

4/May/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column



Mark Joseph at Togfest

This year's Togfest line-up is starting to come together and the promoters reckon that this one will be the 'best yet'. This annual event takes place on Saturday June 25 at Bradwell Abbey just up the road in Miton Keynes; which makes it the nearest thing we have to a local general music festival. Topping the bill - and looking forward to performing in front of his 'home crowd' again - will be local hero **Mark Joseph**. He's currently on tour with Ocean Colour Scene but will be taking time out from his increasingly busy schedule to add his critically acclaimed guitar driven pop to all those who have supported him on his musical journey (www.markjoseph.co.uk).

Other acts already on the festival roster include folk rockers **Little Johnny England**, Australian blues guitar supreme **Gwyn Ashton**, **The Michele Welborn Band**, **Six.Point.Five**, **The Zeds**, **The Powders** and - all the way from New York - **Joe Driscoll**. With another 31 bands still to be announced, this is looking like a day not to miss for all music fans. Early birds can get special advance tickets now for a measly £5 to ensure a place in on the day. For more information you can telephone the Togfest Office on 01908 313413 for all details or check out www.togfest.org

If you want to avoid the suspense of election night on Thursday then Danny McGreevy from **Komatone** tells me that they are playing at the Well in Hightown Luton tomorrow night (Thursday). The band is based in Leicester but Danny hails from Luton and used to hold down the bass slot in the local band "Shine" until last year. Danny describes the Komatone sound as anthemic rock'n'roll with both amplitude and attitude. Check out the website at www.komatone.com for more info on the band and to hear the songs.

Local Jazz trumpeter Ray Batson tells me that he is running a one day Jazz improvisation course at South Luton Community College on Saturday 14th May, 10am to 3pm during Adult Learners' week. For more information call 01582-480886 or email Ray on ray@nostab.freereserve.co.uk

The next Headstart Jam night Hat Factory will be on their Open Day on Friday week (May 13) and will take place in the Basement venue from 2pm-11pm. Musicians or bands will be able to use this area free of charge but will need to book soon so that the Headstart team can sort out a schedule for the day. The event coincides with the launch of the Cultural Network and the PA and sound engineer are supplied free of charge. You can check out video clips of previous Jam sessions on their website at www.headstartproject.org

11/May/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Live music in Luton looking up...

One of Luton's favourite bands - **Bowfinger** – is working together with local record label Latent Lemon Recordings to bring high profile live music back to Luton. The next gig is on Friday week (May 20) at the Oxen Road Club in High Town, Luton when **Bowfinger** will be pushing their new single – recorded at London's Fortress Studios. The tracks were made with local producers Justin Saban and Thom Morris - whose CV reads like a “Who's Who” of the current music scene. As well as the Luton lads, there will be another four bands on the bill and



the line-up is one of the best to be seen in the town for a long time. From London there is **Blind Jackson**, an outstanding band who really are tipped for the top, their new album is being played on Virgin Radio as well as also playing a live session for the station. Also appearing is ex-Lutonian **Ali MacQueen**, whose band features another local face - Steve Tebbutt on bass. Thing's are moving for the band after being recently spotted by indie label Fierce Panda who have taken an interest. The other two bands are **The Occasion** and **Pirate Radio** and tickets are £4 in advance (from www.latentlemon.co.uk) or £5 on the door. Doors open 8pm with the first band onstage at 8:30pm.

Tomorrow night (Thursday) **Pete Morton** is appearing at Redbourn Folk Club at the Cricketers public house on the Common. Pete Morton has been described by the Guardian as one of England's best singer/songwriters and has been performing to audiences worldwide for nearly two decades with his unique and involving style of singing. His performances are very passionate, intimate and intense; with songs from the heart accompanied by his powerful percussive guitar style. Pete is much in demand internationally; in fact I keep bumping into him all over the world. The music starts at 8:30 and admission is £6. For further information check out the website at www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk or ring 01582 452954 / 07850 163241.

Support your local ceilidh! This month's Dunstable Tyre Kickers' Ceilidh is on Friday (May 13) and features local band **MoonDance** with caller Alan Simpson. The dance is at St Mary's Social Club in West Street, and the doors open at 8pm. Tickets cost £6 (£3 conc) and accompanied under 12's get free entry. For more information see the website www.roots66.net/tkc, email tkc@roots66.net or call 01582-475655.

Don't forget that tonight – and every Wednesday – **Wild Willy Barrett** hosts an ‘open mic’ session down at the Norman King in Church Street, Dunstable. I've been down to a few of these and heard some great music from some of the area's best local musicians and a bunch of rising stars. Call 01582 661603 for more information.

