

## 4/Jun/2003 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

As I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, you can see one of Luton's favourite bands - **Bowfinger** - upstairs at Sadlers in Luton on Friday (June 6). They tell me that the first 100 people through the door will get a free Bowfinger CD produced ONLY for this gig. Apparently when they did the same thing with a special Christmas song it ended up being played on XFM and Pulse FM radio. Support will be from **The Occasion**, **Reverie** and **Steve Tebbutt**. The **Occasion** features **Andy Sizmur** and **Andy Paris** who used to front Too Far Gone. They have just finished recording a new demo which will also be available on the night. Also, it seems that **Reverie** have been courting interest from a major indie label and a well known London management company, so catch them at a rare local gig while you can! The doors open at 8:30, and fans should make sure that they get there early as all Bowfinger's Sadlers' gigs so far have sold out. For more information visit [www.bowfinger.net](http://www.bowfinger.net).

Or if you want to hear something a little different, then don't forget that **enQ** will be playing a charity gig down at Harpenden on Friday (June 6). The music has been described as "... a high energy vortex which combines elements of Celtic, folk, rock, and hauntingly fugue like melodies that are universal and transcendent in their emotional impact." by Joel Siegfried of SB Talent Associates (San Diego, U.S.A.). So to bop to an exciting fusion of rock, roots and pop, call 01582-623199 or 01582-766942 to get tickets. All profits go to Age Concern and Stairways. Check out [www.enq.org.uk](http://www.enq.org.uk) for more details. The band will also have copies of their critically acclaimed new CD - 'Tear Down the Barriers' - on sale.

Tomorrow night (Thursday) singer/songwriter **Kieran Halpin** is appearing down at the Hollybush Public House in Redbourn. Since 1979 Kieran has released fourteen albums as well as having many of his songs covered by other artists including Dolores Keane, the Battlefield Band and Vin Garbutt to mention but three. In fact, his songs are performed in clubs, pubs and concert halls throughout the world and while his albums always go down well, it is live on stage that Kieran makes his mark. Powerful, passionate, intimate and intense, he has managed to marry his intelligent and sometimes thought provoking lyrics with great melodies and his trademark acoustic guitar sound, underscored by an incisive wit and humour in his introductions. Tickets cost £5 and are available from 01582-452954 or from the Hollybush Public House, Church End, Redbourn on the night. The music starts at 8:30 and you can get more details from 01582-452954, 07850-163241 or by contacting The Hollybush on 01582 792423.

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## 11/Jun/2003 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### Graham Robins gets back to his Roots

I had a chat to singer/songwriter **Graham Robins** last week and he tells me that after a few health problems that curtailed his live performances he's back on the gig trail. He has now tied up with multi-instrumentalist **Peter Grove** to produce a mix of soul, blues, country and gospel tunes along with some cleverly reworked standards. Graham tells me that the new set is going down extremely well, but he's not stopping at that. He has set-up a new organisation called 'The Modest Music Group' which will be promoting regular showcases featuring singer/songwriters in a friendly acoustic format. The idea behind the showcases is that whilst the majority of music venues are putting on covers bands and Karaoke backing tape bandits there is not much scope locally for good new music.

The first of these regular showcases will be at the Luton Postal Club, Dunstable Road, Luton on Sunday June 29 at 8.00 p.m. The line-up will include Luton based storey teller **Luke Monaghan**, singer/songwriter **Joanne Keegan** from Ireland and **Graham** and **Peter**. The Modest Music Group would like to hear from artists and bands that work in an acoustic and roots music format and that want to promote 'Quality Live Music in the area and perform at the venue. For more details about the showcase call 07773-263918 or e-mail [Themodestmusicgroup@hotmail.com](mailto:Themodestmusicgroup@hotmail.com).

On Friday (June 13) local indie-rock band **Diskordian** will be playing down at the Cork and Bull in Cumberland St, Luton (01582-729586). They will be promoting their most recent self produced album - Tin Soldier - and generally celebrating the fact that from this summer they will be based back in Luton permanently. I had a quick listen to the CD and it's pretty cool with a good range of influences and dynamic throughout the twelve songs, it reminds me somewhat of the west coast sound produced by bands such as 'Country Joe and the Fish' and 'Jefferson Airship'. For more you can check out their website at [www.diskordian.co.uk](http://www.diskordian.co.uk).

Next Monday (June 16) the live music petition will be presented to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing St. The online petition, which now has over 83,000 signatures, basically asked the government to take small scale live music out of the licensing regime - just like big screen TV and satellite sports - to encourage the live music scene. The presentation is being organised by the Musicians' Union, who will be joined by MPs and Peers, the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and the Association of British Jazz Musicians, in the presentation group. If you want to add your support go to the online petition at [www.musiclovers.ukart.com](http://www.musiclovers.ukart.com).

