellar – Free Range’s garage, grime and bassline club night playing underground sounds.

BOULEVARD SPRING: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Thames Valley Jazz and Swing Band play standards – including ‘The Lady Is A Tramp’ and ‘Tuxedo Junction’, and original songs.

NINEBARROW + ROBERT LANE: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club hosts award-winning duo Ninebarrow, Jon Whitely and Jay LaBouchardiere playing traditional folk songs inspired by the rural landscapes of the British Isles. Birmingham

singer-songwriter Robert Lane supports.

DIRTY EARTH BAND: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Party favourites from the local rockers.

THE MIGHTY CADILLACS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Classic blues, r’n’b and rock’n’roll.

SUNDAY 5th

WHISKEYDICK + TREVOR’S HEAD: The Wheatsheaf – Return to town for heavily bearded Texan country/metal duo Whiskeydick, mixing outlaw country and serious rock riffage into an unusual whole that’s like a cross between Pantera and David Allan Coe. Acoustic they may be but they’ve supported Honky, Weedeater and Nashville Pussy on tour. As they say themselves, “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” Yes they are.

HEADINGTON FESTIVAL: Bury Knowle Park – Live music in the park, with sets from Headington Hillbillies, Ady Davey, Nick Gill, Special Riders and more.

MONDAY 6th

PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED: O2 Academy – Lord Lydon of Sneer returns with more post-punk

Friday 3rd

CANCER BATS: O2 Academy Ah, Cancer Bats, how much do we love you? Lots and lots and lots, it must be said. Here’s a band that doesn’t mess about, preferring to get on with economical sub-four-minute blasts of (often surprisingly melodic) metalcore noise rather than fanny about with technical fripperies. The Toronto band’s latest album, ‘Searching For Zero’ – produced by Ross Robinson – is possibly their most experimental to date, and finds them exploring their Sabbath obsession to the max at times, but it’s also a highly volatile emotional catharsis, spurred on by the death of several of the band’s friends in the time it was being written and recorded. So, while the band crank out black-hearted blues and southern rock sludge boogie, or venomous punk-tinged metal anthems, the still impressively strident Liam Cormier lets rip in a manner that suggests Beelzebub himself is tearing terrible confessions from him. Live there is mayhem and ferocity of a type that’s irresistible, but equally you can sing along, if your lungs can cope. Having made their name supporting everyone from Funeral For a Friend and Bring Me The Horizon to Rise Against and NOFX, Cancer Bats are top drawer headline material now, blitzkrieg entertainment with few equals. Time hasn’t mellowed them. If anything they rocker harder than ever.



genius – *see main preview*

LERA LYNN + GEORGE COSBY: The Bullingdon – Gorgeous, atmospheric Lynchian alt. country from the rising Nashville star – *see main preview*

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Msrs Nicol, Pegg, Leslie, Sanders and Conway continue their tradition of playing intimate shows around the Shire in the run up to their annual Cropredy gathering, the pioneering folk-rock legends still going strong fifty years on from their inception, setting the benchmark by which all subsequent English folk artists will be compared. Long may they reign.

TUESDAY 7th

KATHRYN JOSEPH + JESS HALL + COLDREDLIGHT: Modern Art Oxford – Gorgeous, griefy folk-pop from the Scottish singer – *see main preview*

ALVIN ROY & REEDS UNLIMITED: The Bullingdon – Trad jazz, bop and swing from Alvin Roy and his reeds band at the Bully’s free weekly jazz club.

13 BURNING: The Wheatsheaf – Old school metal.

HANS HOUSE: The Cellar – House remixes of the legendary Hollywood composer’s works, from *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *The Lion King* to *Batman*, *Superman* and *Kung Fu Panda*, with DJ EE Rolls, GMBC and Gilpin’s Jam.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern – Weekly open mic and jam session.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE: The Half Moon – Modern jazz and grooves from the Hammond/sax/guitar/drums outfit, playing their monthly residency.

WEDNESDAY 8th

ADAM ANT: The New Theatre – The Dandy Highwayman returns to town for the first time since 2012 to coincide with an extravagant box set reissue of classic album ‘Kings of the Wild Frontier’. Having dominated the early-80s charts with theatrical glee and monster hits like ‘Ant Music’, ‘Stand & Deliver’ and ‘Prince Charming’, a gradual retreat into a less successful solo career and mental health issues, Ant’s return to performing at the end of the noughties was as much a personal triumph as it was a welcome return of a man whose dedication to proper pop star entertainment puts most modern day manufactured nobodies to shame. As well as the hits there’s be plenty of early Adam & The Ants gems to keep the old guard happy.

LUCY SPRAGGAN: The Bullingdon – Whimsical hip hop-infused acoustic pop from the former *X-Factor* contestant, best known for her song ‘Tea & Toast’, back in town as part of a tour to promote her third album ‘We Are’.

DISCO MA NON TROPPO: The Cellar – House, disco, dub/, afrobeat and cosmic weirdness with DJ Closed Stack, Mallard Hotlines, DJ Mangrove and Virtual DJ.

THURSDAY 9th

THE CULT OF DOM KELLER + THE NEON VIOLETS + MASIRO: The Bullingdon – Nottingham’s psych-kings bring the deep, dark groove to town – *see main preview*

THE ELO EXPERIENCE: The New Theatre – Big band ELO tribute show returns to town.

RAISED BY HYPOCRITES + IDEAL KOALA + BROWN GLOVE: The Cellar – Mixed bag of local bands with Witney’s metallers Raised By Hypocrites; experimental cellist and singer Ideal



Monday 6th

LERA LYNN / GEORGE COSBY: The Bullingdon Room for another Americana show in little ol’ Oxford? Of course there is, especially when it’s an artist of the calibre of Lera Lynn (no, she won’t be singing ‘We’ll Meet Again’). The Nashville singer, songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist, has kind of gone stratospheric since the release of her second album ‘The Avenues’ in 2014. As well as featuring in pretty much every end of year critics chart going in the States and earning herself an appearance on *Letterman*, a fair few of the songs on the album were used to soundtrack *True Detective*, in which she also had a cameo as a bar singer. These sort of things have a tendency to get an artist noticed and sales and Youtube views pretty much went through the roof. One of the finest voices in modern country music, Lynn hasn’t rested on her laurels since and her follow-up album, ‘Resister’, pretty much ditched the pedal steel twang in favour of a far more atmospheric, otherworldly sound, spacious and exploratory, as close to Opal or Mazzy Star as it is to the likes of Neko Case – perfect music for soundtracking future downbeat drama series. While she’s co-written songs with Rosanne Cash and T Bone Burnett, for the most part everything on Lynn’s album is her own work, including playing pretty much every instrument on it, and she’s set to become one of the biggest talents in the Americana sphere. Great downbeat dark-pop support at tonight’s Empty Room Promotion show from London singer George Cosby, inspired by The National and Bon Iver.

Koala, and wonderfully bizarre Weimer-style operatic cabaret-rock from Brown Glove, who closed this year’s Oxford Punt.

ANNA CORCORAN & BAND: St. John the Evangelist – Singer and pianist Corcoran plays songs from her new album ‘Easier Than Falling’, her gentle fusion of folk and jazz drawing comparisons to Norah Jones and Sarah McLachlan.

TENTH LISTEN + KANCHO! + COWLEY CHAINSAW: The Library – Local skate punkers Tenth listen launch their new EP at tonight’s free Smash Disco show, joined by two-man noise-pop riot Kancho! and lo-fi hardcore crew Cowley Chainsaw.

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Between them, husband and wife duo My Darling Clementine have clocked up several decades of successful, critically acclaimed solo and collaborative work. Singer and songwriter Michael Weston King was previously a member of pioneering British country band The Good Sons – dubbed The UK’s answer to Uncle Tupelo – and





Monday 6th

PUBLIC IMAGE Ltd: O2 Academy

PiL's previous two gigs here over the last few years have been nothing short of a revelation. John Lydon's well-earned reputation as a lifelong contrarian meant anything could have happened, but in the end both shows were extended *tours de force* with Lydon an imperious ringmaster as he and his recently resurrected band, including former Pop Group member Bruce Smith, ran through every great moment PiL have created since they emerged from the ashes of The Sex Pistols. The Pistols might have kicked down the statues, but with PiL, Lydon's musical legacy reached further and into more interesting corners. As Simon Reynolds argues in his superb book *Rip It Up And Start Again*, PiL's debut album was the real year zero for rock music, taking the revolutionary spirit of punk and drawing in disparate strands, from dub to funk to electronic music and inventing a whole swathe of new musical genres. Abetted by some of the most innovative musicians of the modern age – bassist Jah Wobble, guitarists Keith Levene and John McGeoch, and drummer Martin Atkins – Lydon took PiL to places previously unvisited by a rock band, arguably inventing post-rock along the way. From 1978 to their unofficial split in 1992 PiL's output was inconsistent to say the least but the best of it – 1979's inspirational 'Metalbox' and the more abstract, electronic 'Flowers Of Romance' in particular, stand alongside the greatest, most challenging music ever made. Something the band's most recent releases have continued to do. So we go along expecting greatness. All previous evidence suggests we shall not be disappointed.

has written for and collaborated with Nick Cave, Steve Earle, Roger McGuinn and Ron Sexsmith, while Townes Van Zandt has covered his songs; Lou Dalglish, meanwhile, has worked with Elvis Costello and Bryan Ferry as well as releasing a succession of solo albums since the early 1990s. But after ten years of marriage the pair finally started to write and perform together, bringing their voices together on debut album 'How Do You Plead?', an album of classic Nashville-style duets that explore the timeless themes of the country duet, inspired by, but often equal to, the likes of George and Tammy Wynette or Carter-Cash. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**
SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford
VISHTEN & MEAGHAN BLANCHARD: St Nicholas Church, Baulking

FRIDAY 10th

BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Dancefloor

Latin, Balkan beats, global grooves, Afrobeat and nu-jazz club night, with a live set from The Carny Villains, playing a raucous, theatrical mix of swing, ska and Balkan-flavoured folk. Host Dan Ofer is on the decks playing the best in world jazz dance.

BIG DEAL: The Bullingdon – Grungy pop, dark folk and dream-pop from the London-California duo of Kacey Underwood and Alice Costelloe, back out on tour to promote their new album, the follow-up to 2013's lauded 'June Gloom', which earned them a tour support to Depeche Mode. **BLOODY KNUCKLES: The Bullingdon** – Classic house club night.

CARLENE CARTER: St. Barnabas – The daughter of June Carter Cash and 50s country superstar Carl Smith, Carlene Carter is part of the great Carter country music dynasty, sharing their tendency towards the dark edges of the genre having recorded her 1978 debut album in London with Graham Parker's The Rumour before going on to cover 'Ring of Fire' and 'Foggy Mountain Top'. Having enjoyed her biggest hits in the 90s with 'Every Little Thing' and 'I Fell In Love' she's chosen to explore her family's musical legacy with new album 'Carter Girl', playing songs from across the generations, including The Carter Family and AP Carter – even bringing long-term family friend Kris Kristofferson in for some duet action. Another American cult legend brought to you by the good folks at Empty Room Promotions. **THE FELLOW MAN + WE BLESS THIS MESS + OH LEE RECORDS FOLK COLLECTIVE: The Wheatsheaf** – Portuguese singer-songwriter Bruno Mira brings his breathy acoustic folk-pop band to town.

