

## 1/Mar/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *The Unusual Suspects*

**The Suspects** gig at Eddies Bar that I mentioned last week seems to have gone down well as they are back there tomorrow night (Thursday) for another one! Band member Stephen Lock (bass and backing vocals) tells me that the landlady at Eddie's Bar was so impressed with the music that she rebooked them on the night. The band plays a mix of covers and original material and will be giving away their newly recorded CD at tomorrow's gig, so get down there if you want a free copy. The rest of the band is made up of Jim Oliver on lead vocals and rhythm guitar, Andy Barraclough on lead guitar and backing vocals and John Conaghan on drums. If you can't catch them at Eddies then they will be playing down the road at the Inn on the Green at 469 Luton Road, Harpenden, AL5 2HU next Thursday (March 9).



The **Imperial Vipers** tell me that their latest tour kicked off in style last week at Reading's Purple Turtle and Plymouth University and say that Wevs' back seemed to get through the gigs without any problems. They also tell me that they have just found out that they have been selected as part of The Sun Online's Battle of the Bands competition where you can vote for the Vipers, who are listed alongside six other bands. As you can imagine this is great publicity for the band. Viper fans can help out by registering a vote by clicking on <http://tinyurl.com/ldbxxj> and then clicking on the vote button is at the bottom of the page. They also tell me that you can get a sneak preview of their new single – 'Jewels' – is due to be released at the end of the month (March 27) by going to the band's website ([www.imperialvipers.com](http://www.imperialvipers.com)). It'll be available on 2 track CD (Track 2 - Scars Alone), 3 track CD, (Track 2&3 - acoustic versions of Jewels and Kick a Hole), a limited edition, numbered red vinyl 7" disc and, of course, as a download. The hard copies of single will be available through HMV and all good record shops and it might be a good idea to order the limited edition disc in advance if you want to avoid disappointment.



This month's Tyre Kickers' Ceilidh (i.e. Barn Dance) in Dunstable is taking place next Friday (Mar 10) and features the **Climax Ceilidh Band** from Hastings with Sarah Malleson calling. This up-and-coming ceilidh band is making quite a name for itself on the dance scene with storming ceilidhs at Cecil Sharp House Knees Up in London and Towersey Village Festival. The band prides itself on its fine mixture of highly original self-penned tunes and traditional material, with the emphasis always on making ultra-exciting dance music. The event takes place at St Mary's Social Club in West Street, Dunstable and the doors open at 8pm. Tickets cost £6 or £3 concessions with under 12's free if accompanied by an adult. For more information visit [www.climaxceilidhband.co.uk](http://www.climaxceilidhband.co.uk), [www.roots66.net/tkc](http://www.roots66.net/tkc) or call 01582-475655.

## 8/Mar/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Climax Ceilidh Band Blues*

This month's Tyre Kickers' Ceilidh in Dunstable is on Friday (Mar 10) and features the **Climax Ceilidh Band** from Hastings with local caller Sarah Malleson. The Climax Ceilidh Band has been getting a lot of attention on the e-ceilidh scene recently with some great comments from people who ought to know what they're talking about. The band is the fusion of two trios - Meridian and Pesky - who combined to get a bigger, more exciting big band sound. Gordon Potts, who is considered by many to be the guru of the burgeoning e-ceilidh dance scene, has commented about the band; "...they were very good. Two fiddles, a piano accordionist who can actually play the damn' thing, Mr Walshaw on various woodwindy things & a thuggish guitarist...".



The accordion slot in the band is held down by **Richard Jones**, who was a founder member of the Climax Blues Band, being the original bass guitarist in 1967 and later rejoined the veteran blues rockers on keyboards in 1975. The rest of the line-up - Chris Walshaw (pipes / whistles), Anna Tabbush (fiddle), Holly Sheldrake (fiddle), Swerve (guitar) - have a good dance pedigree with credits including the Duellists, Stocai, Tabbush Sisters, and the European Youth Folk Orchestra. The venue for Friday's dance is St Mary's Social Club in West Street, Dunstable (LU6 1NY) and the doors open at 8pm. Tickets are £6 or £3 for concessions and accompanied under 12's are free and there is a bar available (with club prices). For more information either email [tkc@roots66.net](mailto:tkc@roots66.net), call 01582-475655 or check out the websites at [www.roots66.net/tkc](http://www.roots66.net/tkc) and [www.climaxceilidhband.co.uk](http://www.climaxceilidhband.co.uk).

Tomorrow night (Thursday) you can catch singer / songwriter **Liz Simcock** just down the M1 at the Cricketers which is just off the common in Redbourn. Liz is a regular performer at the award winning Hitchin Folk club and has appeared on record alongside Eliza Carthy, Billy Bragg, Eddi Reader and Kathryn Williams and is gaining a growing reputation as a performer and songwriter. Redbourn Folk club has been going over 15 years now and is a friendly club that features a wide range of acoustic music and alternates guest nights with singers' open mic' nights. The action starts at 8:30 and entry is £5, for more information call Janet Strapp on 07850-163241 or check out the websites [www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk](http://www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk) and [www.lizsimcock.com](http://www.lizsimcock.com).