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The Brian Heywood Column

The Michèle Welborn Band

On Sunday (May 22) you will get a chance to see **The Michèle Welborn Band** just up the A5 when they play a lunchtime gig in Bertie's Bar in Wolverton. The band – which I saw perform a brilliant set at the Dunstable Folk Weekend a couple of years ago – has just released a new CD called 'Don't Call Her After Midnight' which is a collection of 13 eclectic songs and tunes that reflect both the contemporary and traditional musical backgrounds of the players. Michèle's background is rooted firmly in the folk world and has worked as a solo folk singer and in duo and band formats over a number of years singing with 'Jigby', Dan Evans, 'Pitchblend' and John Close. She has also done a stint in the theatre and worked with 'The Syringe Babies' and Milton Keynes 'Living Archive Band' as well as working with the Welborn/Clenaghan Quartet and with the trio; Welborn, Martin and Jewell. Bertie's Bar is part of The Queen Victoria Pub which is opposite The Agora Centre in the centre of Wolverton. The venue used to be called 'Zaks' and has been given a lick of paint, comfortable seating and tables and generally a new lighter 'feel'. To find out more information about the band check them out on the web at www.michele-welborn.com. The music will be starting just after 1pm.



Bowfinger's management emailed me last week to say that the timings for the gig at Oxen Road Club in High Town, Luton on Friday have changed slightly. The doors now open at 7:30pm and the first band on will be at 8pm. The line-up remains the same with **Bowfinger, Ali MacQueen, The Occasion and Pirate Radio** onstage and tickets are still £4 in advance (from www.latentlemon.co.uk) or £5 on the door.

The **Bon Temps Playboys** will be perpetrating their brand of good-time, foot-stomping Cajun, Zydeco and Swamp pop music on Saturday (May 21) at Walkern Music which operates from the Walkern Sports & Recreation Club, High Street Walkern Herts SG2 7NP. The doors open 8pm and tickets are £10 - contact the band on 07836 280 774 for more information.

Tomorrow night (Thursday) you have a chance to have a close encounter with the top UK acoustic duo **Show of Hands** at the Sun Hotel in Hitchin. Steve Knightley and Phil Beer - who make up the duo - famously sold out the Albert Hall in London at a self-promoted gig. Tomorrow they will be getting close up and personal, interacting with the audience on a one-to-one basis. This is a ticket only event and you can reserve a ticket by calling Maureen on 01462-812391. You can find out more, and download the duos new single, at www.showofhands.co.uk

25/May/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

*Over*Easy at Luton Carnival Party*

You have a couple of chances to see the award winning **Over*Easy** in Luton this week. On Sunday (May 29) they will be doing an acoustic spot in the "Party in the Car Park" of the Cork and Bull (in Cumberland St) as part of the Luton Carnival and on Tuesday (May 31) you can see the full line-up at Red Red Red in Park St. Since winning the Dunstable Battle of the Bands in 2002, the band has been going from strength to strength with the band's line-up being finalised in early 2003 with the addition of vocalist and front man Timm Stock. The band's sound still has a strong funk and groove feel with an all original set which has won over critics and fans alike with their powerful stage presence. The rest of the line up is Matt Lawrence (guitar, vocals and harmonica), Simon McPherson (bass guitar), Antony Tearle (drums and percussion) and Adam Lawrence (keyboards and samples). You can find out more about them on the web at www.overeasymusic.co.uk or catch them live in Luton this weekend.



Tomorrow (Thursday) the Liverpool based rock band – The Yaks – will be helping to open the 6th Luton Filmstock Festival when they play outside Debenhams in Luton Town Centre (Market Hill). The performance will kick-off at 6:20pm and will be a 30 minute taster of their performance at the SubClub at the University of Luton on the following day. The Friday gig will also be the launch of their new album 'Seven' which is already attracting interest from overseas. The band comprises of **Lee Duffy** on vocals, **Lee Williams** on bass guitar and **Chris MacAllister** on guitar and keyboards performing original material with influences ranging from Neal Young, Led Zeppelin and the Smashing Pumpkins. On Friday the doors open at 7pm and the music starts at 8pm with entry being £7 (£4 students).

On Friday (May 25) Friday you can catch the latest of the Unicorn ceilidh series at Hitchin Town Hall (Brand Street, Hitchin). The dancing will be led by experienced caller **Philippa Spencer** who hails from Cambridge with a bunch of established and fresh dances. Philippa will be supported by **Laughing Gravy**, a local ceilidh band who draw on influences from various musical traditions including; English, French, Welsh, Irish, Old Time American, Glen Miller and more. The line-up features accordion, melodeon, guitar, bass, and fiddle with which they produce great foot-stomping dance music. Doors open at 7.30 for an 8.00 pm start. Tickets cost £7.50 for adults and £4 children under 14 and are available at the door. For more information call the organisers on 01582 724 261 or on the web at www.unicornceilidhs.org.uk

Send gig information to "The Brian Heywood Column", PO Box 649, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 4XD and you can also email details of gigs, gossip, web sites or anything else to info@lutonscene.com. A searchable archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>