

5/July/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Serious Shoes!



Matt from the local rock outfit **Ruby Shoes** tells me that the band is currently branching out from their Luton base and have already been stealing shows in Reading, London, Peterborough, Swindon and that they now have gigs lined up in Brighton and Sheffield. The music they play is a mix of riff oriented 70's style rock influenced by Led Zeppelin, Rolling Stones, T-Rex with a touch of glam rock from the likes of Bowie. They are obviously going down well with the audiences as they are now through to the second round of the prestigious Rock Garden (in Covent Garden) battle of the bands, after winning their first heat with a unanimous vote.

They seem to be on line for media recognition as well with Q Magazine describing them as "Jaw dropping, foot tapping, bra strapping glam rock 'n' roll ringin' hard in yer ears". The next round in the Rock Garden competition is on Sunday week (July 16), but you can catch them tomorrow (Thursday) at the Well Music venue in High Town Road in Luton supported by **Spacejunkie** and **Shotgun Suicide**. The music kicks off at 8pm and entry is £3 – see <http://www.myspace.com/therubys shoes> for more information and sound clips.

It seems like you just can't get away from the World Cup at the moment, it has even insinuated itself in to the local music scene. On Sunday (July 9), PDM Promotions are throwing a World Cup Final Party at The Exchange in Luton. Topping the bill will be **New Groove Formation** (www.newgrooveformation.com) with support from Pirton's **Fruition** (www.fruitionhq.co.uk). The **New Groove Formation** formed in early 2004 to play dirty funky beats, grooves and breaks to reggae, dub and ska. Since then the band has crafted a unique show with lots of energy and plenty of good vibes.

Fruition have been pushing the boat out by gigging around the country and have notched up some high profile support slots with bands such as Larrikin Love, The Rifles and The Holloways as well as getting airplay on XFM. On Sunday the doors will open at 6pm and you will be able to watch the game before the music kicks off. Entry is £3 but if England last out to the final then entry will be free. Also if England don't last the distance then anyone wearing the strip of one of the teams in the final will get in free. See www.pdmusic.com for more information.

If you fancy something completely different then tonight (Wednesday) you can catch a mini-festival of folk music and dance at the St. Michael's Folk Evening in St Albans. This is an annual event held at St. Michael's village is at the bottom of Fishpool Street in which the whole street is closed off from about 8pm and invaded by Morris, Clog and Country dance displays along with music sessions in the pubs, folk club events and plenty of beer and barbecues. And what's more it's all free! For more information see www.stalbansfolkmusic.org.uk.

12/July/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Words and Music from the Wild Side

This week you can get an extended chance to see the Banner Theatre Group's **Wild Geese** production at the Library Theatre in Luton from tomorrow night (Thursday) until Saturday. I've always been fascinated by the mixing up of music, spoken word and visual images, either on the video screen or in a live theatre situation. The Banner Theatre is one of Britain's longest established community theatre companies, with over thirty years' experience. Their shows have a large dose of social commentary and use a combination of theatre, music and real recorded voices - both video and audio - as part of the performance. When these various elements are spun together they create an entertaining, but also thought-provoking, show based on people's real-life experiences. The core of the show is live music from a quartet of player made up of **Dave Rogers** and **Fred Wisdom** (vocals, guitar), **Jilah Bakhshayesh** (vocals, violin, bass) and **Gaylan Narzhad** on various types of hand percussion.



Wild Geese is essentially about exile and migration, using live music and video to highlight the contradictions in the lives of migrant workers, often trapped in the poorest jobs, which no-one else will do, but often still vilified by the press despite this. The show looks at migration from the point of view of the migrants themselves, exploring their hopes, dreams and often harsh realities. The show intertwines video stories of Irish nurses in the 1950s with Asian textile workers in the 1960s, Iranian refugees in the 1980s and Chinese cockle pickers risking their lives on the sands of Morecambe Bay in 2004. The first show is tomorrow (Thursday) with further chances to attend on Friday and Saturday - when there is both a matinee, and an evening performance. To get tickets contact the Library Theatre Box office on 01582-547474 and the cost is £10, £8 conc. and only £6 for students (NUS ID required).

This month's Tyre Kickers' Ceilidh / Barn Dance takes place on Friday (July 14) in Dunstable and features a new ceilidh band with some familiar faces. The four piece outfit led from the front by Lincolnshire based **Liam Robinson** (Pigeon English) on melodeon and calling, **Thomas Fairbairn** (Whapweasel, MoonDance & Pigeon English) on keyboards, **Donna Whitlock** (MoonDance) on kit drums and myself (Cluster of Nuts Band, MoonDance) on bass guitar. Together we're the **Kickin' Ceilidh** Band, a new dynamic outfit for which this will be the first public outing, though we've been playing together for some time for functions around the country. The dance is 'family friendly' and will take place at St Mary's Social Club in West Street (Dunstable). Doors open at 8pm and tickets £6 (£3 conc) with accompanied under 12's free. For more information email tkc@roots66.net, call 01582-475655 or check out the website at www.roots66.net/tkc.

Both Pop poll winners Loose Thread, and Long Shore Drift, tell me that they're back on the gigging circuit and that you can see them playing live upstairs at the Winston Churchill in Dunstable on Saturday (July 15). Doors open at 8pm. See www.loosethread.co.uk and www.longshoredrift.co.uk for more information.

