

## 2/Jun/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Come on England*

As Euro-2004 football mania grips the country you may well hear a familiar tune with a new set of words blasting out of your radio. The song is based on the Dexy's Midnight Runners' hit "Come on Eileen" and the new lyric was written by **Steve Fox** who has strong family ties with the band, being the nephew of the late John Bottrill, Dexys' original drummer. Anyway, Steve approached Barry Ratcliffe who is the powerhouse behind the British Underground Rock Bands organisation (BURBs) who pulled together a super-group of BURBs members to form a band to record the song - "Come on England". As well as being a tribute to the England footie team, it's a tribute to the original classic song. What's more the track is played by a living, breathing live band made up of musicians picked from the current pool of talent in the UKs' independent music scene. The band is called '4-4-2' and are an eight of them; **Mark 'madfiddler' Knight** (Tricks Upon Travellers) on violin, **Neil Murray** covering lead vocals & guitar with **Milly** on percussion, **Nick** on keys and **Dan** on bass (The Hamptons), **Jimi** doing the drums (Double Zero), **Phil Doleman** on banjo and **Lucy Wills** on brass and vocals (Archstanton). For more background about the song and the musicians surf to [www.burbs.co.uk/4-4-2.html](http://www.burbs.co.uk/4-4-2.html).

A little closer to home, 13 Promotions are presenting **The Open** at the Well in Hightown (Luton) on Saturday (Jun 5). The band is a five piece outfit from way up north who've been likened to early U2 with songs in the mould of The Verve, Coldplay and Echo & The Bunnymen. They seem to be on the way to greater things with The Daily Star voting their debut release "Never Enough" as single of the week and The Fly asking "Is this Britain's best new band?". You can get a preview of their sound on the website [theopenmusic.com](http://theopenmusic.com). Local band **Surefire** ([www.surefireuk.com](http://www.surefireuk.com)) are support on the night. Entry is £4, 7:30pm to 1am with no entry after 11pm.

Dunstable based singer / songwriter **Lauren Field** - who you may see performing her new single 'Wicked Game' at the Luton Carnival on Sunday or heard being interviewed on Chiltern FM - and her band are performing at a charity gig at The Bloomsbury Theatre in London's West End on Sunday week (June 13). Other artists joining her on the bill include her long-time co-writing partner Randy Bachman (Guess Who/Bachman Turner Overdrive), Graham Gouldman (10cc) and Dennis Locorriere (Dr Hook). The concert, which will feature classic hits and new songs, is being put on in aid of The Teenage Cancer Trust and tickets are available from the Bloomsbury Theatre Box Office on: 020 7388 8822.

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## 9/Jun/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Folk like us*

Two of the acoustic music scene's most powerful songwriters are in the area this week. Tomorrow night (Thursday) **Jez Lowe** is playing down the road at the Cricketers in Redbourn (just off the common). Normally based up north and just back from a world tour, Jez is a powerful singer and a consummate performer of his own material with songs like 'Back In Durham Gaol', 'The Bergen', 'Black Diamond' and 'These Coal Town Days'. His songs have also been covered by scores of artists world-wide by artists such as Fairport Convention, The Dubliners, The Tannahill Weavers and other artists from as far away as Australia, Canada, and the U.S. His songs have even been taught in school classrooms, not only in here in the UK, but in Canada and the U.S. as well. Tickets cost £6.00 and are available from 01582 452954 or 07850 163241 or you can check out the website at [www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk](http://www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk)

If that wasn't enough on Friday (June 11), **Harvey Andrews** is playing just over the border at the St Albans Folk Club in the Duke of Marlborough (110 Holywell Hill, St Albans). Harvey is originally from up the road in Birmingham and since his first gig in October, 1964, has been using his native wit and clear insight to lay bare the English soul. Over the years he has played all over the UK and the world, appeared on radio and TV and recorded no less than twelve albums - most of which are still available from his website ([www.harveyandrews.com](http://www.harveyandrews.com)). His songs have been covered by the likes of Christy Moore, Mary Hopkins, Ian Machintosh, Max Boyce and even been used as course work for the GCSE English exam. The newspapers don't stint their praise of Harvey with New Musical Express accusing him of "sheer talent". Why this man is not more famous is a mystery, his songs have the ability to strike right at the core of the matter, with perception and humour. For more information and tickets call 07774 909067.

