

1/Aug/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Party-on at St George's Square

Fingers crossed, but it looks like the weather is going to hold for the massive live music party at the redeveloped St George's Square in the heart of Luton. According to Huey Lewis the Heart of Rock and Roll is still beating and on Saturday it's going to be thumping away in time to a host of great local bands including **Bowfinger**, **Blumunki**, **Ruby Shoes**, **Novocaine** and **The Occasion**. BBC Three Counties Radio's Gareth Lloyd who is presenter of "The Box Office", BBC



Three Counties Radio showcase for local entertainment and unsigned bands. There will be ten local bands playing live from midday till 8pm with the whole caboodle being arranged by Luton Council in conjunction with the Box Office to celebrate the refurbishment of the square – which is as good an example of 'joined up thinking' that I've ever seen from a local council.

You can check out the bands' sound by going to the 'Listen Again' feature on the BBC Three Counties website (www.bbc.co.uk/radio/aod/three.shtml) and clicking on the Box Entry at the top of the A-Z list of radio shows. This will get you last Sunday's programme where Gareth does a rundown of the bands that will be gracing the stage on Saturday. The show hits the airways at 5pm on a Sunday and is an essential listen to anyone who wants to keep up-to-date with the local live music scene – along with this column of course! Gareth and the crew also have a page on MySpace as [bbcboxoffice](http://bbcboxoffice.myspace.com). So make sure you get down there on Saturday and join in the fun.

Paul from PDM tells me that this month they are starting the shift to Thursday night gigs which will be complete by October. He tells me that he'll miss the Tuesday gigs but that as more people want to go to a gig on a Thursday this will give the best as possible audience – and start the weekend a day early! The next PDM gig is at The Hat Factory, Bute St, Luton next week (August 9) and features **Subversion**, **Dumpster Pop** and **Scope**. Pop/punksters **Subversion** from St Albans are making a welcome return as part of a UK tour and are able to mix catchy songs a great live show. **Dumpster Pop** from East Anglia make a loud uncompromising brash, yet tuneful melodic Punk noise with catchy choruses while **Scope** from Bedford bring a Metal to Hard Rock sound that won them the new band section of the Bedford Metal Battle of the Bands last year. You can find the bands on MySpace at [subversionband](http://subversionband.myspace.com), [dumpsterpop](http://dumpsterpop.myspace.com) and [scopemusic](http://scopemusic.myspace.com). Doors open at 8pm and admission is just £3.

MySpace corner: The page is now fully operational so why not surf over there and add yourself to the 'friends' list and subscribe to the weekly blog which previews each week's column and includes stuff that I can't fit into the column due to lack of space. This week's featured track is 'Lost and Found' by **The Blue Teeth**.

8/Aug/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Music Festival Atmosphere in the Heart of Luton



We had fantastic weather for Saturday's live music party in the heart of Luton. Ten great local bands including **The Blue Teeth**, **Shapes**, **Bowfinger**, **Pirate Radio**, **Idle Silver** and **Penny Racers Last Journey** entertained the crowd at the redeveloped St George's Square. As BBC Three Counties Radio's Gareth Lloyd (presenter of "The Box Office") said on the day, the whole thing was only made possible by of Luton Council along with their arts services manager Andy Grays. The collaboration of the council along with the help of the BBC Three Counties Radio and the bands meant that whole event had the feel of a real 'grass roots' music movement.

If you couldn't get down to the gig then you can hear a bit of what you missed by using the 'Listen Again' feature on the BBC Three Counties website (www.bbc.co.uk/radio/aod/three.shtml) and clicking on the Box Entry at the top of the A-Z list of radio shows. This will get you a live track from each of the bands and live interviews with the bands recorded on the day. This will stay online until the next show which hits the airways at 5pm on Sunday. The Box Office can be found MySpace at bbcboxoffice and is an essential listen to anyone who wants to keep up-to-date with the local live music scene – along with this column of course!

Getting back to upcoming gigs on the local scene, tomorrow night you can catch the indie / alternative rock sounds of **Dead Sea Sound**, **Echobox**, **Knievel Genius** and **eLad** over at the George II in Bute St, Luton (next to the Bus Station), the music starts at 8pm and entry is free. You can find the George on MySpace at george2ndluton.

