

3/Aug/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Focus on Folk

This week I'm down at Sidmouth Festival to help out with some workshops and generally take in the seaside atmosphere along with shed loads of live music. It is the first time for many years that this week long festival isn't being organised by a single promoter but rather a 'rainbow alliance' of smaller promoters. Until last year the entire shebang was programmed by one organisation which booked the acts, sorted out the venues, the campsites and organised the volunteer helpers required by any large festival needs to operate these days. If it all works out then it could be a good model for the growing Dunstable Folk and Dance festival that takes place at the beginning of September (Sept 2-4).

Incidentally, this will be the fifth year of the Dunstable based festival which is gradually growing, with more events and a broader spread of music types, still in the general folk genre. Like in previous years the whole weekend revolves around two free concerts in Grove House Gardens organised by Dunstable Town Council. This year there will be two opening events on the Friday; the traditional opening ceilidh (or barn dance) with local electric ceilidh band **MoonDance** with **Liam Robinson** calling and The Folkaholics Folk Club featuring the world famous piper/percussionist **Steafan Hannigan** and fiddler **Saskia Tomkins**. On Saturday there will be folk bands playing in the Quadrant shopping centre from 12 till 4pm, dancers throughout the town and chainsaw carving in grove house gardens.

Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies will be topping the bill in the evening concert and will be supported by folk singer, comedian and TV personality **Richard Digence**, folk rock from **McDermot's Two Hours** and singer/song writer **Tony Carling** will be opening the show while **Rick Christian** will be MC and filling in the gaps during the changeovers. On Sunday Rick will be opening for the Afternoon concert which will also feature the **Michelle Welborn Band**, the new line-up of local celtic fusion band **enQ** and the **Sons of the Soil**. You can see details about the complete programme for the weekend from the What's On page of the council's website at www.dunstable.gov.uk

Don't forget that next weekend is Chalgrove Live Music Festival near Watlington in Oxfordshire which will feature a load of live bands in a variety of styles including local folk rockers WoodworX. See their website for directions and more information: www.clmfestival.com

Unfortunately the gig I mentioned last week that was originally going to be held at the Grove House Gardens as part of the Youth Festival on Saturday has had to be cancelled due to the lack of a suitable venue. This has been a real problem in Dunstable since the Queensway Hall was converted into (yet another) supermarket. Maybe things will improve when the Grove Theatre is built.

10/Aug/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Back from a week on the south coast at Sidmouth Festival and I am again totally amazed by the breadth and quality of the music I heard down there. The label 'folk music' tends to be used as a blanket description to cover anything that doesn't fall neatly into the pop, jazz or rock categories and is the home for some of the most amazing fusions between different music styles. A good example of this were a young five piece celtic-jazz-funk band from the south coast called **All Jigged Out** who played a fantastic set mixing the languid flute of **Philippe Barns** with the cutting violin of **Ben Lee** all support by a kicking rhythm section of keyboards (Tom), bass (Andre) and drums (Ollie). They were finalists in the BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Awards and now are in the process of releasing their first CD. You can find more and hear some sound bites at www.semusic.co.uk/AJO.htm. Incidentally this year's Sidmouth Festival was a great success and they are already planning the next one so stick Aug 4-11, 2006 in your diary.



Mind you don't have to go down to the south coast to tap into the summer festival vibe, on Saturday week (Aug 20) you can catch the Hoo '05 Festival at the Luton Hoo Estate on the edge of town. The line-up includes up-and-coming local and national bands such as **Blind Jackson**, **Turncoat**, **Bowfinger**, **Imicus**, **Fruition**, **Pirate Radio**, **Novacaine** and even **Elvis Shmelvis**. The festival is the brainchild of Ben Price of Burp Promotions, Justin Saban of Latent Lemon Recordings and Andy Pullinger of Remedy Sound and they are aiming for a relaxed party-in-the-park vibe suitable for the whole family. It's the first time an event like this has been put on in our area, so go out of your way to support it. They are already planning for it to be an annual event. Tickets are £12.50 in advance with a Family ticket costing £37.50 (for a family of four - children under 13yrs). They tell me that tickets are going fast so check out www.burppromos.com, phone 01582 488 588 or pick up some tickets from Coda Music in Guildford Street in Luton. First band on at 1pm