19/Jul/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

HammerFluff Aid Luton



Kat from the fast paced pop-punk local band **HammerFluff** tells me that you can see them at the second Luton Aid all day event at Luton University on Saturday week (July 29). You may also be able to hear them tomorrow night (Thursday) at the Well music venue in Hightown Luton, but there is some doubt to whether it's going ahead since the other band on the bill – A Boy Called Hero – appears to have broken up. Anyway, **HammerFluff** are a feisty four piece band that is led from the front by lead singer and bass guitarist **Kat Upton** backed up by the powerful guitars of **Ben Cooper** (vocals/guitar), **Andy Greaves** (guitar) and the awesome

drums of **Ashley Bennett**. The band have been starting to make quite a name for themselves with gigs at Esquires in Bedford, London as well as the local round of pub and Luton University gigs. The current line-up of the band has been around since 2002, when Andy introduced Ashley to Ben and Kat at the start of year 10 at Ickneild High School in Luton, and they've never looked back. The band's name came up at a rehearsal and stuck as it sums up the combination of their hard edged metal sound combined with the more fluffy pop sensibility of the songs with their powerful harmonies. Other bands appearing at the Luton Aid gig are **Dead Girl on Pavement**, **Drive Like Casey** and **The Shine**, **The Kindred** and **Novacaine**.

On Friday week (July 28) you can see singer / songwriter Chris Smyth at the Buck's Head on Stevenage Road in Little Wymondly. At 24 years of age Chris writes mature thoughtful songs and delivers them with passion and a great voice with very nice guitar accompaniment. Originally from Kent, Chris is from a musical family, in fact his dad produced the Undertones 'Teenage Kicks' EP which was John Peel's favourite track of all time. Now based near Nottingham, Chris has produced one album and a live EP and has just about completed his second studio album. Next Friday's gig is a rare local appearance of this up-an-coming performer, and what's more, it's free! For more information check out his website www.chrissmyth.com or contact Mad Nanny Music on 0845 1232656 or madnanny@questor-cp.co.uk. Chris is on stage at 9pm.

Pam from amalgamation management tells me that they are doing an "Amalgamation All Dayer" at the Brixton Telegraph in London on Sunday week (July 30). The headlining band is "Last Stop China Town" who have been all over "Kerrang" and "Rocksound" recently and the show will feature two local bands - Imicus and Novacaine. Novacaine will be on at 4pm to 4.30 and Imicus will be on from 7.45 to 8.15 and the price of tickets is £8 on door £7 with flyer available from www.myspace.com/amalgamationdevelopment. The gig will be the first of a monthly series to showcase talented bands from all over the UK so if anyone would like to take part in one of these shows then contact Pam via MySpace.

Also don't forget that there is a Headstart Jam Night tonight (Wednesday) at 7.30pm in the Hat Factory in Bute Street, Luton. Entry is free for both performers and audience.

26/Jul/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Colourful grin at the Hat Factory



Next Tuesday (Aug 1) you can hear some searing indie ballads with a funky edge from **The Blue Teeth** at the Hat Factory. The band members are teachers **James Trapp** (Icknield High School), **Paul Ramsey** (Icknield Junior School), Manshead Upper School graduate **Sam Allan** and **Gareth Lloyd** who is also a producer for BBC Three Counties Radio. **The Blue Teeth** formed a year ago and have already played gigs at three of Luton's top pub venues - George II, The Well and The Cork and Bull in Luton as well as The Winston Churchill in Dunstable. Although the band's music is influenced by the likes of Oasis and Coldplay, all their material is original and is already making a mark with

their audience. According to drummer Gareth; "it was so strange at The Well last week, we were called back on stage for an encore, so we asked the crowd what they wanted to hear?" The emphatic response was "Johnny No Stars", a story about the band's recurring experience in a famous fast food restaurant. He continued "We didn't have to sing the chorus as the crowd have already learnt it". They've also attracted the attention of the local media, being featured as local band of the week on Chiltern FM on Gaz and Karen's morning show. The Hat Factory is in Bute Street Luton and tickets cost £3 (Box Office 01582 878100) and you can find the band's website at www.theblueteeth.com.

Loz Jones tells me that he's ready to start gigging out his new solo project. Lozzy made quite a splash on the local scene back in the nineties when he was the dynamic front man for **Crying Blue** and **ESC**. He's now back with a vengeance after taking a short break to recharge his batteries. His new set concentrates on sounds and lyrics that matter to him; sharing stories, personal experiences and social observations designed to challenge as well as entertain. The rest of the six piece band is pretty impressive as well, featuring top local musicians **Stuart Buckle** and **Keith Green**. To celebrate his return to the live music scene and the release of an EP by the Aylesbury based Jam Central label, there's a special, ticket-only launch party at the Hat Factory in Luton on Saturday week (August 5). Note that tickets for this gig are not available from the venue so to get in you'll need to e-mail Loz at info@lozjones.com or check out his website at www.lozjones.com.



If you're into high quality Blues then check out **Fat Walter's Band** at the Greyhound in Dunstable on Saturday (July 22). This five piece outfit features vocals, harmonica, guitars, keyboards and drums and plays a rockin' rhythm and blues set.

Andy Gordon from the George II pub in Bute Street Luton tells me that he has taken over the music promotion and is planning to get the bands up and running again on Saturday nights. Any local bands interested in playing at this well respected and long standing music venue in the center of Luton should contact Andy on 07887-926772.