THE AMAZONS: Modern Art Oxford – Reading's anthemic power-pop crew The Amazons return to town.

WALLINGFORD BLUES & BEER FESTIVAL: The Regal Centre, Wallingford – Doing very much what it says on the tin, the annual Wallingford Blues & Beer Festival provides a bluesy soundtrack to ale consumption over the weekend, today's star turn coming from the now seemingly immortal Wilko Johnson, whose successful battle with cancer has provided one of the happiest rock and roll stories of recent times. Having breathed new life into r'n'b in the 70s with Dr Feelgood, he's continued to prove himself not only one of the UK's finest blues guitarists (inadvertently laying the groundwork for punk) but also a livewire performer who never gave up playing every show like it was his last, even as deteriorating health suggested it might be. Keep on rocking, sir. Support from The Liam Ward Band and Thomas Ford.

REVELATORS: James Street Tavern – Lively blues and cigar box guitar boogie in the vein of Seasick Steve and Rory Gallagher. **PLANTEC: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Classic Breton and Celtic folk music for the modern age from Brittany trio Plante, reinvigorating the traditional sounds with loops, samples and synths. **BETTER THAN NEVER: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Pop-punk from the local faves. **DIDCOT BEER, CIDER AND MUSIC FESTIVAL: Didcot Civic Hall** – Live blues and r'n'b from Mad Larry and more at the beer festival.

SATURDAY 11th

GLASSHOUSE STUDIOS 1st BIRTHDAY PARTY: Glasshouse Studios, Cumnor (2pm) – The recording and rehearsal studio celebrates its first anniversary with a free afternoon of live

music, with sets from Cameron A.G., A Silent Film, Richard Walters and Egrets. Bring a picnic. **POLICE DOG HOGAN + PAUL McLURE: The Bullingdon** – Upbeat urban bluegrass, suburban country, West Country folk, fun drinking songs, tales of failed barbecues and souvenir tea towels at tonight's Empty Room show from the ever-touring octet, back in town after last year's sold-out show, the band featuring *Guardian* columnist Tim Dowling on banjo, their inclusive, feelgood onstage vibes a neat counterpoint to his dry, hangdog humour.

PETER ASTOR + PUPPET MECHANIC: The Wheatsheaf – Having tempted The Go-Betweens' Robert Forster to town last year Swiss Concrete bring another 80s indie demigod to Oxford in the form of Peter Astor. Long before Oasis, or even My Bloody Valentine and Ride, Astor's name was synonymous with Creation Records with his bands The Loft and The Weather Prophets, helping spearhead a particularly elegant, poetic form of indie pop. The author of such timeless indie classics as 'Up The Hill & Down the Slope' and 'Why Does the Rain', his cult status has rarely been troubled by commercial success, and after a brief solo career in the early 90s he disappeared from music altogether for nearly a decade before re-emerging. His new album, 'Split Milk', was recorded with Veronica Falls' James Hoare, and if these days Astor works full time as a music lecturer, a listen to any of his best albums should teach aspiring musicians everything they know about writing a great pop song.

LUCY LEAVE + SLATE HEARTS + 31HOURS + WOLFS: Modern Art Oxford – Fresh from their excellent Punt set Lucy Leave unfurl their psych-groove, punk noise and spiky-pop storm once again, while fellow Punters Slate Hearts lead the local grunge revival charge, sounding impressively like T-Rex if they'd grown up in Nirvana's basement in the early 90s. Support from promising funk-ed-up electro-pop newcomers 31Hours at tonight's Tigmus show.

LITTLE SPARTA + COLDREDLIGHT + PIPELINE: The Cellar – Folk-punk duo Little Sparta launch their debut EP.

ABBA MANIA: The New Theatre – All your favourite ABBA hits. Admit it – this is the best gig in town this month.

WALLINGFORD BLUES & BEER FESTIVAL: The Regal Centre, Wallingford – Second day of the annual blues and beer fest, today's proceedings starting early with a family-friendly daytime session featuring local guitarist and singer Matt Edwards and his band, plus Hiproute and Big Joe Bone. Tonight's main event is topped by Stratford's rising young guitarist Laurence Jones, who has been compared to Peter Green and Joe Bonamassa. Support from Red Butler and Babajack.

DIDCOT BEER, CIDER AND MUSIC FESTIVAL: Didcot Civic Hall – Rock covers from Junction 6 and more.

JOHNNY'S SEXUAL KITCHEN: The White House – Rock, blues, country and punk covers.

SUNDAY 12th

JAMIE C PAGETT + ASH LEWIS + CLAIRE LE MASTER + DAN McKEAN: The Wheatsheaf (2.30pm) – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of unplugged music in the Sheaf's downstairs bar.

BEARD OF DESTINY + MOON LEOPARD + RIVERSIDE VOICES + OXFORD UKULELES: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free evening of unplugged music hosted

by the genial Jeremy Hughes and his psychedelic folk crew Moon Leopard. They're joined by folk/blues types Beard of Destiny, a capella ensemble Riverside Voices and uke crew Oxford Ukuleles. **NATIONAL YOUTH FOLK ENSEMBLE DAY: The Cornerstone, Didcot (11am-4m)** – An open day for young folk musicians aged 14-18 to jam and learn about folk songwriting and performing. **WATERFAHL: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)** - Acoustic blues and pop duo.

MONDAY 13th

VIOLENT CHIMES + SHOTGUN SIX + STARBELLY: The Library – Emo, grunge and drone-rocking at the local bands showcase.

TUESDAY 14th

THE HUGH TURNER BAND: The Bullingdon – Funky jazz from Turner and chums at the Bully's free weekly jazz club.

INTRUSION: The Cellar – The long-running goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night celebrate their fifteenth anniversary with a fairytales, myths and legends party.

Tuesday 7th

KATHRYN JOSEPH / JESS HALL / COLDREDLIGHT:

Modern Art Oxford

With an album titled 'The Bones You Have Thrown Me & Blood I Have Spilled', Kathryn Joseph's songs were never going to be a barrel of laughs. Instead they are stark, haunting, poetic and utterly, utterly gorgeous. Having spent the early part of her career considered Scotland's best kept musical secret, her Kickstarter-funded opus beat off competition from Belle & Sebastian, Young Fathers and Mogwai to win Scottish Album of the Year in 2015, while she's earned herself a devoted following that includes Lauren Laverne and Marc Riley along the way. Like New Zealand's rising star Aldous Harding, Kathryn Joseph deals in the griefier side of life lyrically and brings it to shimmering life with a voice that's spectral and birdlike, her sometime unnerving vulnerability drawing comparisons to Anthony Hegarty and Joanna Newsom. Tonight is her Oxford debut and is a rare chance to see one of the most astonishing vocal talents around. An added bonus comes in the shape of two of Oxford's own brightest vocal stars – bright-eyed, romantic folk-pop singer Jess Hall and a solo show from Coldredlight, aka Gaby-Elise Monaghan, whose dark, desolate blues was one of the most talked-about turns at this year's Oxford Punt. Quite simply an unmissable show.



SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern
MUNKEY: The Jericho Tavern – Rock and funk covers.

WEDNESDAY 15th

SONA JOBARTEH: The North Wall, Summertown – Rare opportunity to see Sona Jobarteh, the first female Kora virtuoso to come from a noted west African Griot family. Players of the traditional 21-string African harp have been almost exclusively male over the centuries – the instrument handed down from father to son, so Sona's rise has been little short of extraordinary, and her music – based on the traditional songs, sounds and stories of the Mandinko people from The Gambia, Senegal, Mali and Guinea – is elegant, otherworldly and rhythmically hypnotic, helped along by a pure, highly melodic voice. Probably the most pioneering musician playing in Oxford this month.

SARI SCHORR & THE ENGINE ROOM: The Bullingdon – Powerful, gutsy blues rocking from New York Blues Hall of Fame inductee Sari Schorr and her band at tonight's Haven Club. Having made her name with guitarist Joe Louis Walker, Schorr has drawn comparisons to Janis Joplin and Tina Turner, while her new band features former Robert Plant guitarist Innes Sibun. **STOLBY + BROWN GLOVE + LAIMA BITE: The Wheatsheaf** – It's All About the Music hosts its regular Let The Lady Sing showcase of female singers, tonight with Joni Mitchell-inspired folk-pop people Stolby; theatrical Weimer-steampunk cabaret nightmares from Brown Glove, and elegantly melancholic pop from Laima Bite. **BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar**

THURSDAY 16th

SLATE HEARTS + THE VINCENT WHITE BAND + LE PUB + THE STRAYS: The Jericho Tavern – It's All About the Music showcase night with frenetic grunge-core newcomers Slate Hearts alongside blues rockers The Vincent White Band and more.

MARTY O'REILLY & THE OLD SOUL ORCHESTRA: Fat Lil's, Witney – Blues and swing of a darker persuasion from Marty O'Reilly and his band, inspired by Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker and Tom Waits. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**
SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

FRIDAY 17th

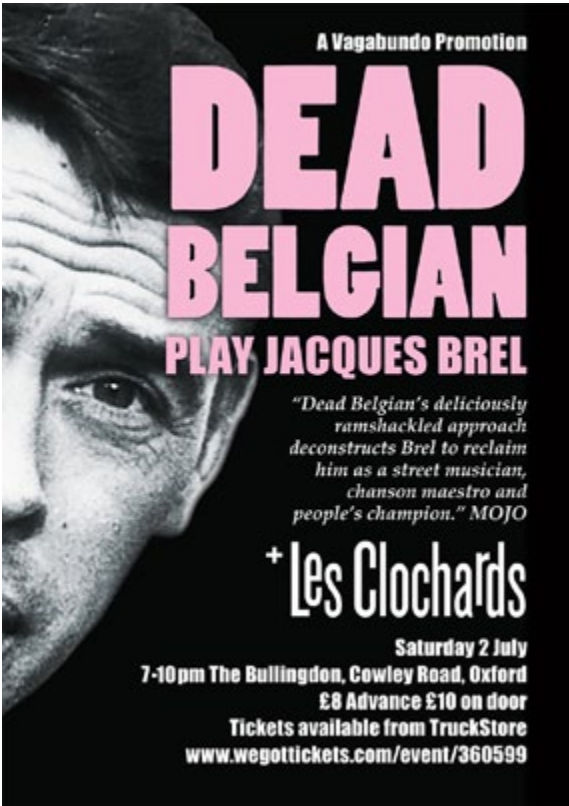
NELLY: O2 Academy – Over a decade and a half on from breakthrough debut album 'Country Grammar' Missouri rapper Nelly is out on tour playing club shows with just a DJ and hype man rather than the massive stadium and arena gigs he once enjoyed, but if multi-million selling albums are a thing of the not-so-distant past, he seems to be enjoying himself as much as ever going by reviews of recent shows, the new-found intimacy adding a freshness to monster hits like 'Hot In Herre', while those old Neptune-produced tunes haven't passed their sell-by date yet.