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## 18/Jun/2003 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

I saw **HumDrum** - a percussion and fiddle trio - as part of the Stony Live! Festival up in Stony Stratford last week. The ensemble features well known local drummer **Chris Puleston** along with **Donna Whitlock** on percussion and **Saskia Tomkins** on violin, viola and 'cello. The percussion set-up is absolutely fantastic and filled up most the room with esoteric ethnic percussion such as Tabla, congas, talking drums, djembe, derebuka, bodhran, claves, tambourine, Tibetan bells, cowbells, kit drums, cymbals, washboard, shakers, and a triangle! As well as these 'standard' instruments they also play guttering, soil and waste pipes (really!), plant pots and Didjerydu. The music is full of dynamics, passion, humour and a fair amount of athletics and theatrics as they sprint around the congas. The melodic improvisations of Saskia Tomkins add another level of complexity to the mix as she provides atmospherics, free improvisations, eastern sounding melodies or even the odd Irish jig to the mix. You must see them if you get the chance. They also have an EP - "Ignition" - recorded by top local producer Justin Saban. For more information email [humdrum@justinsaban.co.uk](mailto:humdrum@justinsaban.co.uk) or check out Justin's website at [www.justinsaban.co.uk](http://www.justinsaban.co.uk).

Closer to home, Kindred Productions in conjunction with Longlights has started up with a regular series of gigs featuring local 'originals' bands at the Winston Churchill in Church Street, Dunstable. The series kicked off last Saturday **Pinto** and **Common Mortal Man** taking the stage. The next gig is on Saturday (June 21) when **The Imperial Vipers**, **Echelon Blue** and **Otis** followed by **The Dead On Holiday**, **Audio Justice** and **Stickerphase** a fortnight later (July 5). For more information contact Phill Doyle at Kindred at [kindred.productions@ntlworld.com](mailto:kindred.productions@ntlworld.com).

Monday saw the presentation of the Live Music Petition to Downing Street, consisting of 86,393 'electronic signatures' and 26,380 signatures on paper. This gives a total of 110,077 signatures showing the depth of support for live music as well as the depth of distrust in the government's assurances that the guidelines that will go with the bill - as yet unpublished - will stop overzealous councils from enforcing the letter of the new laws. To give you a sense of scale of the support, the 'Stop the War' petition on had 15,000 signatures. Let's hope the petition will attract the attention of the legislators, otherwise we will see a further contraction in the places where you can hear live music in England and Wales.

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## 25/Jun/2003 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### Join the Strawb Union

You'll get a rare chance to see the acoustic version of the **Strawbs** at The Sun Hotel, Hitchin on Sunday (June 29) when they appear at the Hitchin Folk Club. The club, which is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> year, close down for the Summer festival season and are finishing the season in style with **The Acoustic Strawbs** which features founder member **Dave Cousins** along with **Dave Lambert** and **Brian Willoughby**. The original band is probably best known for their massive hit in 1973 with 'Part of the Union' a thinly disguised reworking of a Woody Guthry song, which can still be heard today - recently being used for a TV advert. Dave Cousins is essentially the Strawbs (and visa versa) and over the years has seen such household names as Rick Wakeman, Sandy Denny and Blue Weaver pass through the band.

Dave Lambert also has a long history with the band being featured in the line-up during the 1970's but only became involved in the acoustic line-up when he stepped in at short notice to help out when the other Dave wrecked his wrist just before duo gig in late 2000. However the trio was such a success that they decided to keep it going and The Acoustic Strawbs was born. The third member of the trio, Brian, started on guitar in his native Northern Ireland at the age of 14. Later he crossed over to the UK, ending up in West London where he worked in the folk scene and was briefly a member of the original Strawbs just before the band broke up in 1980. After that he worked as a session player, working with the Monty Python team amongst others. He was even an extra in Terry Gillian's classic film The Time Bandits. This should be a popular gig so to guarantee getting in tickets call 01462 812391 or email [goodmusic@onetel.net.uk](mailto:goodmusic@onetel.net.uk) (members £10, non-members £12).

**Reverie** would like to thank all those who came to the gig a Sadlers recently, we've never seen the place so packed, especially as it put on at such short notice. The band say that have finally finished their E.P. which be released by Latent Lemon Records (price £3). The track listing is: Be Myself, Now That I'm, Hold On and Guide Dog. For more information email [info@reverietheband.co.uk](mailto:info@reverietheband.co.uk) or see the website - [www.reverietheband.co.uk](http://www.reverietheband.co.uk).

#### Local Gigs . . .

Friday (June 27)

- **Kane, Common Mortal Man, Dilate** at the Cork & Bull in Cumberland St, Luton, 01582-72958

Saturday (June 28)

- Original Rock n Roll from **Surefire** The Well, Hightown Rd, Luton.
- Ceilidh/Barn Dance with **MoonDance** with caller **John Warren** Stoke Hammond Centre, Bragenham Side. Tickets: £6 (£3.50 conc) available from David Webber on 01525-270409.
- Togfest an all day, all music festival at Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes featuring local bands including Luton's own **Devlin**. See [www.togfest.org](http://www.togfest.org) details.
- **Bowfinger** at Eddies Bar, Luton. See [www.bowfinger.net](http://www.bowfinger.net).

Sunday (June 29)

- **The Acoustic Strawbs** at the Sun Hotel, Hitchin, 01462-436411.

Tuesday (July 1)

- **Reverie**, The Horn, St. Albans

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Send Press Releases, gossip, gig and band information to "The Brian Heywood Column", PO Box 649, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 4XD or to [info@lutonscene.com](mailto:info@lutonscene.com). A search-able archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>.

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