On Sunday (Aug 14) PDM are putting on another three bands at The Exchange, King St. Luton. The featured bands are **Novacaine**, **Penny Racers Last Journey** from Luton and **Noon Layer Drive** from Milton Keynes. **Novacaine** are one of the stars of the Luton Scene with "Power, intricacy, melody and lead vocals to die for" according to a recent Live circuit review. **Noon Layer Drive** produce a set of post grunge hard rock with passion, angst and emotion while **Penny Racers Last Journey** from Luton provide savage riffs and fierce hooks in a dynamic set. The doors open at 8pm with the first band on at 8:30 and admission is £4. See www.pdmmusic.com for more details and future gigs.

17/Aug/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Hoo's Next

There's very little time left to get tickets for the Hoo '05 Festival this weekend which will take place at the Luton Hoo Estate on the south edge of town. As we mentioned last week, this is the first event of its kind ever to be held in the Luton area and the organisers have made a real effort to programme a varied line-up to please everyone. The ticket sales have been capped at 1,000 for this outdoor event and the aim is to show off the area's very best indie talent - plus a few out of town bands who are breaking through. For instance **Turncoat** - who are the latest darlings of the music press following their Glastonbury debut and new single - are trekking up from Brighton. There's even some their for Elvis fans in the guise of Elvis Shmelvis.

Since last week's News/Gazette two extra acts have been added to the Hoo 05 bill. **Andy Sizmur** (lead singer with Luton band **The Occasion**) and **Mark James** (who has just come back from touring the USA with local band **Vera Cruz**) will both be doing acoustic sets. Tickets are going fast so be sure to get yours in advance from www.burppromos.com, by phone from 01582-488588 or from Coda Music in Guildford Street, Luton. They will be also be available on the day (if there are any left) and cost £12.50 in advance or a family ticket costs £37.50 (a family of four with children under 13). There is ample free car parking and disabled access. First band on at 1pm and there will be food and soft drink stalls but bring your own alcohol (no glass please). The full programme is available at www.latentlemon.co.uk

Don't forget that it's only two weeks until the fifth Dunstable Folk and Dance Weekend. This year there are more events than ever before with top piper/percussionist **Steafan Hannigan** and **Saskia Tomkins** on five string fiddle and 'cello at the 'Folkaholics Folk Club at Finbars' in the High Street. Top local electric ceilidh band **MoonDance** will be playing at Dunstable Cricket Club at 8pm with tickets from Octave Music in High Street North (Dunstable) or on the door (call 01582-475655 for more info).

On Saturday the music will kick off at noon with acoustic celtic music from **Wot Next** and others in the Quadrant Shopping Centre and the evening concert in Grove House Gardens features **Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies** along with folk singer, comedian and TV personality **Richard Digence**, folk rockers **McDermot's Two Hours**, singer/song writer **Tony Carling** and **Rick Christian**. On Sunday Rick hosts the afternoon concert which features the **Michelle Welborn Band**, local celtic fusion band **enQ** and acoustic Americana from the **Sons of the Soil**. You can see details about the complete programme for the weekend from the What's On page of the council's website at www.dunstable.gov.uk

24/Aug/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Easy like Sunday Morning

Over*Easy are back on the road. Furnished with a brand, plank spanking new bass guitarist **Mark Burnett**, they'll be hitting the stage at the Tring Festival on Sunday (Aug 28) showcasing their crunchy retro-rock sounds from their new 12 track album - "Dirty up a tone ..." - which is due for release at the end of September. Sunday's gig is the first date of a tour to promote the new CD and will take in venues such as Esquires (Bedford), The Exchange (Luton) and gigs in London such as the Half Moon in Putney and a headline slot at the Bull and Gate in Kentish Town. You can get a preview of some of the tracks from the new CD from their revamped website at www.overeasymusic.co.uk as well as full details of other dates in the tour. The band, who won the last Dunstable Battle of the Bands competition, will also be embarking on their first professional video shoot for the debut single next month - anyone wishing to take part in the video should contact the band via the web site.