I didn't have a gig last weekend so I managed to catch some live music in Dunstable and made an interesting new discovery. I popped down to the Greyhound in High Street South and caught the second set from the **Chrevons** ([www.thechevrons.com](http://www.thechevrons.com)) and was impressed by the power of their sound, especially the gritty vocals from **Terry Sullivan** and the guitar mastery of **David Galt**. The music is a powerful blend of rock and rhythm and blues and the band specialises in doing extended sets which have earned them a growing reputation in the London scene and won them Artist of the Week spot on the Lemonrock website ([www.lemonrock.com/chevrons](http://www.lemonrock.com/chevrons)). The Greyhound is a great venue for this kind of band, small enough to get close but well laid out and not claustrophobic. I understand that the band will be back in town in April or May, so check them out.

## 15/Mar/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Gotcha - Vipers Strike Gold*

Local stadium rockers – the **Imperial Vipers** – who are currently on tour throughout England, have topped the Sun Newspaper's prestigious on-line 'Battle of the Bands'. They were up against some pretty tough competition which included 'The Feeling' – who are currently at number 7 in the UK charts. The band tells me that not only did they win the vote, but they polled more than twice the vote of the runner-up with a "record number of votes" according to the Sun. Previous winners of the competition include current media darlings the Arctic Monkeys, so this is a great omen for the future. This is certainly a boost for the Vipers as they prepare to release their first full length album on May 1st. It will be called 'Searching:Falling:Silence' and, like their previous releases, the music will be available on CD from HMV and other High Street as well as for download on-line. If you can't wait till May then the band's new single 'Jewels' is being released on March 27th – check out [www.imperialvipers.com](http://www.imperialvipers.com) for more information. The band's tour hits Birmingham, Manchester, Derby, Bath and Cardiff in the coming week with the nearest future gigs being at The Barfly (Camden) on April 1 and the Soundhaus (Northampton) on May 6.



It's St Patrick's Day on Friday and so you can expect wall-to-wall celtic influenced music and Guinness promotions around the pubs in the area. As the day falls on a Friday there has been a lot of demand for musicians and bands who can supply appropriate Irish music. Although I've been booked for months for two gigs up in Northamptonshire with my celtic outfit Trioch ([www.roots66.net/trioch](http://www.roots66.net/trioch)) I've been receiving increasingly desperate calls from pubs and clubs who left it too late to book a band. If you want to tap into the reel thing then The Luton Irish Forum are presenting a couple of performances at the Library Theatre (Thurs 16 & Sat 18) and various spots in the Arndale Shopping Centre on Friday as part of their annual celebration with the **Mayo Male Voice Choir** along with various dancers and instrumentalists. Over in Dunstable the White Swan are going to town on Friday with a music program starting at 3pm culminating in the evening with performances from **Clayton Stevens** and **Mike 'the voice' Walker**. Call 01582-667833 for more information.

If you want a bit 'heavy' relief from the wall-to-wall celtic music then on Saturday (March 18) local rock band the **Hustlers** will be playing over at the Greyhound in High Street South Dunstable. The band plays songs from the likes of Metallica, AC/DC and Black Sabbath, along with various other artists. They say that the band's unique style and sound along with their reworking of these classic songs "are enough to get your granny out of bed and dancing on the table." Although the band members are fairly young the standards are high and they are getting quite a reputation around the Dunstable area. The music starts at 9pm and entry is free.

## 22/Mar/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Stormy double bill at the Well*

On Saturday (Mar 25) you can catch two great local bands at the Well Music venue in High Town. The bands are **The Tempest** and **Reverie** who have been storming the local scene recently. Reverie have released their single "On The Fence"/"Why Don't We" it was recorded at Fortress studios in London and released on the Luton Record Label 'Latent Lemon Records' at the beginning of last month at Camden's Dublin Castle when they supported Morning Runner. The Tempest has also been on a roll recently which culminated in a gig at Esquires in Bedford supporting chart band The Feeling. Saturday's event is hosted by x-ite promotions and starts at 8.00pm, tickets are £4 on the door (over 18's only). For more information contact; [info@x-iteuk.com](mailto:info@x-iteuk.com), [info@reverieuk.com](mailto:info@reverieuk.com) or [james@the-tempest.com](mailto:james@the-tempest.com).



