

## 1/Sep/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *DIY at the Folk Festival*

It's just a few days to the Dunstable Folk and Dance festival (see coverage elsewhere in the paper) and I have the details a couple of music sessions that didn't make it into the main programme. The first is an instrumental folk session at the Norman King Public House (in Church Street) led by Alison Macfarlane, helped along by some other members of her ceilidh band – All Hands Around. I also understand that local singer / songwriter Martin Dent is running a sing-around at the White Horse in High Street North if you want give your tonsils a work-out. The sessions kick off at noon and are completely free, so get down there and get involved.

While we're on the subject of folk, I hear that a new folk club is going to open at the Hat Factory in Luton at the end of September. The club is being organised by local personality and author Nigel Benson (Dunstable in Detail) and will take place on Tuesday evenings in the basement performance area of the Bute Street arts centre. The club nights will feature professional performers in both contemporary and traditional styles and there will be scope for local 'resident' performers as well as floor spots. As well as the regular club nights, Nigel plans to have some additional special events including some very well known names indeed. The launch date for the club is September 28, for more information and updates check out the website [www.bennys.org.uk](http://www.bennys.org.uk) or stay tuned to this column.

Tomorrow night (Thursday) **Dilate** debut with their new drummer, and unleash some new material at The Well, 5 High Town Road, Luton, with support from **Zipper** and **Noise Pollution**. For more information about the band see [www.dilate.org.uk](http://www.dilate.org.uk).

Local band **The Imperial Vipers** tell me that they've spent most of August working hard in the studio and will be returning to the stage on Saturday (Sept 4) at the Sound venue in London. The band's debut single is due out in October and they will be backing up the release with various live dates and a tour. More details in future columns.

Finally, I hear that Andy Sizmur will no longer be involved with the Well Music Venue. Andy's put a lot of work into raising the profile of The Well which has resulted in a busy and high quality music programme at the venue. Andy says that he would like to thank all those who supported the Well over the last eight months and tells me that he is planning to open a new venue in the town centre. I will of course keep you informed of the details of the new venue. Best of luck Andy!

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## 8/Sep/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Sun shines on Dunstable Folk Festival...*

What a brilliant weekend! The weather came up trumps for the fourth Dunstable Folk and Dance weekend, right from the word 'go' with the festival ceilidh on Friday to the free Sunday open air concert in Grove House Gardens. Of course the highlight was the Saturday concert featuring blinding sets from the **Oyster Band**, **The Acoustic Strawbs**, **Mas Y Mas** and **Roy Bailey** all held together by compering skills and songs of Rick Christian. A big round of applause is due for Dunstable Town Council – especially Michelle and Clare – who organised the weekend and Concert Sound who did such a great job on the PA.

Award winning local band – **Over\*Easy** – tell me that their new bass player will be taking the stage for the first time at their gig at the Well Music Venue in Luton on Saturday (Sept 11). The new musician on the block is Tom 'T-Bone' Flynn who previously held down the bass end of local band Childhoods End. Over\*Easy's management – Teamwork's Alan Hughs – said "Tom has worked very hard in the last month and has learnt the band's material quite quickly." He then went on to say "He has also added his style to the band's groovy funk rock sound." You can check out the band's new sound at the Well in High Town Road, Luton on Saturday when they go on stage at 9pm.

The acoustic music sessions at the Fox in Pirton (near Hitchin) are restarting after summer recess tonight (Wednesday). The music is an eclectic mix of tunes, songs, poems. Session organiser and well know local melodeon player Theo Thomas says if you want a seat, come early. The session officially starts at 8.00pm and carries on through to 11pm.

On Saturday (Sept 11) you can catch more live music at The Wheatsheaf in High Street North, Dunstable when **Relay** and **The Donkeys** play down at the pub just outside the centre of town. Relay plays original music while the Donkeys deal in loud and lethal rock. Admission is free and the music starts at 8:30pm.