Thursday 9th

THE CULT OF DOM KELLER / THE NEON VIOLETS / MASIRO: The Bullingdon

Groove is in the heart, but it's also in the head, and if it's played down and dirty enough, in your bowels too. Nottingham's Cult of Dom Keller's groove is positively subterranean it's so deep and heavy. Since their formation in 2007, and via a brace of lo-fi album releases, they've become darlings of the underground psychedelia scene and played psych fests from Austin to Lewes, their heavy duty bass-led dirge as spaced-out as it is juggernaut relentless. Very much in the lineage of similarly drone-heavy psych bands as Loop, The Heads, Spacemen 3 and Wooden Shjips, their one and only mission is to mine that groove to its darkest depth and expose your soul to a wonderful world of noise. In this quest they're ably supported by Oxford's own psych-drone heroes The Neon Violets, whose adherence to groove and space-rock sonic expansion is similarly head-on. Coming in and flying out in rather more directions are Masiro, whose math-rock attack stays the right side of prog decency, mixing technical virtuosity with free-ranging rock fun. A night to leave the real world behind and feed your head.





Sunday 19th

TESTAMENT: O2 Academy

They might not be part of thrash metal’s Big Four, but Testament’s history is intrinsically locked into that of Metallica, Anthrax, Slayer and Megadeth. They emerged from the same early-80s California scene that spawned a whole raft of pioneering heavyweights, and they toured with the latter three over the years as well as with the titans who inspired that scene – Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath. The band’s debut album ‘Legacy’ (also the original name of the band) has lately been recognised as a thrash classic to equal those of their more lauded contemporaries, and sales wise they didn’t do too shabbily either – shifting over 14 million albums around the world. Constant line-up changes have done as much as anything to stop their top tier momentum continuing, though. Only guitarist Eric Peterson remains from the original 1983 line-up, while singer Chuck Billy, who joined in 1986, is the only other member to appear on every Testament album. Lead guitarist Alex Skolnick returned to the fold in 2005, having quit years earlier over the band’s direction – he wanted more melody, the rest of the band were headed into death metal at that point. Along the way they’ve had more drummers than Spinal Tap could imagine, and the band have endured through cancer and brain tumours as well as the line-up changes. And they’re still with us, making thrash metal as it always was and always will be, their influence on subsequent generations plain to hear. Metal, you see, is forever. There will be riffs.

ALKALINE: O2 Academy – The rising Jamaican dancehall star embarks on his ‘Next Level Unlock’ tour, having made his name alongside Beenie Man and Rkade.

BLACK IRON PRIEST + SECOND RATE ANGELS: The Cellar – Black Iron Priest would be a great name for any metal band, and this lot are a triple-value tribute to Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden and Stryper. Only kidding, Judas Priest. So, wall-to-wall classic rifforama at tonight’s OxRox show, with an opening set from London’s metal and rock and roll crew Second Rate Angels.

KONE + LUCY LEAVE: The Wheatsheaf – Idiot King host sparse, monochrome post-punkers Kone whose dark, understated pop recalls The Chameleons and Young Marble giants as well as The xx at times. Everyone who buys an advance ticket will get a free single from the band’s new EP. Great noise-rock support from recent Punt stars Lucy Leave.

CLUB SODA + DEAR HERO + OCEAN RUINS + ROSE SEGAL + LUKE ALLMOND: The Bullingdon – 80s-flavoured popsters Club Soda headline tonight’s It’s All About the Music showcase, with support from gothic post-punk people Dear Hero and more.

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Mad Hatter – Party-hearty swamp blues, funk, ska, folk and pop from the veteran local faves.

SATURDAY 18th

STILLMARILLION: O2 Academy – It’s true, there are still Marillion fans out there. If you fancy a bit of fun, ask them where Fish is and watch them turn puce with rage as they explain that actually he left in 1988 and Steve Hogarth has been singer for far longer than he ever was. Then ask them if they still play stuff off ‘The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway’.

THE CHEESEGRATERS: The Bullingdon – The drunken funksters return to action after another elongated hiatus, armed with a fresh selection of tunes to butcher. Warning: may contain kazoo solos.

NEW GENERATION SUPERSTARS + THE BLACK BULLETS + HELL’S GAZELLES + TRAUMA UK: The Wheatsheaf – Nottingham’s punked up rockers come to OxRox, out on a headline tour after supports to The Wildhearts, Duff McKagan’s Loaded and Supersuckers. Supports include great local heavy rockers Hell’s Gazelles in a Judas Priest and Led Zep vein.

FLUID: The Cellar – The drum&bass, bassline and grime cub night celebrates its fifth birthday, with host Masp and guests.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Cricketers Arms, Cowley – Fun blues rocking from the veteran local singer and guitarist.

THE MIGHTY CADILLACS: The Black Swan, Abingdon

SUNDAY 19th

TESTAMENT: O2 Academy – Heads-down moshtastic riff-frenzy a-go-go from the thrash veterans *-see main preview*

BRAIDS: O2 Academy – Montreal’s precious popsters return to Oxford on the back of third album ‘Deep in the Iris’, their last visit to town a low-key show at the Jericho Tavern around the time of acclaimed debut ‘Native Speaker’. Their often extended, cyclical songs, buoyant yet baroque, can evoke ‘Feels’-era Animal Collective, Broken Social Scene’s expansive folk-tinged pop and The Sundays’ playfully ethereal indie shimmer, deeply textured and intricate but strongly melodic, but it’s singer Raphaëlle Standell-Preston’s gloriously pure, almost ghostly voice that really stands out, acrobatic enough to see her compared to Björk, but more in tune with Julee Cruise, Tori Amos and Edie Brickell in the way it sweetly soars and bends notes at will.

HENRY CLUNEY + MAD LARRY + THE CORSAIRS + OSPREY + PURPLE MAY: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – A free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar, with Stiff Little Fingers’ Henry Cluney playing alongside local r’n’b stormer Mad Larry; rockabilly crew The Corsairs; bluesman Osprey and hosts Purple May.

THE MIGHTY REDOX + JABBA CARTEL + DES BARKUS: The Whitehouse (3-7pm)

MONDAY 20th

CROBOT: O2 Academy – Dirty groove rock from Pennsylvania’s Crobot out on tour on the back of their ‘Something Supernatural’ album, drawing comparisons to Wolfmother, Queens of the Stone-Age and Soundgarden.

THE KAZ HAWKINS BAND: The Bullingdon – Deep, powerful blues and soul from Northern Irish singer Kaz Hawkins, recent winner of the all Ireland Pure M Award for best female singer. She adds this to myriad blues accolades she’s received

lately as she’s made her name known on the European blues circuit.

TUESDAY 21st

THE BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE: O2 Academy – Anton Newcombe’s frazzled psychedelic rockers return to Oxfordshire for the first time since their set at Truck Festival back in 2007, the notoriously headstrong bandleader having dispensed with almost as many band members as Mark E Smith, but for all his wayward behaviour – bordering on outright self-destruction, as evidenced in the film *Dig!* – his singular vision has helped him produce some amazing music along the way, from their early psychedelic blues rock, through more experimental noise, inspired by The Velvet Underground and My Bloody Valentine, to last year’s tribute to European art house cinema, ‘Musique de Film Imaginé’.

THE STUART HENDERSON QUARTET: The Bullingdon – Free live jazz from trumpeter Stuart Henderson and band.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 22nd

THE DESLONDES + TWAIN: The Bullingdon – Quality Americana courtesy of Empty Room promotions again tonight with New Orleans’ rootsy roughneck country stars on the rise, mixing gumbo grooves, honky tonk, campfire stories and humour and southern states folk music into a rich stew.

FUJI + SEVEN O’CLOCK JUNKIES + BOON, MEW & WOOSTER: The Wheatsheaf – Alternately ambient and spiky melodic rocking from Fuji at tonight’s Oxford Music Rooms show, with support from REM-inspired indie crew Seven O’Clock Junkies and folk-rock trio BMW.

THURSDAY 23rd

TEN TOG KING + FLASH FIRES + ANDRE CHAVES + TEN TOMBS: The Jericho Tavern – Duvet-core from Ten Tog King at tonight’s It’s All About the Music showcase gig.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon

ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure

BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

FRIDAY 24th

SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Cellar – Count Skylarkin hosts his monthly reggae, dancehall, dub and soul party, with live guests and classics from the crate into the wee small hours.

CHEROKEE + BEARD OF DESTINY + THE OTHER DRAMAS + ADY DAVEY & SHAKY LIPS: The Wheatsheaf – Recent Punt stars Cherokee kick it out raw and loud in the vein of Royal Blood, Dreng and Led Zep, with support from folk and blues man Beard of Destiny; garage-pop duo The Other Dramas, and veteran local blues and country rock chap Ady Davey.

HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: James Street Tavern – Bluegrass and country-folk from the local regulars.

WITTFEST: The Plough, Long Wittenham – Weekend music festival with blues rockers The Vincent White Band, punk crew Strike One and more.

SATURDAY 25th

FLOFEST: Florence Park (11am-4pm) – Live music and family fun day in the Cowley park, with

sets from Cuban big band Ran Kan Kan; folksters Band of Hope; kids songs from Nick Cope, and ska and funk-tinged blues rock from The Mighty Redox, plus Papa Nui; Madflamenco; Alex O’Connor and Maracutaya.

LITTLE BROTHER ELI + NINE MILES SOUTH + NEVERLND: The Bullingdon – Album launch show for this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars, with their livewire blend of blues, funk and garage rock. Country and blues rocking from Nine Miles South in support, and eclectic indie, electro and more from Neverlnd.