On Saturday (Aug 27) you'll get a rare opportunity to see and hear top local singer/songwriter **Katie Buckhaven** when she returns from her French tour to play a concert in The Old Town Hall in Hemel Hempstead. Her new album is being championed by none other than Michael Parkinson on his radio show who commented; "We think we've made a real discovery". Katie will be supported by media darlings **Blind Jackson** who will be playing a rare acoustic set and Luton band **Bowfinger** who have been described as Luton's favourite band. The show starts at 8pm and tickets cost £7 and will be available on the door or in advance (phone 01582 488588). See www.katiebuckhaven.com to find out more about Katie.

This new licensing law is likely to dominate the news as we approach the end of the year. The August deadline for converting existing licences has passed which means that anyone who hasn't already applied must now go through the full application process or get shutdown in November. Some estimates place this number at up to two thirds of all licensed premises in some areas and many of these applications could be automatically rejected due to administrative overload. The national press has been going on about the booze aspect of this situation but what about live music? According to Hamish Birchall, a leading national campaigner, many musical activities like charity events, self promoted gigs and even parties will potentially become criminal offences if a performance of live music is to any extent public. Basically the new act requires every venue - which includes private clubs, village halls, schools, all public open spaces and private land - to make a full Public Entertainment License (PEL) application if they want to promote live music for the general public more than once a month. This applies irrespective of whether alcohol is sold. So we may well have a quiet, sober festive season this year.

21/Aug/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Dunstable Festival Weekend

Friday sees the start of the fifth annual Dunstable Folk and Dance Festival Weekend. This year there are more events than ever before with more music and dance, and what's more, most of it is free. On Friday evening you're spoilt for choice with special edition of the 'Folkaholics Folk Club at Finbars' featuring top fiddler **Saskia Tomkins** along with piper/percussionist **Steafàn Hannigan** (tickets £5). Or if you fancy something a bit more energetic then you can dance to top local electric ceilidh outfit **MoonDance** who will be playing over on the edge of Totternehoe at the Dunstable Cricket Club with rising star of the Northern folk circuit, **Liam Robinson**, calling the dances. The music starts at 8pm with tickets (£6/£3) available from Octave Music in High Street North (Dunstable) or on the door (call 01582-475655 for more info).



On Saturday you can watch one of Britain's premier chainsaw carvers, Ben Loughrill, in Grove House Gardens who will be creating a new sculpture of four foot high eagle, carved from solid oak. The music will kick off at noon in the Quadrant Shopping Centre with music from folk singer/ songwriter **Peter Quin**, acoustic celtic music from **Wot Next** along with Morris, Irish and other World dancing. The big evening concert is hosted again this year by **Rick Christian** and takes place in the outdoor performance area in Grove House Gardens. There will also be a chance to visit the beer tent, food stalls, hog roast and craft stalls throughout the evening.

The fun starts at 6pm when Americana inspired singer/song writer **Tony Carling** takes the stage and he is followed by folk rockers **McDermot's Two Hours** which is based around the song writing skills of Nick Burbridge and has a reputation of being one of the best live acts of its genre. Next at 8pm is folk singer, comedian and TV personality **Richard Digence** who is regarded as one of Britain's top entertainers. Topping the bill at 9pm is **Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies** whose mix of gritty northern social comment and bizarre humour should make it an evening to remember. Rick will be filling the gaps during the changeovers with a mix of original and traditional songs.

On the Sunday the music carries on when Rick hosts and plays the first set of the Sunday Free Folk Showcase concert. The other three slots are filled by Milton Keynes based **Michelle Welborn Band**, local celtic fusion band **enQ** and acoustic Americana from the **Sons of the Soil**. You can see details about the complete programme for the weekend from the council's website at www.dunstable.gov.uk or from www.roots66.net/dfw. For more information about any of the weekend's events you can also call the council on 01582-513000 or email them at info@dunstable.gov.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>