It also looks like a good week for blues rock fans with **The 5th Quarter** appearing at The Horn in Victoria St, St Albans on Friday (Mar 24) and **Robin Bibi** at The Hat Factory on Saturday (Mar 25). The **5th Quarter** play passionate and uplifting covers by the likes of Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix and Cream. Robin Bibi is a seasoned session musician who has worked with Jimmy Page and Robert Plant and was a one time regular with The Pretty Things. His influences include Peter Green, Hendrix, The Beatles and the music of the Mississippi Delta and he'll be throwing all these things into the mix supported by his rocking band. He'll also be giving vent to some more traditional leanings of the blues and gospel music of Robert Johnson and John Lee Hooker. For more information about the Friday gig check out [www.thehorn.co.uk](http://www.thehorn.co.uk) or call 01727 844 627 and you can contact the Hat Factory Box Office on 01582 878100.

Tim at the Greyhound in High Street South, Dunstable tells me that they will be starting up a new weekly Jam night which kicks off on Monday (Mar 27). The session arose from the packed out **Fresh Tea** jazz fusion gig at the pub a couple of weekends ago. The band will be providing PA, backline and support so it looks like it could be a great little Monday night out for both players and listeners. Call the pub on 01582-521594 for more details.

I've just heard that Radio Verulam have just got their full community FM licence after a wait of ten years. Community radio is a fairly recent innovation in the UK and is a third tier of radio which complements the mix of services already provided by the BBC and commercial radio sectors. In fact it is much more like the PBS systems in Australia and Canada – albeit on a much more local scale. The station has actually been transmitting on cable for sometime, but the essence of radio is to be able to pick it up anywhere. The coverage of the new station will be primarily for West Hertfordshire, including St Albans, Harpenden, Hemel Hempstead and the Dacorum area, but I reckon that listeners in Luton and Dunstable may be able to tune-in. See [www.radioverulam.com](http://www.radioverulam.com) for more details.

## 29/Mar/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### Rockin' Ceilidh



On Friday (Mar 31) you can catch the highly regarded and exceptionally tight and powerful music of **Peeping Tom** at the regular monthly Unicorn Ceilidh in Hitchin Town Hall. Based in Coventry, the **Peepers** (as they are sometimes known) are a rock ceilidh outfit with a powerful, precise and up-tempo beat and have an obvious fondness for black leather. They are easy to dance to, particularly for newcomers and always produce a cracking good dance.

Caller for the night will be Martyn Harvey with an interval spot from **Shore Tars Rapper** display dancers. The tickets are available on the door and cost £7.50 for adults, £4 for accompanied under 14s and £5 for concessions (OAPs, students and unwaged). You can also reserve tickets by emailing [tickets@unicornceilidhs.org.uk](mailto:tickets@unicornceilidhs.org.uk) or for general enquiries call Alan Creamer on 01582 733113 (day) or 01582 724261 (eve). Check out [www.unicornceilidhs.org.uk](http://www.unicornceilidhs.org.uk) for more details and directions.

Saturday (April 1) looks a busy night with **Sonic Boom Six**, **3 DBS Down**, **Dexters Fish**, **Pirate Radio** and **The B-Team** playing down at the Luton University Student Union from 7pm (£6). See [www.dtapromo.co.uk](http://www.dtapromo.co.uk) for more information and to see details of other DTA Promotions' gigs. Over in Dunstable, the **Fat Walter's Band** is playing at the Greyhound (on the corner of High Street South and Great Northern Road). The Walter's – who have recently been picked by the Lemonrock website as a band of the week - play a mix classic and original rhythm and blues with a lively rock'n'roll feel with a lot of kick. For more information about the band and a live track check out [www.lemonrock.com/fatwaltersband](http://www.lemonrock.com/fatwaltersband).

Thom Piercy emailed me to say that he's hooked up with a local record label, 'Without Dead Time Records' to do a label showcase night. The event is taking place at the Hat Factory Arts Centre (Bute Street, Luton) and looks like it has a pretty packed programme with **The Flying Blackbird Ensemble**, **Liam Butler**, **Garcia Dances** **The Jttrbg** and **Tomfire** - who are headlining the event. The night starts at 7:30pm and will crescendo (after Tomfire) with a big noise ensemble made up of all the acts performing along with various random helpers which should be quite something to hear. Tickets are £5 and you will be able to purchase their label sampler and some other CD's. You can get more information by emailing Matt at: [mattspokes@gmail.com](mailto:mattspokes@gmail.com) or surfing to their website at <http://withoutdeadtime.port5.com>.

It seems that local stadium rockers **Imperial Vipers** are becoming a regular feature in The Sun with the latest mention being a review of their new single *Jewels* in the paper's 'Something for the weekend' section. The review is nothing short of ecstatic with the national daily saying that the Vipers are ; "A Genuine rock and roll band you can believe in, and the answer to the prayers of a million frustrated Guns N' Roses fans" and giving them a rating of 4 out of 5. If you want to make up your own mind you can hear the track and watch the video on the band's website at [www.imperialvipers.com](http://www.imperialvipers.com).

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](mailto:info@lutonscene.com).  
A search-able archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>.