MAIA + DECOVO: The Cellar – Lively spaced-out sci-fi folk-pop from the well-travelled Huddersfield troupe – *see main preview*

CHASING DAYLIGHT + ECHOPRAXIS + KUIPER + KANADIA + NEON TEEPEE + GRUB: O2 Academy – Local bands showcase night from It’s All About the Music, with Britrockers Chasing Daylight launching their own range of marmalade while paying musical tribute to The Beatles, Kinks, Oasis and Blur. Support comes from indie rockers Echopraxis; funky rock from Kuiper; expansive stadium-pop from Kanadia and psychedelic grunge noise from Grub.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with TANNERS POOL + JULIET & THE RAGING ROMEOs + THE LOST ART: The

Saturday 25th

MAIA: The Cellar

While a million column inches are dedicated to the demise of the music industry as it was, and the opportunities and pitfalls of the internet free-for-all, when it comes down to it, the most effective, and satisfying route to success is getting in the back of a van and gigging til your fingers bleed and your kidneys explode. Nowhere is this more true than on the fringes of the folk scene where reputations are earned through graft and the ability to engage a new audience every night. Or in Maia’s case afternoons too, since they’re a fixture on the festival scene, where their eclectic but inclusive approach to folk music makes them a regular fixture. They describe themselves as sci-fi folk, which doesn’t mean a huge amount but in their case involves a sometimes rootsy and upbeat, sometimes spaced-out and psychedelic blend of traditional instrumentation, Deep South atmospherics; Mariachi horns; dancey grooves and close harmony singing. The fact that reviews over their six-year lifetime have drawn comparisons to MGMT, Anthony & the Johnsons, Mumford & Sons and Beirut, shows they’re a hard act to pin down. They come from Huddersfield but seem to consider the UK’s motorway network their real home and you could easily imagine they originate from some bohemian Californian enclave. Or maybe aliens really did bring them here. Pop along and find out for yourself.



Wheatsheaf – Reliably mixed bag of sounds at this month’s GTI. Light, bubbly, funky rock from local newcomers Tanners Pool, plus excellent pop-inflected post-punk from recent Demo of the Monthers Juliet & the Raging Romeos, and skilful fretwork, subtle vocal harmonies and finely nuanced acoustic duo dynamics from The Lost Art.

PITCHBLACK: The Cellar – Techno club night with John Swede, Mark Dancer and Jack Powell.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Whitehouse

SHEPHERD’S PIE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Hard rock and metal covers, from Maiden and Metallica to Thin Lizzy and Black Sabbath.

WITTFEST: The Plough, Long Wittenham (1pm) – Johnny’s Sexual Kitchen, Mad Larry and more at the weekend music fest.

DRIVIN’ SIDEWAYS: The Dolphin, Wallingford – Rocking blues.

THE MIGHTY CADILLACS: The Three Horseshoes, Long Hanborough

SUNDAY 26th

HATTIE BRIGGS + LEWIS BARFOOT + JACK COOKSON: The Jericho Tavern – Winsome acoustic folk-pop from Gloucestershire singer Hattie Briggs and her band – which often features Barney Morse-brown from Duotone – out on tour to promote her debut album ‘Red & Gold’, inspired by the likes of James Taylor, Eva Cassidy and Katie Melua.

HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: Prince of Wales, Iffley

BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm)

MONDAY 27th

SAUL WILLIAMS: O2 Academy – The New York rapper continues to rage against the machine in poetic style – *see main preview*

MORELAND & ARBUCKLE: The Bullingdon – Raw, gritty Delta-style blues and electric blues-rock from Kansas duo Aaron Moreland (guitar) and Dustin Arbuckle (vocals and blues harp), out on their ‘Promised Land or Bust’ tour.

TUESDAY 28th

THE BULLINGDON HOT CLUB: The Bullingdon – Hot jazz and swing at the Bully’s weekly jazz club.

SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 29th

WILL & THE PEOPLE: O2 Academy – Reggae and ska-soaked 60s pop and good vibes from Will Rendle’s enduring band.

CLUB SODA + THE ILLUMINATI + FASHIONPROOF: The Wheatsheaf

THURSDAY 30th

BRICKWORK LIZARDS: The Bullingdon – Turkobilly fun at the Bully with the local fusion crew, mixing traditional Arabian folk music with blues, hip hop and rockabilly, gearing up for a summer of festival-flavoured good times.

BENET & VIV McLEAN: St John the Evangelist – An evening of jazz and classical with the McLean brothers (Benet on piano and violin,



Monday 27th

SAUL WILLIAMS: O2 Academy

Saul Williams is angry. Saul Williams has always been angry, and now more than ever music needs angry people. A philosophy graduate, poet, writer, visual artist and actor, Williams is multi-talented in the extreme but it’s as a rapper he’s at his most potent, a man who’s spent close to two decades raging against social injustice and corporate greed, while refusing to be bound by genre tropes. If the primary inspiration for his poetic, sometimes stream of consciousness raps is Gil Scott Heron, and his early records touched on Public Enemy territory, he’s expanded his sound incrementally over the years, taking in Living Colour’s funk-rock and The Mars Volta’s inventive prog, while covering U2’s ‘Sunday Bloody Sunday’. He’s worked with and toured extensively with Nine Inch Nails as well as artists as diverse as Nas, Erykah Badu, Blackalicious, The Fugees and Zac De La Rocha, and acted in a musical soundtracked by Tupac, so he’s hardly your typical MC. That he upped sticks from his native New York to live in Paris suggests he’s got a wider vision than most, and if he tends towards the polemical, he does so with the lyrical dexterity of a true poet. Prolific as a guest and collaborator, Williams’ own album output has been sporadic but this tour coincides with his new opus ‘MartyrLoserKing’, a meditation on social justice in the internet age from the viewpoint of a computer hacker living in Burundi. Go see a lyrical master at work.

Viv on piano) and their friends

LUCY LEAVE + TOO MANY POETS + NO DICE GRANDMA + GIRL POWER + DRORE + BASIC DICKS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – As good a reason as ever there was to get the bus over to Witney for the evening, with spiky psychedelic noise from Lucy Leave; dark, confrontational gothic rock from Too Many Poets; angular math and post-rock from No Dice Grandma; militant, sheet metal hardcore from Girl Power; sludgy D-beat noise from Drore and hellbastard rocking from Basic Dick, featuring members of Undersmile, Too Many Poets, Girl Power and more.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon

ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure

BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

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THE OXFORD PUNT

Various venues

Three hours before The Punt starts and it’s perfect punting weather in Oxford. As in you could sail a punt down Cornmarket, such is the monsoon-season downpour enveloping the city centre.

No wonder sound engineer James Serjeant, who was electrocuted while setting up last year’s Punt, has wisely elected not to load in the Purple Turtle PA til it’s over. Although it means he makes it to the end of the night unfrazzled, it does mean that the venue – as is traditional now – runs late, and therefore we don’t get to see as much of **MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS** as we’d like. We do, however, see enough to know they look like the PTA impersonating Kraftwerk, sound like Devo playing Tom Lehrer and they posit reusing disposable cameras as a metaphor of minor civil disobedience. The Cellar is only next door, but **THE GREAT WESTERN TEARS** make it feel as though we’d ridden a transmit beam direct to Nashville. Theirs is unreconstructed country, easy on the ear and impeccably performed. It’s proper old-fashioned Nashville, but the syrupy beauty of the pedal steel is enough to win over the most cynical heart.

Back in The Purple Turtle **THE AUREATE ACT** are an intriguing propsect, combining funk-indebted indie and various strains of progressive rock, from the bombastic/quiet dynamic of King Crimson, to the haunted atmospherics of Talk Talk and some of the ‘flute and panpipe’ tendencies of the genre as a whole, and theirs is a hypnotic performance, like a cross between Foals and Yes, that shows a very young band with a great deal of ambition and talent.

Discovery of the night occurs at The Wheatsheaf and the torrent of literate punk pop unleashed by **THE BECKONING FAIR ONES**. Their dour, snarky twitch rock reminds us of barely remembered Peel favourites Badgearer (look them up, it’ll be worth it) while the walls of synth vying with the guitar point towards Future Of The Left. Even a song about going on holiday seems to rouse singer Niall to vein-popping fury, while the ear-chafing Mogwai-esque coda to final track ‘Billy’ ensures a thrilling climax. Continuing what is a rather noisy Punt, **SLATE HEARTS** impress with their unashamed grunge: unashamed in that they sound like Mudhoney at their scuzziest, and that one of them wears the least cool dungarees witnessed in public since 1991. If the dirty fluff from under the beds of a ten storey flophouse were squeezed together into the form of riffs, it

would sound like this, ie. fantastic. Our inner 16 year old has a new favourite band.

If rock and noise dominate much of this year’s Punt, solace and space to think is available at Turl Street Kitchen. First act here, **CHARLIE LEAVY**, has been playing the length and breadth of the country on her lonesome over the last couple of years, racking up the sort of Soundcloud hits that would make every other act tonight green with envy, and you can quickly see her appeal; her impressive vocal range is given warmth and extra soul by the Yorkshire burr in her accent. Simple but highly charged love songs like ‘Don’t Trust In Cupid’ recall Tracy Chapman or Indigo Girls, but she’s not too comfortable in the acoustic singer-songwriter mould, singing one song in Korean before tearing her finger open and finishing the set with her guitar streaked with blood. There may be plenty of riotous rock and roll going on elsewhere tonight but Charlie is the only act to literally bleed for her art.

Filling in for Being Eugene at the last minute hasn’t intimidated Witney’s math rockematicians **NO DICE, GRANDMA** who put in a fantastic performance at the Purple Turtle. Taking inspiration from the likes of At the Drive-In, That Fucking Tank and any number of noisy bands that you might find at ArcTanGent festival, NDG are loud, pointy and very, very tight. The musical equivalent of being cast asunder in choppy waters, they pummel the senses and leave your mental arithmetic feeling severely lacking.

The White Rabbit somewhat absent-mindedly leaves the house stereo on as the bands play. Not that you’d hear it with **KANCHO!** in full flow. Drums are pummelled relentlessly and improbably overdriven bass strings twanged, with the occasional snatch of shouting, and it all sounds pretty superb, and talk at the bar - as close as we can get to them - turns to Big Black’s industrial misanthropy. In filthy rock terms, they may be outfrittized by Slate Hearts and Too Many Poets, but at their best Kanchol’s music is as shocking as their name’s original meaning (don’t Google it at work; Google Badgearer instead).

THESE ARE OUR DEMANDS aren’t shocking but their itchy, scratchy post-punk is suitably intense – man on a ledge tense, and if there’s any disappointment to be had it’s that with such tension and a name like that they haven’t held the entire pub up at gunpoint before their set ends.



CHEROKEE are here not so much to play a set as to put on a show. Bassist/vocalist Jack appears to be wearing a matador’s jacket and sombrero (though the latter is soon frisbeed out over the heads of the crowd) while drummer Felixx is dressed as either a droog or a dissolute morris dancer (we’re not quite sure which). Appropriately enough, their thunderous alliance of Royal Blood’s beef and Iron Maiden’s theatrics proves to be ultraviolent with bells on.

COLDREDLIGHT is a name almost unknown to Oxford’s gig-goers, and the Turl Street Kitchen’s small room is crammed with people who have come along to find out who this new act is. What we find is Gaby-Elise Monaghan and her guitar, playing some mesmeric, chiming songs. She has a strong, strident voice, which oddly reminds us of Avril Lavigne, although an Avril Lavigne who’d swapped skateboards, ripped jeans and hours at the mercy of her publicist’s thinktank for evenings spent staring at misty moonlit hinterlands with nothing for company but a Mazzy Star record and the ghost of Robert Johnson. A cover of Hozier’s ‘To Be Alone’ is as

mesmeric as it is desert-at-midnight desolate, and we look forward to a less hectic opportunity to see her with her full band set-up as soon as is humanly possible. **LITTLE RED** too aren’t at full-band strength tonight, playing in their acoustic three-piece guise, which we have to say suits them better, allowing the three-way harmonies to work their magic on their country-tinged indie-folk that occasionally sounds like Nick Cave has dropped in for tea and darkness with First Aid Kit.

