

7/Jan/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

The 2004 season of the Dunstable Tyre Kickers' series of ceilidhs kicks off on Friday (January 9) with a welcome return visit by caller **Fee Lock** and the electric sound of **MoonDance** - who last played locally at the Dunstable Folk Festival in September. A ceilidh (pronounced 'kay-lee') is a kind of supercharged celtic barn dance - in fact the word simply means 'party' - so a good time is guaranteed for all. The dances are organised by a bunch of local bands who have got together to promote a regular series of public ceilidhs to help fill the local dance vacuum and give local e-ceilidh bands a platform to reach a wider audience. Tickets cost £6, £3 concessions and under 12's are free if accompanied by an adult - available from Octave Music in High Street North (Dunstable) or on the door. The dances take place on the second Friday in each month at St Mary's Church Social Club in West Street, Dunstable so be sure to mark it your diary. Future fixtures will feature **ODE** and **Pete North** (February 13) and **Nelsons Arm Band** with **Chris Jewell** (March 12). For more information call 01582-862643/475655, email tkc@roots66.net or check out the website at www.roots66.net/tkc

Last week I did a rundown of the more established local bands and over the coming weeks I'll be covering some of those who either surfaced in 2003 or became more active. If you want your band - or your favourite band - then send me details at bands@lutonscene.com. Just remember P T Barnum's immortal words "without publicity a terrible thing happens . . . nothing!"

Echelon Blue This young Luton based band produces a highly dynamic metal sound with influences as diverse as Beastie Boys, Black Sabbath and Michael Jackson. Their first album "Ruined my life" is now complete.

Web: www.starlightpromotions.co.uk/bands/indie

My Pet Junkie A north Hertfordshire band who are very active on the local scene. With influences ranging from The Smashing Pumpkins to King Crimson, they formed in mid-2000 when they released their first self-funded. Their line-up is Stuart O'Connor (lead vocals/guitar), Leon Camfield (drums/vocals) and Julia Bell (bass/vocals) and have just released a new single.

Web: www.mypetjunkie.theredsky.com

Long Shore Drift Formed by ex-Queensbury Upper School students. The band describe their music as indie rock with a funky twist.

The Occasion Rose from the ashes of Too|FarGone and features **Andy Sizmur** and **Andy Paris** .

Dilate Luton based metal band who's diverse metal sound is building them a strong following. Compared with the Deftones, Incubus and Stained.

Rush Hour Had line-up changes at the beginning of the year and have been rather quiet of late. Their web site no longer works so they may have stopped gigging.

Web: www.rushhour.org.uk

Pale Marble Movie AKA Chris and Alice making melodic original acoustic pop.

14/Jan/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Luton based band **The Tempest** sent me a copy of their new demo which was produced in their new recording studio in Dunstable. The six songs have a wide ranging dynamic from a gentle acoustic number to a harder edged rock sound with a fine pop sensibility. Pat's lead vocals have developed a real character that gives the band a real 'signature' sound that allow them to stand out from the crowd. The band have recently added Tony Pope to their management team who used to manage Frankie Goes to Hollywood who is involved in plans to launch the band nationally and in the US, with a mini-tour starting in New York in the pipe-line. Currently the band's producer Dave Dix - who has produced Alison Moyet, Black, BB Mack and Eddie Reader - is putting the finishing touches on the band's first album which should be out at the end of February. You can see The Tempest at The Well in High Town on Friday (Jan 16), the band hits the stage about 9pm. Also, anyone interested in using the Tempest Studio should contact Rob on 07956-812831.

On the national scene, the live music debate rages on with concern over the continuing existence of a viable live music scene finally reaching the corridors of power in Westminster. New culture minister Estelle Morris has come up with a scheme for a task force to safeguard the future of live music in England and Wales. This new talking shop will be led by ex-Undertones front man Feargal Sharkey and will initially try and determine what the current state of the scene actually is in terms of audience and types of music. While the initiative is welcome you wonder whether a minister who is a self confessed failure in her previous post and an ageing pop star who hasn't had a success either inside or outside the music industry since the late-80's. In fact Mr Sharkey has just completed a five year stint at the Radio Authority - which is renowned for not enforcing the legal rules requiring local Radio stations to include local music content in their programme output. Like, when was the last time you heard any local music on Chiltern Radio or BBC 3 Counties for that matter.

I will continue with my run-down of local bands over the next few weeks. If you want your band - or your favourite band - then send me details at bands@lutonscene.com. Just remember P T Barnum's immortal words "without publicity a terrible thing happens . . . nothing!".

