

## 6/Sept/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Presidents of Pop on a mission*



Four local lads are setting out to help put Luton at the top of the music scene. Planting their colours firmly in the heart of Luton's busy entertainment district, the four lads; **Jamie McDonald** (vocals, guitar), **Peter Cordt** (bass) and **Brendan Monahan** (drums) and **Matt Rushton** (lead guitar) plan to help improve the reputation of the town, building it up along with other local bands and musicians on the local scene. Despite only being together for around six months they're already building up a healthy following on both the local scene and further a-field. The band tells me that they've had some great gigs at places like the Filmstock Festival, The Well, Melting Pot, The Hat Factory and the Hart in Hitchin.

They recently played a gig in Bedford Esquires supporting a successful up and coming band The ON-Offs and headlined at the Hope and Anchor in Islington. Another milestone on the road to fame was interview and photo shoot with the local fanzine 'Vandalism Begins At Home'. If you want to support these four plucky musicians on the road to fame or just hear some good hard edged power rock/pop then you can see them tomorrow night down at the Horn in St Albans along with **Battle**, **8 Legs** and **National Heroes** or on Friday at Esquires in Bedford [www.myspace.com/presidentsofparkstreet](http://www.myspace.com/presidentsofparkstreet).

If you fancy hearing some really classy adult oriented rock from down under then get over to The Granary at The Grand Junction, High Street, Buckingham on Saturday (Sept 9) to see the **Anne McCue Band**. One of only six dates in the UK, Anne will be touring with bass and drums as she did the last time she toured in October 2004, when she put on a "really stonking performance" according to Mike Trotman of Empty Rooms Promotions. Anne McCue's career has covered punk, toured the US with the Lilith Fair road show, won awards in Australia and even played in Ho Chi Min City in Vietnam. On this visit she will be promoting her fourth solo album - 'Koala Motel' - a follow up to her last album, 'Roll' which was picked by Bob Harris of the BBC as his favourite album of 2004. As well as working on her solo projects she has appeared as guest guitarist/vocalist on albums by Michelle Shocked and Gina Villalobos. Doors will be at 8.00pm and tickets are £12 in advance.

If you want to make music yourself then there is a Music Producing and Composing Workshop starting at the Hat Factory on Sunday (Sept 10). This eight week course is being run by top UK producer Tony Briscoe whose work includes film music for the BBC and work with artists such as Craig David, Aaron Soul and Beverly Knight. Each of the weekly sessions costs £12.00 (conc. £10.00) or you can sign up for the full course for £90.00 (conc. £75.00). The workshops are for ages 16+ and take place between 11am and 3pm at the Bute St Arts Centre, for more details or to book call the Hat Factory on 01582 878100.

## 13/Sept/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Steve Tilston at Redbourn*



Tomorrow night (Thursday) you'll get a rare chance to see and hear the talented singer / songwriter **Steve Tilston** when he appears at the Cricketers Public House which is just off the green at Redbourn. Steve has been writing, making records, performing and gaining accolades for more than thirty years. Steve often writes in a traditional style, so convincingly in fact that audiences often believe that songs of his like "The Slip Jigs and Reels", "The Naked Highwayman" and "Here's to Tom Paine" are from the tradition. Other artists obviously like his work as well; with bands and performers like Fairport Convention, Dolores Keane, Bob Fox and others performing and recording cover versions of his material.

Steve is one of those artists who you don't hear a lot of, but help form the backbone of the UK music scene, though the press are in the know with Mojo Magazine describing his music as "Gently intoxicating and uplifting stuff" and the US Guitar Magazine saying "His music has a flow and poignancy which makes it stand out from the plethora of singer-songwriters on the scene". Steve will be promoting his new CD – Of Many Hands – latest of a long line of solo albums he's released since the early 70's. For more information call 01582-452954 or check out the gig on the web at - [www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk](http://www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk).

The lads from **Imperial Vipers** tell me that they'll be back 'ripping it up on the road' soon, with an acoustic tour in the planning stages and other live dates in the pipeline. In the meantime they've decided to make the acoustic version of 'Jewels' available as a free download from their MySpace page ([www.myspace.com/imperialvipers](http://www.myspace.com/imperialvipers)). Apparently the track was recorded as one of the B-sides to their 'Jewels' single that was released earlier this year and is a piece of music that they are really proud of. They have had so many of their fans asking about it that they thought "why not give it away?" so they are! To get the track simply go to their MySpace page, click on the 'download' button under the acoustic version of Jewels and follow the instructions.

Next Tuesday (September 19) you can see two top local bands down at the Hat Factory Arts Centre in Bute St, Luton when PDM Promotions presents **Phonic Rapture** and **Grief Society**. The regular gig is designed to showcase the biggest and brightest of local live music scene along with new talent showcasing their musical skills. Described as "local down-and-dirty rock-gods", **Phonic Rapture** and independent heavy rockers **Grief Society** will be playing some of the finest home grown melodic rock gems. Doors open at 8pm and all are welcome to hear some of best talent and freshest new sounds in the Luton area, entry £3.

And if you want have a bash yourself then don't forget the Monday jam night at the Greyhound in High Street South Dunstable. The music starts at 8:30pm.

## 20/Sept/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Poozies Hit Hitchin*



On Sunday you can see one of the UK's longest running girl bands perform over at the Sun Hotel in Sun Street, Hitchin. No, I'm not talking about a reconstituted Spice Girls but the **Poozies**, who have been the ambassadors of women in folk music for over fifteen years. And this is a real band, not a bunch of wannabe X-Factoettes with backing tracks - real musicians and real singers playing real music. The current line-up features founder-member Sally Barker which recreates the original groundbreaking line-up which hit the music scene with their break-through in folk-rock fusion.