KANADIA aren’t necessarily noisy, but they are big. Stadium big. Epic reverb on the reverb big. They sound a bit like pre-definite article Verve tackling some 1995 vintage PJ Harvey, and at one point they go so far as to sound like U2 half-inching Roxy Music’s ‘Love Is The Drug’. BIG, in other words. Cellar engineer Jimmy Hetherington is vaping some strange concoction that smells like candy floss, and being caught up in a gust of this is not a trillion miles away from experiencing Kanadia’s billowing confections.

Did we call Slate Hearts shameless? Well, that’s nothing compared to



CRYSTALLITE, who are playing the sort of mid-80s rock that can only be performed with your head in front of a giant fan and a foot on a monitor. By all that is rational and reasonable this should be unbearable, but there’s so much gusto and infectious energy onstage, nobody with any ounce of human decency could dislike them. The singer is a whirlwind, looking a lot like P!nk with everything exaggerated to the limit and the band is having more fun than any single person inside the ring road right now, with those in the front two rows coming a close second; in the face of exuberance like this, all our music journo, record collector notions of what is acceptable get lost, like tears in rain.

You go and see a band featuring 50% of Undersmile, you better go prepared. A stiff drink in hand, we return to the Turtle for **DRORE**, who have taken the ‘Smile’s sludge and given it a wee D-beat kick up the fundament. This is half rock and half silt, and experiencing it feels like having a sore throat in your ears. In 1919, a man named Anthony di Stasio surfed through Boston on a black sticky wave during the Great Molasses Flood, and we now

know what he must have felt like. Musically it’s close to hell on earth: excellent, then.

LUCY LEAVE have steadily become one of our favourite local acts in the past year, peppering their spiky pop with psychedelic curlicues and punk floyd textures. They’re not always the tidiest band in history – drummer Pete Smith often sounds as though he’s working out which of his hands can move faster than the other – but all that proper grown-up stuff is irrelevant when songs are weird, wonky and wonderfully inviting.

Portishead’s lax work ethic might be the cause of much exasperation to fans, but not to **STEM** at The Cellar, who seem eager to capitalise on the Bristolians’ protracted silences. They don’t exactly deal in spectacle, but with a deep, dark bass, doomy electronics and some languidly smoky vocals, there’s enough about their music – portentous without being pretentious – to captivate.

Countless bands split citing personal or musical differences; far fewer have the nerve and courage to stay together despite them for the greater good. The misfit members of **TOO MANY**



POETS look as though they’re not so much on two different pages as two different planets, but the creative tension that ensues is precisely what makes them currently one of Oxfordshire’s most intriguing and original bands, located somewhere in the hinterland between Bauhaus and Soundgarden and destined for a cult following. Their set ends with a chaotic, destructive stage invasion, tonight’s single most rock and roll moment.

CRANDLE open their set by transforming Antony and The Johnsons’ ‘Hope There’s Someone’ into a gloopy, doomy, sobbing mess: an aching torch ballad coming out of a melting radio. When the second number, a hazy, swaying take on Leonard Cohen’s ‘I’m Your Man’, starts a few in the audience turn on their heels. Their loss: Crandle are bewitching, both for the artifice of their ethos (famous songs of all eras and genres stripped to melodramatic little cabaret numbers) and the obvious earnestness of their approach. It’s the sound of amateurs (they apparently only learned their instruments so they could play this year’s Punt, but who’s believing that?) amazing themselves with the depths

they could find in songs they love, or hate, from the bouncing, unspeakably catchy jaunt of ‘Spellbound’ to their eviscerating and (sorry, Tom Petty) definitive remake of ‘You Got Lucky’.

BROWN GLOVE take to the stage dressed as distressed pierrots, and proceed to play a piece of clockwork goth cabaret like JF Sebastian’s automata trapped in some Weimar of the damned. With lots of harpsichord canters, twisted diva soprano and tiny bursts of super-compressed thrash guitar underpinning some very naughty lyrics, it’s a bit like The Tigerlillies appearing in the *Flesh World* readers’ wives forum. Singer Gemma Moss has been known to come up with some pretty spicy stage shows in the past, but with Brown Glove, a duo with her partner David Kahl, she’s found a more subdued sense of theatre that lets the songs take centre-stage. And, that’s it. The last pint is downed, and we murmur our goodbyes before stumbling towards bed with our feet aching and our ears ringing. Time to die.

Words: David Murphy; Ben Woolhead; Tom McKibbin; James Dawson; Ian Chesterton



LIVE

NEVERLND Jacqueline du Pre Building

New name; new band? When Balloon Ascents announced they were to become the spellcheck-bothering Neverlnd last month, reaction ranged from slight concern to barely-stifled snorts of derision. Why change tack so abruptly when things had been building so well so far. On reflection though, it feels like an acknowledgement that the band are growing up. Balloon Ascents suggests almost childish glee; Neverlnd something more exploratory. The band – for tonight’s relaunch gig in the suitably ambitious environs of the Jacqueline du Pre Building expanded to a six-piece – have always sounded like

they’re searching for something beyond simple pop tunes. The good news on tonight’s evidence is they haven’t deserted their old ways completely. The better news is some of their new songs are the best they’ve done. With his hair styled into a collapsed quiff and dressed in distressed three-quarter-length jeans and white high tops, singer Thomas Roberts looks increasingly like a lost founder member of One Direction, though his enthusiastic dance moves might need some tutoring; but when he sings, he’s possessed of an often stunning voice, pure, wide ranging and able to turn on a sixpence. While

the band’s music is often languorous, with understated dub and funk elements, it’s this voice that holds the melodic core steady throughout. Old favourite ‘Cutout’ is an early highlight tonight, its almost jazzy slink unfurling as well-placed harmonies and a tightly-reined Pink Floyd-style guitar solo creep in, but the staccato tumble of ‘Neighbours’ is a captivating counterpoint, bringing a welcome air of discord to the sometimes languid grooves. There’s the odd mishit; ‘No’ manages to be both awkward and anonymous, but they rescue themselves immediately with the darker ‘Aberration’, Thomas’ voice

hovering elegantly over sparse guitars and a simple tambourine and shaker rhythm. In fact it’s often when they strip back the sometimes overly busy arrangements that they sound at their best. So, the piano lament-cum-tropical-pop rock’n’stroll of ‘Lonely Alone’ makes way for the dressed-down ‘Easy’, which provides a more effective vehicle for Thomas’ vocal performance. They peak, though, with the elaborately rhythmic ‘My Heart Away’ and recent relaunch debut ‘Where Do I Start’, which sounds like Belle & Sebastian if they’d got their funk on a bit. We’re still not too sure about the new name, but there’s more than enough evidence tonight to suggest that Neverlnd won’t become home to another bunch of lost boys. **Dale Kattack**

LEADER / A WAY WITH WORDS O2 Academy

On the day Oxford United won promotion to League 1, A Way With Words’ onstage pre-gig huddle feels more like a pre-match team bonding exercise, and there is a similarly muscular sense of determination about their bolshy, grungy rock that perhaps has more of Stevenage’s physicality about it than Kemar Roofe’s fleet of foot creativity. In particular they seem unable to switch styles or pace, even when they attempt to slow things down with ‘Caffeine & Cigarettes’, which merely comes across as laborious, and as the set progresses, the early Foo Fighters influences make way for something that whiffs heavily of Nickleback – in an Oxford sense at least, the Swindon Town of rock music. Leader are similarly muscular, and display an admirable set of tattoos between them, but possess far more melodic guile, as well as an ability to alter pace and tactics, to make for a dynamic, and engaging set that equally recognises the importance of brevity.

There’s a distinct 80s feel to their set opener, heroic chiming guitars and expansive vocals suggesting Midge Ure fronting Big Country, while further in they unexpectedly conjure something approaching a Jeff Buckley moment with the more tender, stripped-down ‘Circles’. Where they tend to fall down are on the couple of *faux*-funk, chugaboogie numbers that could be any pub band in any town across the land, but when they play it big and bold, particularly on set highlight ‘Chasing You’, they really come into their own. In fact the set builds strongly to the point ‘The Way You Do’ becomes a singalong for the impressively packed crowd, ‘Left Outside’ is a pure stadium-filling rock anthem, and encore ‘Live Like Kings’ is their full-on U2 moment. Without breaking down new musical barriers Leader confidently stake their claim as an unabashed rock band with ambitions beyond local stages, and if Oxford United can look forward to life in a higher division next year, there’s no reason why Leader can’t expect to be playing at the next level soon enough. **Dale Kattack**

BELLOWHEAD Oxford Town Hall

They’ve come from all points of the compass tonight, not to bury Bellowhead but to celebrate a band who were not only five time winners of Best Live Act at the BBC Folk awards, but one of the best live bands of any genre in recent times. The eleven piece are ending their twelve year journey on the stage where it all began when, after some hurried rehearsals in an east Oxford scout hut, they played their first gig at the Oxford Folk Festival, and Tim Healey, who booked them then, is here to witness their final hurrah. Emerging from the depths of the Town Hall to a rapturous reception from a long-since sold-out crowd, Bellowhead open with ‘Amsterdam’, always a showcase for singer Jon Boden, tonight resplendent in a sparkling belt and later an equally dazzling waistcoat, changing the lyrics to “a singer who’s gone”; surely a reference to his decision last year to leave and which led to the band’s decision to disband. They follow with the catchy ‘Alabama Roll’, an early reminder of just how many of their tunes have killer hooks. Then it’s onto the near traditional folk of ‘Cold Blows the Wind’, about a corpse being stalked, with the stage bathed in eerie blue light; the jazzy ‘Fine Sally’, and onwards towards the strangeness of ‘Flight of the Folk Mutants’. Within the framework of joyous brass, percussion and multiple strings, John Spiers’ melodeon and Paul Sartin’s oboe, there’s still space for the duos and trios

which add an extra layer; band founders Spiers and Boden duetting in particular is an emotional moment, while in a nice touch, Oxford-based original member Giles Lewin comes onstage to be one of five fiddle players in a rousing ‘Haul Away’. With band members striking poses the show has a sense of theatre about it, and Boden and Spiers Morris dance their way through the much-loved ‘Slow Gin’ set before the band leave the stage for the first time with a boisterous version of the cautionary ‘New York Girls’ ringing in the crowd’s ears. Back they come for the another of their anthems, ‘London Town’, with the crowd joining in the actions, and a jubilant ‘Frogs’ Legs and Dragons’ Teeth’ announced as “what we always finish with.” Except every fan knows there’s one song not played yet and back they come again. “We’ve got one more song for you; it’s the first song we played on this stage and it’s going to be the last, announces Boden, and the singing of ‘Prickle-Eye Bush’’s chorus by the entire on this final night could not have been more heartfelt. As the band walk off together for the last time, they looked drained and emotional, particularly Spiers. Bringing up the rear, Sartin turns for a last look, acknowledging the cheering crowd with a nod of the head. To quote Boden, “not a wake but a victory lap,” and the end of twelve glorious years for folk and for live music. **Colin May**