Miller from **Dilate** tells me that the band would like to apologise to any fans that turned up for last Thursday's comeback gig at the Well. The gig had to be cancelled at short notice due a problem with the PA system. The band tried desperately to arrange a suitable replacement but to no avail. They are trying to arrange an alternative comeback show. I will keep you informed of the details.

Tomorrow night (Thursday) you can catch the final of the Horn's Battle of the Bands down in St Albans (next to the Mainline Railway Station). The competition has narrowed the original 71 entries down to three – **Enter Shikari**, **Munkster** and **Firstborn**. The first band is on stage at 8 and entry is £5, see [www.thehorn.co.uk](http://www.thehorn.co.uk) for more details or call 01727-844627.

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## 15/Sep/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Pete Coe in Letchworth*

Anyone who caught the amazing Dunstable Folk and Dance Weekend will be glad to find that there is loads of stuff going on in the local area. For instance on Friday (September 17) Pete Coe who was described as "A One-Man Folk Industry!" by Jim Lloyd is appearing just down the road in Letchworth at the Mad Nanny Folk Club. Pete has a vast repertoire of traditional and original songs, dance tunes played on bouzouki, melodeon, dulcimer, banjo and even his feet! I first met Pete when he was a member of the seminal ceilidh outfit – **The New Victory Band** – and concert band **Muckram Wakes**. Since then he's been in various outfits like the hard hitting **Red Shift** as well as touring the world as a solo artist. Musically, he looks to the tradition, but doesn't shrink from adapting and reinventing in order to move forward. He is essentially a storyteller, equally at home with lengthy traditional ballads as with pithy self-penned songs – but he is not afraid to confront contemporary issues.

His recorded output is prodigious as well, having released ten albums as well as broadcasting regularly on local and BBC radio and television. He is also prolific songwriter and his songs include Joseph Baker (performed by The Chieftains), The Wizard of Alderley Edge (an early classic), The Alimony Run (recorded by Token Women), Sold Down the River Again (recorded with Red Shift), The Jackdaw, The Waves of Tory (a comment on the Thatcher Era in Britain), Bring the New Year In (on the new album) and numerous others. In fact Mojo Magazine commented; "He explores the heartland of the English folk song revival with an ease and honesty that invests traditional songs with a simplistic beauty". You can see Pete on Friday at Caffeine, Station Rd, Letchworth; call 01462-438373 for more information or check out the web site at [www.madnanny.co.uk](http://www.madnanny.co.uk)

Closer to home, tomorrow night (Thursday) you can see **Mike Silver** at the Library theatre in Luton. Mike is one of the most requested artistes on Radio 2 and has always been one of the counties hardest working performers. Described as one of the finest singer / songwriters of our time, his songs have been covered by numerous people, both live and on record. Tickets £8/£5; for more information contact the Library Theatre Box Office on 01582-547474.

On Saturday (September 25) you can see **Graham Robins** and his band at The Hat Factory Arts Centre in Bute St, Luton. Graham's music ranges from the struggle and suffering of the Blues to the tender sounds of Tamla Motown and more contemporary styles. He will be playing material off his new album "The Bare Tracks". For more information you can contact the Hat Factory Box Office on 01582-547474.

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## 22/Sep/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Folk coming out of the WoodworX*

There doesn't seem to be a great deal of action on the indie/alternative scene, perhaps they're all gigging down to London – like **Stonegrass** who are playing down at the Verge in Camden tonight (Wednesday). However the cooler weather seems to have bought the folksier elements out of the wood pile. Following on from Pete Coe and Mike Silver last week we have two 'must see' folk music events this week.

The first is an album launch from my concert band **WoodworX** on Friday (Sept 24). You may remember seeing at the Dunstable Folk and Dance festival a couple of years ago where we went down very well indeed. The album is called "Two Short PlanX" and features a globe spanning mixture of twelve Australian and British contemporary and traditional songs. The band got together when I met fellow Australian Toni Wood a few years ago and the material reflects our individual journeys in time and in space as well as our shared cultural background on both sides of the globe. The tracks range from traditional songs, through settings of poems by Henry Lawson and Robert Burns, to contemporary original material penned by Brian Heywood, Mark Cryle and Iain Davidson.