The **Poozies** have always been masters of arranging, led by the nylon and metal strung harps of **Patsy Seddon** and **Mary Macmaster** plus **Karen Tweed's** deft work on the piano accordion backed up by Sally's strident guitar style. Even more spine-tingling is the combination of close vocal harmonies and Sally's powerful and blues-influenced voice. Support on the night will come from resident singer and erstwhile member of the folk rock outfit Shave the Monkey – **Carolyn Causton**. Music starts at 7:30pm, for more information call 01462 812391, [goodmusic@hitchinfofolkclub.co.uk](mailto:goodmusic@hitchinfofolkclub.co.uk) or check out the web site [www.hitchinfofolkclub.co.uk](http://www.hitchinfofolkclub.co.uk).

On Saturday DTA Promotions presents a full programme of high quality, local Indie Rock and Pop/Punk at the Luton University Students Union. Topping the bill will be Andy Sizmur's **The Occasion** who will be supported by local punksters **Pirate Radio** and **Red Dollar**, **The Dregs**, the **Presidents of Park Street** and **Sunset Waterloo**. This is amazing value for money at on £5 entry and they've even managed to bring the bar prices down. Doors open at 7pm, see [www.dtapromo.co.uk](http://www.dtapromo.co.uk) for more information.

Speaking of Andy Sizmur, he tells me that the East-end Valley Festival a few weeks ago was a great success and that he'd like to thank all the bands and other performers who gave their time for free to raise money for charity. The list is too long to print here but Phil (from Sulfur), Junior (Burnt Idols), Faz (New Groove Formation) and of course Andy Sizmur himself deserve a special mention for all their hard work over the weekend helping out with the stage and sound engineering. The final count is in and money raised over the weekend was a staggering £9347.08 which will go to the Pasque Hospice, Keech Cottage and R.A.T.S, which is an animal charity.

I see that Dunstable Town Council have been debating the future of the town's Folk Festival and looking at ways of reducing the cost of the event to local tax payers. While I can see that it could look attractive to make the Saturday evening concert a ticketed event, I rather agree with Councillor Mike Tilley that this will reduce the size of the audience and that the additional cost of satisfying the draconian Health and Safety regulations would probably swallow any additional funds collected. It would also mean that Dunstable residents would be paying twice for going to the concert; once through council tax and then again at the gate.

## 27/Sept/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Indie-pendance Day*



Tonight you can get in at the ground floor at a brand new live Indie night at one of Luton's most stylish venues – Bellini's in Chapel Street. This new regular event is being headlined by **The Suspects** who are an up-and-coming local band who play a mix of covers and original material. They will be supported by the local three piece outfit - **The Hotheads** – who play original songs inspired by the likes of Oasis, U2, the Libertines, Richard Ashcroft and Jeff Buckley. According to chief suspect Steve Locke, Bellini's is “a great little venue in the centre of town with modern

facilities and lighting” and goes on to say “let's face it, the town centre is screaming out for somewhere to host a live music night”. If you want to check out the bands then get on down to Bellini's at 9 Chapel St, Luton (01582-720427). You can preview the bands on [www.myspace.com/thesuspects06](http://www.myspace.com/thesuspects06) and [www.myspace.com/thehotheads](http://www.myspace.com/thehotheads). Music starts at 8:30pm.

If you're looking for something a little stranger, you can see the extraordinary Wild Willy Barret's **Sleeping Dogz** at the Ents Shed in Bedord on Friday. This unique trio mix English, Cajun, Celtic and Moorish influences with a large helping of lunacy to produce a blend of highly emotive original music and arrangements. Wild Willy is perhaps best known for his successful partnership with John Otway throughout the 1970s and 80s. The trio consists of Willy Barrett (guitar, fiddle, banjo, balalaika, vocals), Mary (cello, percussion, harmonium, vocals) and John Devine (uilleann pipes, whistles, harmonium, percussion). The Ents Shed is at the Gordon Arms in Castle St, Bedford. For more information call 01234 269519 or check out the band at [www.sleepingdogz.co.uk](http://www.sleepingdogz.co.uk).

You can catch some great bluegrass music then Keith Pearson's band **Coup de Grass** is appearing at the Orange Tree in Norton Road, Baldock next Wednesday (Oct 4). Keith's music ranges from fast, dazzling banjo, guitar and harmonica solos to ballads of exceptional beauty and is liberally spiced with hilarious stories and banter. The support for the night will be from a new Johnny Cash tribute act which is led by **Alan Hewsons's** deep, dark voice which does full justice to Cash's powerfully lyric songs. The music starts at 8:30pm, for more details call 0845 123 2656, email [madnanny@questor-cp.co.uk](mailto:madnanny@questor-cp.co.uk) or check them out on the web at [www.madnanny.co.uk](http://www.madnanny.co.uk).



Also on Friday, you can shake a leg at the first monthly Unicorn Ceilidh of the 2006 season at Hitchin Town Hall. Kicking of the new season will be high-energy English dance music from Simon Care's **Tickled Pink** with Gordon Potts calling. The band is one of the top bands on the UK dance scene and mix solid rock based rhythms, along with influences from Rave to Reggae with a more traditional front line led by melodeon. The band has played at a huge number of festivals around the UK including Glastonbury and Cambridge. Support will be from **Rockhopper Morris**. Doors open at 8pm and tickets are only £7.50 (under 14s £4), you can get more details from 01582 733113 / 724261.

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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 searchable archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>.