CHAMELEONS VOX / BAWS INC O2 Academy

“I am in a stupid band,” sings Baws Inc singer Mac with his tongue doubtless only half in his cheek. For over 30 years the man best known as the promoter who put The Jericho Tavern and The Point on the world’s music map has crafted alternately careworn and sharply observant songs with one foot in punk and the other in quintessentially English self-deprecation. Baws Inc. are little different. Featuring assorted members and ex members of Medal, The Candyskins, The Anyways and Les Clochards, they sound good time while singing about it being as bad as it can be, while on new single ‘Dr Ink’, a rambunctious bluesy number that might be Carter USM out on the sauce, Mac sounds like he’s over-enunciating in sneery Lydon fashion while stifling a Cheshire Cat grin. “This one goes out to the hard of thinking,” he announces before the last number. We’re sure they can hum along happily. The rest of us can celebrate another indisputably smart band in town. Celebrations of a different sort for Chameleons Vox, who are bowing out with one last tour after some 35 years as the UK’s most enduring cult concern. Too heartfelt for post-punk, too poppy for the goth crowd and far too agitated and militant to follow U2 and Simple Minds to stadium glory, Mark Burgess’ Manchester road warriors have

been sustained by a fanatical few over the decades, including several influential radio DJs, but faced with an audience who only really want to hear the old songs again, a future as a never-ending nostalgia exhibition obviously doesn’t appeal to Burgess, who is the sole remaining member of the original line-up. Once more through those old classics then, and the opening rockabilly rumble of ‘Don’t Fall’ sets a familiar, welcoming scene. The queuing ‘Monkeyland’, with its undercurrent of surly menace, builds momentum, though often tonight’s set is oddly subdued, perhaps a reflection of its farewell nature, at least until the lysergic spangle of ‘Swamp Thing’ spreads its tentacles across the venue, a song that stands amongst the best that 80s alternative music had to offer. Tonight’s crowning glory, though, is a relatively rare outing for ‘Mad Jack’, an intense, anthemic clarion call for outsiders, musical or otherwise, and a likely final reminder of one the finest bands of the last few decades, one who never really found a place to fit in and so leave as unbowed mavericks who simply lit their own musical fire, one that continues to attract acolytes and will do for years to come. **Dale Kattack**

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TREETOP FLYERS / THE SHAPES / LES CLOCHARDS

The Bullingdon

Given their name and given the prominent presence of an accordion, one might expect a Gallic experience from Les Clochards to kick off proceedings at a nicely full Bullingdon, but it’s instead from all four corners of the British Isles – as well as Australia and the

US – that the mood emanates. With two songs in the set dealing with the paranormal, the band’s clever lyricism recalls The Go-Betweens at their most folk-tinged while the electrics are turned up for ‘Soap and Water’ and ‘Guilty as Charged’. The latter, an account of being sent to

prison for the forging of luncheon vouchers, cannot help but set the mind wondering.

If the openers are perhaps guilty of underusing their female vocalist, The Shapes are even more negligent in this respect; some truly lusty backing singing leaving one

wishing for a more starring role for the distaff section of the band. Nevertheless, with seven people on stage, it’s to entertain us that the group are devoted and if the impression is of a rollicking pub act, they have just enough savvy and just enough of the New Wave to elevate them above the kind of band that might feature as part of Oxford’s parallel music scene – the kind of shower that you’ll come across if you are ever unimaginative enough to set foot in O’Neill’s. The keyboardist is introduced as a fan of League 2 champions Northampton Town, presumably still reeling from any suggestion that the Cobblers are this year’s second best team in their division.

With both local bands receiving heroes’ applause, Treetop Flyers are a more polished, more studied presence from the off. We are immediately plunged into a world of tie dye shirts, dirty riffs, mind altering substances and swirling, kaleidoscopic colours. Singer Reid Morrison nods like an extra from ‘Celebration from Big Sur’ and it’s to Crosby, Stills and the Gang, Gram Parsons and the Flying Burrito Brothers that the debt is comprehensively owed. Such shameless pastiche is something they just about get away with – the songs are good and the professionalism enhanced – Joaquim Phoenix in *Inherent Vice* is not an influence on this showing.

Rob Langham

SLATE HEARTS / DEAD PHEASANTS / ROBERTO Y JUAN

The Wheatsheaf

Roberto y Juan; so that’ll be Robin Christensen-Marriott and Jonny Vickers from Neverlnd, then. Good offshoot: erudite musically, neo-prog fused with Lat-indie jazz-funk. Okay, it’s Santana as imagined by Postcard Records. It’s very much a work in progress but it’s blues groovetastic with more than a hint of promise.

Reviewers are having to work extra hard these days with all the genre fusions and cross pollinating going on. None more so than with Chippenham’s Dead Pheasants, a politically strident (both lyrically and vocally) mash-up of Dexy’s, dub and Two Tone, and, fair to say, left wing (does anyone beyond a few neo-nazi bands write right-wing political songs?). Ultimately, though, we just dance to everything they heap on us and not bother to wonder if Corbyn is the sex panther in the song ‘Sex Panther’. They also play a song called ‘Reining Bodies’, which they are at great pains to tell us is spelt R-E-I-N, to which I add question marks to my dancing.

They say music/fashion/culture has a 30 year cycle, so you better get on and die if you don’t want to get knocked off your Zimmer frame by the interest being shown in grunge by long-fringed tykes who weren’t even born the first

time round. Slate Hearts bring it on strong with the fabulous vocal twist of Marc Bolan fronting Scientists or Skin Yard. These boys are pumped and getting it just right, and live they crank it up more than their SoundCloud suggests. They even do a corking chunk of ‘21st Century Boy’ to flag up “*Yeah, we know what you’re thinking*”. Welcome back SubPop; we’ve missed you.

Paul Carrera

JEFFREY LEWIS & LOS BOLTS / ROZI PLAIN

The Wheatsheaf

No surprise to see the Sheaf sold out this Tuesday, as both acts richly deserve a full audience on a school night. Rozi Plain and her four-piece band make gentle, playful music that seems almost childishly simple at first listen, reinforced by her very 80s pair of dungarees, like a post-punk *Playaway*. Things take a more serious turn with a cover of Sun Ra’s ‘There Is No Sun’, benefitting from a lovely, stripped-down arrangement. Her constant guitar re-tuning reveals the complexity underlying the songs, some with echoes of Stereolab, which work their way inside your head in an entirely welcome manner.

New York’s Jeffrey Lewis has been releasing records, CDs and cassettes for nearly twenty years, with a side-line in producing comic books

owing no small debt to 70s counter-culture artists like Robert Crumb. This short tour promotes new Rough Trade album ‘Manhattan’, a charming set of little pieces circling around an ambivalent relationship with his hometown. Every song is so crammed full of words that everyone strains to not miss any, the overall result being a kind of Talking Indie, as in Talking Blues. While the voice naturally falters and cracks, this only adds to its effect and charm.

While his terrific album of Crass covers could be classed as antifolk, tonight’s show is a little more New York indie, never too far from the UK variety but always its own master. His version of The Velvet Underground’s ‘Heroin’, renamed ‘Internet’, is full of hilariously accurate comparisons between the two (“it’s my Wi-Fi and it’s my hi-fi”). ‘Support Tours’ is his story of a life on the road playing down the bill while looking forward to turning the tables in the future. But the highlight is ‘Scowling Crackhead Ian’, a tale about a neighbourhood figure he’s known since childhood, reflecting on their lives then and now: “You must have it so rough kid, well I wonder, forged by a tiny portion of love or fortune, goes lightning or goes thunder”. This is stuff worthy of John Donne, metaphysical poetry for the Spotify generation. Like a listen to one of his albums, tonight’s show is a complete experience, leaving us touched by real emotion and a complete lack of artifice. We need more like him.

Art Lagun

ROBOT SWANS / DITTE ELLY

Modern Art Oxford

The main support for tonight’s show is singer/songwriter Ditte Elly, who has been mostly absent from the local scene since releasing 2012’s ‘We’ll Meet Again’; she’s been studying up north. In that time she has gained the attentions of 6Music, Amazing Radio and opened for Newcastle natives Lanterns On The Lake.

Accompanied by loose percussion and soft backing vocals the star of the show is Elly’s voice. It would be impossible to avoid making comparison to Laura Marling but Ditte’s low register is more rooted in traditional folk styles, evoking the greats of the folk-rock revival, notably Sandy Denny.

Her voice flows like honey over the minimal guitar arrangements of her compositions. Like her folk forebears, she doesn’t stick to a simple verse-chorus-verse structure, highlighted wonderfully on the seven-minute ‘Right Out Of Time’, which evokes the freeform feeling of Ray Lamontagne and Josh T. Pearson’s arrangements. Ditte ends her set with a re-working of older song ‘Northumberland’, with pitch-shift effects and looping a capella parts in rounds until the layers become an abstract folk-drone.

Beautiful.

Tonight’s gig is the launch for Robot Swan’s debut album, and they set the bar pretty high. The further into their set we get, the more I run out of space in my notes for all the diverse influence the trio bring together. On first inspection, they’re a lo-fi slacker indie band, but the first clue this isn’t quite all there is to them is the DIY robotic glockenspiel they’ve built.

This highlights the very nature of Robot Swans: beautifully at odds with itself, scuzzy punk? Sure. Crystalline synths and electronic beats? Throw in some of that too. There’s post-rock sampling and droning countered with male/female vocals on top of a riff that sounds not too far from The Pixies; add in the wry humour and pop hooks of vintage Pulp and you’ve got an idea of the unique concoction Robot Swans have created.

Honestly, I think I could use up my whole word count trying to enumerate everything Robot Swans have brought into their sound, but simply put it’s pop music; clever 21st Century pop music made, by a trio of brilliant weirdos.

Matt Chapman Jones

NIGHT BEATS

The Bullingdon

“Rock and roll can never die, there’s more to the picture than meets the eye,” prophesied Neil Young in 1979, but with an increasing amount of crossover acts with multi-genre methodology, bands who embrace the purist rock and roll doctrine do appear to be dwindling. Often the only groups still making any headway in the category seem to be a parody of their idols, adding nothing and merely highlighting the ridiculous gimmicks of a genre that contains the good, the bad and the hideously disfigured. Night Beats, however, with their blues inflected, sleazy, unkempt riffage and sturdy, unrelenting rhythm section are a band who live by the same ideology of the early pioneers, and perhaps have the ability to keep things dynamic and animated.