The critics seem to like the CD too, with comments like "... essential listening, and possibly the best thing you'll hear all year" (FiddleOn Magazine) and "WoodworX's particular brand of contemporary folk-pop should appeal to a wide cross-section of listeners" (NetRhythms). The launch is at Letchworth Folk Club which is at Caffeine, Station Rd, Letchworth and the band will be the semi-acoustic four piece line-up with Toni on vocals, myself on guitar and vocals, Tom Fairbairn on violin and Donna Whitlock on hand percussion. For more information about the venue call 01462-438373 for more information or check out the web site at [www.madnanny.co.uk](http://www.madnanny.co.uk) and you can find out more about the band and listen to audio clips at [www.woodworx.org](http://www.woodworx.org)

On Tuesday (Sept 28) there's another launch when Benny's Folk club opens its doors in the Basement venue of the Hat Factory Arts Centre in Bute Street. The night features **Derek Brimstone** who is originally from Hemel Hempstead but now is a stalwart of the British folk and blues scene. His music spans blues, traditional, contemporary and much in between, all linked together with tall stories, fast one-liners; tragic and comical tales of misfortune and an array of extraordinary characters. Derek has been featured by John Peel and Stewart Hall, toured with such people as The Strawbs and Steeleye Span - and played all over the world. The club takes place every Tuesday with the music kicking off at 8pm (doors open 7:30) with admission: £3 for Members and £4 for non-members.

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## 29/Sept/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

I hear that following rave reviews of the **Bowfinger** album 'Happy with what you got' the band have been busy recording a new single to coincide with an Autumn tour - which includes dates as part of the BBC Radio 1 "Onemusic" promoted Transit tour. To celebrate the new release the band will be appearing on Saturday (October 2) at The Well Music Venue, in High Town Road, Luton along with **Clarkesville**, **Allstate Everything** and **Ali McQueen**. This is a hot combination with Clarkesville being big in Japan, Allstate Everything being touted as the 'next big thing' from the Luton music scene and Ali McQueen's acoustic set being described as "... the sound of Beck and Nick Drake sharing a roll up on a park bench" by the NME. Doors open 8:30pm, and entry costs a mere £3. For more information see the web at [www.latentlemon.co.uk](http://www.latentlemon.co.uk) and [www.bowfinger.net](http://www.bowfinger.net)

**QuickSilver** is appearing tomorrow (Thursday) down at the Cricketers pub in Redbourn. The duo is made up of vocalist **Hilary Spencer** (Artisan, Mrs Akroyd band) and songwriter, guitarist and broadcaster **Grant Baynham**. You may remember Grant as one of the presenters on BBC1's 'That's Life!' with Esther Rantzen, or perhaps as the regular comic songsmith for 'Start the Week' (BBC Radio 4), 'Pebble Mill at One' (BBC1) or on Suzi Quatro's 'Gas Street' (Central TV). Hilary was trained classically as a soprano a massive three with a half octave vocal range and has been performing with the acappella trio Artisan since they formed in 1984, playing venues all over Britain and worldwide as well as appearing regularly on radio and TV in the UK and North America. The two met at the CD launch party of Hilary's second solo CD 'Afterimage' in July 2001 when Grant stepped in at very short notice as an accompanist and an instant rapport was formed. Both she and Grant realised that they had something very special here as they both love to sing and play anything from traditional ballads to comic songs, blues, jazz and of course Grant's own compositions. Further details are available from: 01582 452954, 07850 163241 or [www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk](http://www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk)

Unlucky Luton rockers **Dilate** are going to have another try at staging a comeback gig when they play at the "spiritual home of Luton rock", the Edge in Park Street. The last attempt at the Well in High Town was scuppered due to problems with the PA system. Andy Miller tells me that last time they played at the Edge members of the band had to stand on the bar and DJ stand to avoid the flying bodies, so it could be a wild night. The support band on the night will be **Bilker**. For more information call 07718955566.

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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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