Also on Friday, 13 Promotions are presenting the female fronted **The Barbs** at The Well, 5 High Town Road, Luton. The band has been described as "Pure rock 'n roll" and have even supported The Darkness and the support for the night are local rockers **The Scales**. You can find out more information about the bands from their respective websites - [www.thebarbs.co.uk](http://www.thebarbs.co.uk) and [www.thescales.tk](http://www.thescales.tk) - entrance £4.

On Saturday (June 12) The Thirst Club at Esquires (Greyfriars, Bedford) feature the award winning Luton band **Echelon Blue** at their "Bedford Metal". Other bands on the night are Bedford bands **Cerberus**, **Delicate Children** and **Ape Thread**. Doors open at 8pm and entrance is £5. See [www.bedfordmetal.tk](http://www.bedfordmetal.tk) for more details.

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## 16/Jun/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### If use the Viper

It was good to see the Dunstable based band **Imperial Vipers** get a front page spread about their mega concert opportunity at Euro-Disney last week. Since then they've returned to Paris to play at the Disney Village X Games Exhibition. It must have been an impressive sight as while they were playing, there were riders doing tricks and stunts on Skate Boards, BMXs & Roller blades with a big screen behind the band alternating between footage of the Vipers performing and the riders - whole thing was filmed by ESPN (Extreme Sports Network). According to the band "It was awesome and we went down a storm with the French audience. A big 'Merci' to our new French fans and for the messages of support. We'll be back as soon as possible." If you want see the Vipers over here then check out their website at [www.imperialvipers.com](http://www.imperialvipers.com).

In last week's article, the Vipers' manager - Callum Rice - struck out at the UK music industry short term 'Pop Idol' approach to new music. Indeed, if the Beatles, Rolling Stones or David Bowie had started their careers during the last decade then they would have been back to stacking supermarket shelves by now. This is, no doubt, why the British music industry can't sell their vapid commercial product to the world at large, and only in the UK when they promote it heavily via TV. So what can we do as punters? For a start we can support independent music by going out to see live gigs, and buying the band's CDs if we like what we hear. Despite the ignorance and sloth on the current big players in the 'music biz', someone out there is minding the bottom line, and if they see a market in independent music developing then they will promote it.

So a good way to start is to get down to The Well Music Venue in High Town Luton on Sunday (June 20) for an alternative all day mini festival in aid of War Child and Keech Cottage Hospice. The day of live music will feature **Special Move, Fuzzy Lumpkins, Bdf, Bug Fly, 50 Caliber, Ten Fold Truth, Otis, Trc, The Stars Have Fallen, Sadako** and **Alpha High** as well as a vegetarian barbecue. The doors open at midday and the music goes on until 10.30pm. And it costs just £6 for a day pass, call 01582-487464 for more information. Alternatively you can see "three awesome alternative bands" on Saturday (June 19) at the same venue for just £3. Award winning Luton band **Echelon Blue** along with **Garrett** and **Novacaine** are playing. Or even better still go both days, all for less than a tenner!

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## 23/Jun/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Get yer Togs On !*

On Saturday (June 26) get along to TogFest, one of the area's largest one day live music festivals takes place at Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes, in the grounds of a stunning 12th century priory. This year's festival is licensed for 3,000 people and offers a record of twelve hours of non stop music on three stages throughout the day. The organisers say that this year's festival the most varied yet with a huge line-up and a great mix of musical genres that will see a full symphony orchestra play the same stage as a 10 piece Bhangra band. Other music includes jazz and blues alternating with folk, and rock, and rap, soul and indie pop. There will even be a roving poet - Rod Eyre - along with interventions throughout the day from a distinguished list of comperes - including the completely mad Big George, composer and local radio and TV star.

The festival started as was a 'one-off' big party back in 1998 with just one stage, a bouncy castle and an ice cream van. Since then it has grown into a huge family friendly music festival which now attracts bands from all over the UK - this year, the A & R team received over 200 applications. The programme features local musical legends and aspiring new talent play alongside nationally and internationally known artists. There are also numerous festival stalls, a wide choice of grub, three bars (including real ale) plus a free craft workshop and bouncy castle for the younger members of the audience - making the whole thing a perfect day out for the family. Tickets are just £7 on the day or £5 in advance - though you'll have to hurry as tomorrow (June 24) is the last advance ticket day - and under 12's get in for just £1. Parking is free and easy so the whole deal is about £107 less expensive than a Glastonbury ticket. Contact TogFest on 01908-313413 or check out the website [www.togfest.org](http://www.togfest.org) for more details on the line-up and how to get tickets.