Hailing from Seattle, the band are touring ‘Who Sold My Generation’, released earlier this year and incorporating perverted twelve bar blues narratives with refined, yet dissident guitar solos and punchy, simplistic bass hooks to create something familiar but also compelling. The guitar solo is something that in this day and age can seem a little reactionary but by using an octave pedal and fierce pitch

bends, there’s a pleasingly refreshing take on a savagely flogged horse. Sadly there’s a lack of showmanship which doesn’t allow a muted Monday night crowd to totally engage with the band, although the approving nod of heads suggest that with a little more coaxing from lead singer Lee Blackwell the ambience could have surpassed that of a poorly attended regional boggle tournament. The vocalist doesn’t, unfortunately, have the strength of voice or the haphazard antics to entice or enthrall but the musical camaraderie of the three piece is enough to keep the evening’s entertainment ticking over nicely, the band appearing polished and self assured throughout the hour long set. Their Bo Diddley cover, ‘Hey Mona’, is a nice, reflective touch and fits effortlessly into a wholesome and complete show which leaves a warm, fuzzy feeling that perhaps Neil Young was on to something.

You don’t always have to reinvent the wheel but rather tweak the design to produce something original and Night Beats have certainly created something relevant and distinguished in their pursuit of a rock and roll revival.

Richard Brabin

TIGER MENDOZA with DAVE GRIFFITHS

Fusion Arts

Having made what is likely to be one of the Oxford albums of the year in ‘Shadow’, there’s a tangible sense of anticipation for tonight’s launch gig, one accentuated by the appearance of former-Evenings main man Mark Wilden on drums, bolstering the beats considerably.

The chief surprise of tonight’s gig is how guitar-orientated it is compared to the record, with Ian De Quadros’ electronics somewhat buried in the mix, either by design or as a result of the venue’s acoustics that don’t really reward sonic intricacy.

Not that this is any kind of a problem as the opening track piledrives in in a motorik blast of metronomic drums, overdriven guitars and velocity rap samples, like some lost 90s treasure chest collision of Prolapse and JC-001. And they barely let up from here, ‘Careers For Girls’ in particular hypnotic and oppressive with something of a stadium supergroup sense of the epic about it.

There are passages where the trio seem to lose focus and start drifting perilously close to Explosions In The Sky territory, while ‘Colossal Fossil Flight’ shows that while he

might be an electronic music whizz, Ian really isn’t a great singer. But they rescue themselves before too much damage is done, Dave’s hysterical vocal performance clashing with the dystopian future factory industrial clang and some scouring ‘Animals’-era Floyd guitar noise at one point, the darkness of the music accentuated by a video of the Black Rabbit of Inle from *Watership Down* cavorting lysergically across the back wall for much of the set.

At their best when they’re belligerently psychedelic, urgent and sounding like they want to escape these four walls by sheer sonic force, this incarnation of Tiger Mendoza are closer to krautrock or even post-rock than we’ve known them and the gig feels like a re-imagining of ‘Shadow’ than a faithful recreation of it. With Mark apparently due to sell his kit and depart for London soon, it’s likely this will be the only time Tiger Mendoza takes such a form; perhaps they might find time to record an alternative noise-rock version of ‘Shadow’ before he goes.

Dale Kattack



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SINFICTION MOOGIEMEN & THE MASOCHISTS 7:45pm

Sunday 5th June – BURIED IN SMOKE

WHISKYDICK TREVORS HORN + CRIMSON TUSK 7:30pm

Tuesday 7th June – MD PROMOTIONS

13 BURNING 8pm/Free Entry

Friday 10th June

THE FELLOW MAN WE BLESS THIS MESS

OH LEE RECORDS FOLK COLLECTIVE 8pm

Saturday 11th June – SWISS CONCRETE

PETE ASTOR PUPPET MECHANIC + SIMON DAVIS 8pm

Wednesday 15th June – IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

STOLBY BROWN GLOVE + LAIMA BITE 7:45pm

Friday 17th June – IDIOT KING

KONE 8pm

Saturday 18th June – OXROX

NEW GENERATION SUPERSTARS

THE BLACK BULLETS + HELL'S GAZELLS + TRAUMA UK 7:45pm

Friday 24th June – IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

CHEROKEE + BEARD OF DESTINY + THE OTHER DRAMAS 7:45pm

Saturday 25th June – GTI

TANNERS POOL JULIET & THE RAGING ROMEOS

THE LOST ART 8pm

Wednesday 29th June – IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

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The Wheatsheaf 129 High Street, Oxford OX1 4DF / www.facebook.com/wheatsheaf.oxford

Dr SHOTOVER: File Under Urban

Ah there you are, Pykestaffe. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar. Pull up a laminated stool and get some brews in. Pykey, this is everyone. Everyone, Pykey. Last seen in your fashionable 1980s high-rise duplex, monging out in front of *Teletubbies* after rolling up a fat one. Or so we assumed when we came to visit. 'I say – that has a piquant hydroponic aroma' said Lord Chavvesworth as we stepped out of the lift in Trustafarian Towers, to be greeted by a cloud of pungent smoke. 'Primo-quality skunk' added Baron Crustington as we walked in through your ever-open front door. 'Eh-oh' said Tinky-Winky on the screen. In fact the smell of burning socks was just *that* – flaming foot-attire. You had turned the TV down, dropped some Ketamine and dozed off with your stockinged feet on the retro two-bar electric fire whilst listening to your CD of *20 Greatest Anarcho-Trance Chills, Volume 7*. You woke as we entered, leaped up with a howl of pain, and began to dance frantically round the room, sparks flying from your smouldering footwear, as the Flaming Lips remix of *Tubthumping* came on the stereo. The water had been cut off, so we dealt with the situation as best we could using a half-full bottle of Sunny Delight which was lying around. Oh, and old Chavvy and Crusty hadn't yet emptied their bladders after multiple ciders in the Dog & Trike... so their, um, *natural resources* came in handy too. Hmm, smells like you haven't changed your socks since, Pykes old chap. Excuse me if I move upwind of you along the bar. Still, you always were a bit of an Urban Leg-End. Cheers!

Next month: Banksy
Drew My Father



Pykey Pykestaffe and his dog Special K go for a walk round the Trustafarian Towers Estate

INTRODUCING.... CHEROKEE

Who are they?

Cherokee are a two-piece "punk'n'roll act", comprised of bassist and singer Jack Harley Bourne, and drummer Felix Bartlett. They formed a year ago "as a joke, with a desire to both avoid social media and a fixed name at the start." However, "as people found it as fun and enjoyable to watch as we find it to play we stuck to a name and caved in on both counts." The pair have been friends since childhood but always too busy with other musical projects to form a band together. "When both our previous acts came to an end at the same time we started to mess about, and we've been messing about ever since." After a string of rave reviews in *Nightshift*, they played The Oxford Punt last month. They claim The Wheatsheaf "has become our spiritual home."

What do they sound like?

Heads-down, no-nonsense rock-and-fucking-roll. It's loud and fast and phenomenally powerful, but not without plenty of guile as the duo constantly reveal an ear for strong melody and an ability to change tack throughout their full-on live sets. There's elements of hardcore, grunge and garage rock amid the timeless 70-inspired blues rock riffage and beats, not to say plenty of (often dubious and scatological) humour and fancy dress.

What inspires them?

"Monty Python; Keith Moon; Danny Morris telling us we're 'ruuubbish'; Joal Shearing's baby face; Osprey and the Mighty Redox clans' endless energy and enthusiasm for new bands, and most importantly Des Barkus for continuously encouraging us."

Career Highlight so far:

"Packing out the Gappy Tooth Industry's night, then having the stage invaded while everyone went nuts. It felt like one huge ball of energy and any concept of 'them and us' with the audience had disappeared."

And the lowlight:

"Waking up cold, wet and tired in a rainy festival field."

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Being that we're not allowed to pick all the great bands we have had the pleasure of playing with, Beard of Destiny: another two piece with great songs – check out 'Ted Ate Keith'."

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

"Led Zeppelin II'."

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

"The Wheatsheaf on the 24th of June. If testimonials and *Nightshift* are anything to go by expect 'beastly gods' and 'one of the most exciting live acts you will be likely to see'. Or, in our words, some loud, cathartic fun with songs about our favourite shade of brown."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"All the great acts and people whom support one and other in order to help Oxford music thrive. Least favourite: that ridiculous two piece called Cherokee, who are just too loud!"

You might love them if you love:

Led Zeppelin; Royal Blood; The Who; Dreng; Lightning Bolt; Derek & Clive.

Hear them here:

www.facebook.com/bandcherokee



ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

The very worst part of putting *Nightshift* together each month is having to report the passing of one of our city's music community. June 1996 saw one of our saddest ever losses as **Mathew Fletcher** died. Mathew, drummer with **Talulah Gosh** and **Heavenly**, was just 26 when he committed suicide after battling depression. A supremely intelligent and talented young chap, he'd formed Talulah Gosh with his sister Amelia when he was just 16 and was a well-known and much-loved character at gigs around town. His death came just days after Talulah Gosh saw their entire recorded catalogue released as an album, 'Backwash', on K Records, and he would never know just how revered they would become. The Talulah Gosh retrospective coincided with a new single this month from Heavenly, a split single with **Bis**. Heavenly's contribution, 'Trophy Girlfriend', would be the last song released by the band during Mathew's lifetime, with final album 'Operation Heavenly' released in October. Other releases this month included **The Candyskins**' 'Get On' and 'Mum Steals Boyfriend' by cult local heroes **The Bigger the God**, while **The Nubiles** put out new single 'I Wanna Be Your Kunte Kinte' and Oxford-related indie crew **Comet Gain** released 'Say Yes (To International Socialism)' – something they're doubtless still waiting on.

Among the highlights of the local gig calendar was a visit to Park End Street for pioneering house DJ **John Digweed**. Elsewhere **Mansun**,

Ozric Tentacles and **The Candyskins** were at **The Zodiac**, **Three Colours Red**, **Sidi Bou Said** and **The Frank & Walters** were at **The Point**, and local faves **Beaker** and **The Changelings** were up at the old **Oxford United Supporters Club** in Headington.

10 YEARS AGO

Following on from Talulah Gosh, another Oxford band who were retrospectively lauded as pioneers were doom-metallers **Sevenchurch**, who in June 2006 were featured in metal bible *Terrorizer*, their one and only album 'Bleak Insight' hailed as the third greatest doom album of all time, behind **Black Sabbath** and **Cathedral**. More immediate acclaim for local indie rockers **November** this month as they won the Oxford bands World Cup, beating **Nation** 2-0 in the final. 24 bands participated in the event organised by **Audioscope**, which raised money for homeless charity Shelter. Less appealing World Cup-related local music goings on in the form of **Loopy's** 'Come On, Come On (We're Not Coming Home)' single which was described as "a wretched mess that sounds like The Fimbles getting pissed and thinking they're Chumbawamba."