21/Jan/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Pete Morton, who is an incredible English singer/songwriter and dynamic interpreter of traditional song is appearing down at the Redbourn Folk Club next Thursday (Jan 29). I first saw Pete perform when we were both showcasing at the NAFA Conference in Nashville last year and I was knocked out by the power of his performance, both of traditional material and his own songs. He has that rare and wonderful skill of mixing intense commitment - to his songs, to his tradition, to his society - with a light, friendly, sometimes humorous touch that can keep an audience engaged the whole night. Pete sings from the heart, delivering songs that tell compelling stories and speak of the human condition from a very original perspective. For instance his song 'Two Brothers' is his own very individual take on the Arab/Israeli situation which - apart from being a great song - is just plain good sense.

Pete Morton burst onto the British folk scene almost 20 years ago in a blaze of outstanding reviews; fROOTS Magazine described his first album as - "quite simply the best debut album by a singer/songwriter out of the British folk scene". Pete is no stranger to the world of recording either with no less than seven solo albums as well as two with Roger Wilson and Simon Edwards as 'Urban Folk', and a duo album with Jo Freya. In fact his original song album, 'Hunting the Heart', was a MOJO folk album of the year, which shows that his talents are impinging on the wider world of music. Pete will be performing at The Cricketers in Redbourn and tickets and further details are available from 01582-452954 or 07850-163241.

Continuing with my run-down of local bands here's another one;

Common Ground - Play mainly original material from Soul with catchy lyrics and strong melodies. The style ranges from smooth grooves to hard hitting and tight funk influenced by 70's and 80's disco and soulfunk, 90's R&B right up to the present day. A 'must see' live soul/funk band.

If you want your band - or your favourite band for that matter - to appear in the list then send me details at bands@lutonscene.com.

It seems that I was a bit hard on Chiltern Radio last week. Since then I've spoken to programme controller Stuart Davis and he tells me that he will consider local music for airplay. In fact he already has Luton singer/songwriter **Mark Joseph** on the schedule. Obviously he has to choose music that fits in with the station's target audience and is up to the required technical standards, but bands can send their CDs to him at: The Music Department, 97.6 Chiltern FM, Chiltern Road, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1HQ.

28/Jan/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Tomorrow night (Thursday) funky hard rocksters - or perhaps rocky hard funksters - **Stonegrass** are playing down at the Well in Hightown, Luton. Guitarist James tells me that they are trying to get some more exposure and capitalise on some pretty exciting feedback from a number of publications, labels and venues from last year's gigs - including notable performances on Oxford Street, London and even Knebworth Park. He goes on to say that the band are launching themselves into 2004 on the back of their recent release of their second EP "Rewrite the Words" which is getting a lot of great feedback and are due to be performing on the Radio 1 / NME backed "Transit Tour" in February and March. For more information check out www.stonegrass.com or just get down to The Well tomorrow night.

Andy Gotch emailed me recently to tell me about the **Andy Gotch Band**. The whole thing kicked off when he placed an advert in local newspapers which attracted numerous musicians and singers who wanted to join the 'Man with Fender Bass' and from these a final five piece group of musicians was selected. Then came some 6 months of hard practise ensued at the Stockwood Park Golf Club rooms which brought the band to a fine pitch and ready to gig. Initial gigs were at the at the Three Blackbirds in Flamstead before widening out to venue around the home including Bletchley, Stevenage, Amersham and of course Luton. The line-up of the band is; Andy Carroll on drums (Caddington), Cliff Lath on vocals (Luton), Mike Gardiner on rhythm and lead guitar (Flitwick), Alex McAllister on lead guitar and keyboards (Flitwick) and the eponymous Andy Gotch on bass guitar (Caddington). Andy tells me that the wide experience of the band members allows them to produce live cover music from the sixties to the nineties which goes down well at Golf Clubs and WM Clubs.

However, the band aren't just sitting down and waiting for the phone to ring., they have started to promote gigs at the Broomhills Club in Markyate. The gigs are called 'Fun in the Forest' and the band are planning exciting live sets which will be linked by recording sessions. The monthly AGB live session is planned for every first Friday of each month commencing next Friday (February 6) with February's session featuring singer Stacey-Marie who will also be joining the band on a more regular basis for the larger gigs. Entry to the club is £5 with ladies free entry before 9pm and hot snacks included - though be aware that the Club's policy is strictly for the over 30's for entry. The Broomhills Club is based near Markyate just off the A5. For more information you can e-mail AndrewGotch@aol.com or phone Andy on 07785-262942.

Send gig information to "The Brian Heywood Column", PO Box 649, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 or info@lutonscene.com. A search-able archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>

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