#### *Local band news...*

Chris from Luton rock band **Cerberus** tells me that they are launching their new CD "Scenes from the Dark Side" at the George II pub in Luton on Saturday (June 26). The music starts at around 8.00pm with support from Worksop based band **Hearing Colour** with the main act hitting the stage at 9:30pm.

**Igneous** - another Luton based rock band are jetting out to Germany this week where they will be headlining at an open air concert in the Spandau district of Berlin - one of Luton's twin towns. The energetic heavy rock outfit features **Paul Vitty** on lead vocals and guitar, **John HS** on rhythm guitar, **Martin Vitty** on bass and **Dave Robertson** on drums. For information about the band and future live dates you can visit their website at [www.igneous.5u.com](http://www.igneous.5u.com)

Bob from **The Tempest** tells me that they are playing at the Dubliner Bar at Santa Ponsa in Majorca on Tuesday (June 29). There are also a bunch of fans going to Majorca to support them - all fly out on Friday (June 25). So anyone who might be in Majorca next week should email [robbo@the-tempest.com](mailto:robbo@the-tempest.com) for full directions to venue.

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## 30/Jun/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Pure Reasons to be Cheerful*

More new musical talent from 13 Promotions at The Well Music Venue in Hightown (Luton) in the form of **Pure Reason Revolution** who will be appearing on Saturday (July 3) Andy at the Well tells me that they take a lot of influence from their hero's Pink Floyd. Jon Courtney and Greg Jong mimicked the coming together of their idols Pink Floyd nearly forty years earlier while at the University of Westminster in London. Taking time off from their studies, they started making 'bedroom' recordings of their songs, influenced by the Pink Floyd along with Led Zeppelin, Super Furry Animals and The Beach Boys. They must have been doing something right since several labels and publishers offered them 'corporate hospitality', however Jon and Greg quickly realised they were far from ready.

Like their heroes they knew that they had to have a solid live band sound to back up the songs. So now Jon (Vox, Guitars, Synths) Greg (Guitars, Vox, Synths) have been joined by Chloe (Vox, Bass, Synths, Tamba), Jim'll (Synths, Sampler, Vox, Bass) and Andrew (Drums). They're on the way now, having recently released their debut single on Poptones and are currently in discussions with another two labels about an album release. Their music is "Harmony-drenched, yet hard-edged" (Greenbelt) with a very melodic but still gritty edge. Support on the night comes from **Zipper** and Luton's own melodic rockers **The Occasion**. Tickets are just £3, for more information from [www.purereasonrevolution.com](http://www.purereasonrevolution.com) or The Well on 01582-487464, [www.thewellmusicvenue.com](http://www.thewellmusicvenue.com)

On my trips to Melbourne I've always been impressed by their community radio stations such as 3PBS and 3RRR. These stations give an airing to music that would never hit the commercial or government funded airwaves, played by enthusiastic and knowledgeable voluntary DJs who are prepared to take risks and play new music, letting the listening public decide what is good, rather than some faceless producer with the advertising manager breathing down the back of their neck. And we're not talking about a couple of blokes with a 5 kilowatt transmitter here, but a high powered, professional service which covers the entire metropolitan area, something like three million listeners.

Well back here in the UK we're not blessed with this level of freedom of choice, however all is not lost, down in St Albans Radio Verulam provides a Community Radio service primarily for West Hertfordshire, including St Albans, Harpenden and Dacorum area. They broadcast on the NTL network on 88.8FM (linking on 52.8FM). Being local they are actually interested in getting local talent on to the air and publicising local events. In fact just last week Stuart from My Pet Junkie was interviewed, playing some new tracks from their forthcoming album (due out in September). If you can't find them by other means then they are on the Internet 24/7, check out [www.radio-verulam.co.uk](http://www.radio-verulam.co.uk)

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Send gig information to "The Brian Heywood Column", PO Box 649, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 4XD or [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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