In other local release news **Lab 4** released their fourth studio album, 'None of Us Are Saints', on Resist Records this month, featuring remixes from Nightbreed and Slipknot's DJ Starscream, while **Young Knives** released 'She's Attracted To' on Transgressive.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

On the gig front **Echo & the Bunnymen**, kiwi singer **Bic Runga** and footie anthem writers **The Lightning Seeds** were all at **The Zodiac**, while Cocteau Twins guitarist **Robin Guthrie** played a solo show at **The Phoenix Picturehouse** – a show at which he first met **Mark Gardener**, the pair releasing their joint album, 'Universal Road', together last year.

5 YEARS AGO

Bit of a quiet one, June 2009, though new releases from **The Relationships** (third album 'Space'); **The Anydays** ('16 Days') and **My Friend Rachel** ('A Moments Silence') made sure it wasn't totally bereft of action. Similarly, local gigs from **2 Many DJs**, **Gary Numan**, **Example** and **Temper Trap** at the **O2 Academy**, bass legend **Doug Wimbush** at **The North Wall**, and **The Pains of Being Pure At Heart** at **The Jericho Tavern** made it a case of quality over quantity. This month's *Nightshift* saw **International Jetsetters** gracing the cover. The band fronted by **Mark Crozer**, and featuring ex-Ride man **Loz Colbert** on drums, were set to release their new single 'California', and while the band were to prove shortlived, Mark went on to enjoy some serious success in the States in 2012 with his band **The Rels**, when his song 'Broken Out In Love' was bought by WWE and used – under the title 'Live In Fear' – as the intro song for wrestler Bray Wyatt. He also went on to play guitar in **The Jesus & Mary Chain**, a position he occupies still.

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

We were, as tends to be traditional every other June when there's a major footie tournament on, going to do a Demo European Championship, which would have allowed us to use all those terrible football-related puns we've been saving up since the last World Cup in Brazil, forcing sporting metaphors into places where they really shouldn't go. But even a cursory pre-season listen through to this month's batch revealed it would be like hosting a tournament featuring one consistently decent-ish team – a musical incarnation of Portugal or The Czech Republic perhaps – and a load of other crap that might as well be Faroe Islands Reserves, or American Samoa Under-23s (look 'em up, fun footie fact fans). So we decided to just review them all as normal, guided by the frustration that there's only one Demo Dumper slot available.

GRANT BALDWIN

Anyone who's a regular reader of the demo pages will know Grant by now – former No Joy In Mudville singer who's been indulging his love for the stranger side of Scott Walker and assorted other esoteric gothic noises for a fair few years now, with consistently pleasing results. This new offering feels like a slight detour from what we've come to expect, a far more understated set of songs that owes more to Peter Hammill's post-Van der Graaf Generator solo material, particularly demo highlight 'The Jade Collector', with its tender, spacious layout and a vaguely medieval vibe. The acoustic-prog-meets-operatic-aria feel spreads to 'Avenues', which sounds like Grant's drifting in, along and out again in a particularly heavy Temazepam haze. It's all rather elegant, and Grant remains a very individual vocal talent locally. It does, at times, all sound a bit too serious and portentous though. Come on old chap, it's only music – it's not football or anything so damn important.

ALL IS WORTH

The punningly-named musical alter ego of Nathan Allsworth, a chap who's been around the local scene for a good while now, notably in promising electro-funk crew Grudle Bay a few years back, All Is Worth finds Nathan going it alone if not acoustic on this one-song demo, titled 'NYC'. Backed by sparse electronic beats and shimmering acoustic guitar he's lost in a fluffy, floaty mist of

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

poetic reverie, with just the odd gallon or two of multi-tracked, echoey vocal stuff going on, which does tend to evoke visions of Mulligan and O'Hare rather more than is probably intentional. Lyrically too it all sounds like it's meant to be very serious while not really saying much. Printing the lyrics doesn't help the cause either since reading the lines, "I believe / That the small people's victory / Is a big deal in history / Ooh," makes us think of the Hillsborough victims' justice campaign, and then immediately after, Frankie Howerd.

TRAUMA

Formed in 1995, Witney punks Trauma previously supported punk legends UK Subs and caused an electrical blackout in their hometown during a gig, before one of them went off to join the army. They reformed in 2014 and played with Twisted State of Mind before one of them (the same one, we think) left to work on an oil rig. And yet, like the Black Knight in *Monty Python's Holy Grail*, they keep on fighting even as bits of them are lopped off. Admirable dedication to the punk rock cause we'd say even if this one-song demo sounds like all that blood loss has left them a bit knackered. The guitars chug out what could be a basic football chant while the singer aims for Jimmy Pursey rabble-rousing and Lydon-esque bite by way of some gruff huff and puff, and it all sounds like some early-80s Oi! band playing at half speed, now too stiff of limb to catch the puny new romantic kids it once dished out regular kickings to. Best have a nice sit down on this park bench and neck a couple of cans of Scrumpy Jack.

YUUSA MUUSA

Not as fighting fit as they might once have been, Trauma could probably still administer a decent beating to this lot with both arms tied behind their back. We're not averse to a bit of wafty dream-pop here at *Nightshift*, really we're not, but if this is a dream it's the one where you're trying to get somewhere in a hurry but your feet just won't move and everything's going in horribly slow motion and you can't breathe properly. Then again, that all suggests a modicum of drama – something that is staggeringly absent from this relentlessly beige ambient clamour of twinkles and fluffles and coos and general airy-fairy inconsequentiality. Four songs of lifeless drifting and general wooziness that makes Slowdive sound like Napalm Death in the up and at 'em stakes. Fifteen minutes in and that bit in the dream about not being able to breathe seems positively appealing, so we stick a plastic bag over our head and staple it closed. Ah, soft, succulent, airless death... Mother, I think I can hear angels singing...

CHALK

Fear not dear reader, *Nightshift* hasn't topped itself. While retaining an agnostic outlook on life and its afterwards bit, we do worry that at some point all our sins will be counted and we'll be condemned to an eternity in Hell by a less than benign deity who actually likes a bit of ambient jazz funk, thank you very much. And we'll be forced to listen to music like this on an eternal loop and if we scream for mercy some sulphurous demon will just crank the volume up another notch. C'mon – Chalk – what kind of non-descript pantywaist name for a band is that anyway? Chalk is soft, old-fashioned and tends to wash away in a slight drizzle. At least you could stab some fucker in the neck with a fountain pen, like Joe Pesci in *Casino*. Chalk's just dull and reminds us of musty classrooms and teachers with tweed jackets with leather patches on the elbows. Chalks is... hey, are we avoiding talking about the actual music well enough? Music that goes wuff, fluff, wuffy fluffy wuffity nuff nuff for about eighteen hours before collapsing into an insipid puddle of its own making, its feeble little limbs incapable of lifting itself up and so it drowns slowly while complaining pathetically about... heck, we don't know. Or care. We're too busy trying to ram this fountain pen far enough up our nose to make our brain stop working so we never ever have to listen to Chalk ever again, the simpering heap of aural insignificance.

JAMES GEORGE

Oh thank (insert name of favoured deity/prophet here) for that – a bit of life at last. James George here at least seems to realise a song might need a purpose and a melody and possibly shouldn't reflect the idea of a universe sliding inexorably towards a state of entropy. So we get some siren-sounding synth pop that reminds us a bit of The Killers, tumbling drums and some doomy, proggy guitar and James himself muttering darkly "I want to make you mine" over and over again, which, given the general backstreet rough house atmosphere of the song, suggest this ain't a pretty love song. We're outta here, but we're taking a small satchel of hope with us. That and a litre bottle of vodka that we swiped from the optics. We're going to need it for these next two demos.

ALSKR

Musicians today are so bloody idle they have simply given up using proper words for band names, so we've ended up with The Weeknd, Neverlnd and AXLNDR. Speak properly and pick your feet up when you walk, wretches! At least with those acts you can work out what the real word is supposed to be, but Alskr? And no, don't say Alaska, because what's that superfluous R doing? Who needs superfluous R's when

the music is such a load of arse in the first place (did you see what we did there? Did you? Did you see?). Sorry, sorry. Trying to distract ourselves from having to say anything about the music again. Because what's to say about something so lifeless, so bereft of excitement, imagination or soul it might as well have seeped out of an ad agency executive's lunchbox after one too many meetings about decaffeinated bio yoghurt. "I won't stay silent, ugh, ugh, ugh," grunts some autotuned petri-dish-grown r'n'b droid over sterile club beats and synth washes that might as well have been scraped out of Years & Years' nappy. Because that's how Years & Years' music comes into this world. They shit it out after eating nothing but decaffeinated bio yoghurts for months on end. And Alskr have lapped it up like it's a new flavour of Ben & Jerry's. Can't write proper words; can't write proper songs. What fucking use are you to anyone?

THE DEMO DUMPER

PLASTIC BARRICADES

"Romantic and honest, gloomy and curious, melodic and melancholic, Plastic Barricades chronicle life in the troubled yet fascinating 21st century with painstaking sincerity, asking questions and trying to find the answers. Inspired and influenced by almighty Radiohead, Oasis, Coldplay, Muse, Keane, Razorlight and many others, the trio loves to experiment with styles, sound and approach." This, dear reader, is our first exposure to the world and mindset of Plastic Barricades. And yours too now, so wipe the tears from your eyes and the coffee you just snorted out of your nose from your shirt and ponder the romance and honesty and gloominess, melodic melancholy and painstaking sincerity of a trio of young men who are trying to find – yes – answers. In this troubled century. Bunch of poncy fucking wankers. But hey, at least they're searching for the truth while the rest of us slouch complacently on the sofa necking vodka by the pint, and what better way to get to the heart of life's puzzle than by sounding like the lily-livered, keening kid brothers of 80s plastic pop sensations Curiosity Killed The Cat? And kids, if that reference is too far in the dim and distant pre-history of pop as you know it, simply imagine the queasy joy of drinking a pint of semi-skimmed milk that's been sat in the sun for a week. That's pretty much what listening to Plastic Barricades is like. Hey, guys, take your painstaking sincerity and ram it up your sorry backsides before we think of new and exciting ways of using this pen as a torture implement.

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.

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 + echopraxis + Kanadia
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 + Grub

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Wed 29th Jun • £10 adv
Will and The People

Sun 10th Jul • £20 adv • 6pm
KRS-One

Fri 15th Jul • £10 adv
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Sat 16th Jul • £10 adv • 6.30pm
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Hawklords

Wed 26th Oct • £18 adv • 6.30pm
Steve Mason

Fri 28th Oct • £20 adv • 6pm
The Christians

Fri 28th Oct • £10 adv • 6.30pm
Gentleman's Dub Club

Fri 18th Nov • £8 adv • 6.30pm
Little Red

Sat 19th Nov • £11 adv • 6pm
Definitely Mightbe (Oasis Tribute)

Sat 19th Nov • £8 adv • 6.30pm
Saedly Dorus And The Hoolie Band

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