On Friday Club NME at Charlie Browns' just across the tracks on the edge of High Town features **Popular Workshop** and **The Model Horror**. The acts are hand picked by NME headline each week, both newly signed 'RADAR' groups and more established acts which are supported by quality unsigned or signed acts from around the UK. This week's headline - **Popular Workshop** - has been described by NME magazine as "Three-pronged indie-pop masterminds. Sounds like Graham Coxon armed with fresh socks and power-tools" and by John Kennedy from Xfm as "Catchy and abrasive, it pulses with energy and hooks". **The Model Horror** is based in Hitchin and Letchworth and consists of five guys playing indie-tronic-screamo. The Music starts at 9pm and entry is £5 or (£3 with the voucher published in The NME each week). Check out Luton's Club NME out on MySpace at lutonclubnme.

I had a bit of a computer disaster last week which meant that all my email was wiped out. So if you've sent me an email to news@lutonscene.com with news of gigs (or anything else) then you'll have to send it again.

MySpace Corner: This week's featured track on the talkingMUSIC MySpace page (lutonscene) is 'All You Know' by **Bowfinger**.

15/Aug/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Canal Side Cadillacs

I heard some great live music from **Cadillac Blues Band** over at the Grand Junction Arms in Bulbourne (near Tring) on Sunday. The band is fronted by singer and guitarist **Coll Michaels** and traces its roots back to Blues Apex, founded in 1966 by jazzman and composer John Altman in support of a CND fund-raising gig billed with Roy Harper and Stray at the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm. Both Coll and the band's other guitarist, **Kim Rew**, have explored various highways and byways since then - for instance Kim's band Katrina and the Waves had a big hit with his song "Walking on Sunshine" and he has recorded three solo albums as well as doing a lot of session work.



The Cadillac Blues Band was born when drummer Brian Scott and bass player Frank Laughton recruited Coll after seeing him play with Smokestack Blues Band and the new trio became well-known in the Herts Beds and Bucks blues scene in the 1990s. The Cadillac core band is often augmented by other musicians including the legendary Pete West, Ray Uren, Pete Wood, and the awesome **Nigel Spennewyn** who was playing with the band on Sunday. Occasionally, the founder of the original Blues Apex band - Emmy-Award winner John Altman, pays a visit with his soprano saxophone. After a break of thirty years Kim Rew was reunited with Coll and joined the band on a regular basis in spite of his busy studio and touring schedule.

The music is very classy blues rock in the style of Eric Clapton at his height with a solid beat provided by a very powerful and tight rhythm section made up of bass player **John Curtis** and drummer **Roland Kerridge**. Coll's laid back vocals are a perfect complement to the guitar driven blues with backing vocals from John to add power and depth when required. The overall sound of the band is very assured and they have a nice feel for the dynamic of the music with the ability to pull back or put the pedal to metal as required. A great band with a great sound - definitely music for grown ups. Catch them live if you can or check them out on the web at www.cadillacblues.co.uk.

The Grand Junction Arms is worth checking out as well. This pleasant canal side pub only does regular live music on a Sunday but it is well worth the trek over to Bulbourne for a relaxing way to wind down the weekend. They do a range of music styles with a good deal of blues and rock on the gig list but with forays into Jazz and heavy metal occasionally. The next two Sundays feature rock / pop / blues covers from **Zarr** and high adrenaline heavy metal versions of pop songs from London's **The Cover Ups** (Aug 26). They're also putting a big gig on Bank Holiday Monday (Aug 27) featuring no less than seven bands including **Blues Squad**, **Micawber**, **Cerberus**, and **Soul Juice**. To find out more give them a call on 01442 890677 or check out their website at www.grandjunctionarms.co.uk.

22/Aug/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Summer Festival Madness

This weekend you can catch the 43rd edition of the Towersey Village Festival which has grown from a tiny village event to one of the top folk music festivals in the UK. Despite getting into the festival 'big league', Towersey is still one of the most relaxed, family friendly festivals of its kind, with an eclectic mix of concerts, workshops, dances and dedicated youth and children's programmes. Acts this year include **Seth Lakeman** along with stalwarts like the **Oysterband** and the **Battlefield Band** as well as newcomers such as **Hotel Palindrome** and duo **Tom Kitching** and **Gren Bartley** as well as a hefty International contingent. Dancers are well catered for by **Asha**, **Heckety** and **Tickled Pink** and there is even a **Lonnie Donnigan Tribute Band** and **The Singing Sous' Chefs** on the menu as well as lots of dance displays. According to the website there are still weekend Season Tickets available or you can just pop over for the day. Check out the website at www.towerseyfestival.com.

For a rockier feel check out The East End Valley Festival on the outskirts of Harlington on Sunday which features live music from; **The New Groove Formation**, **The Measure**, **Delpian Complex**, **Hooverhead**, **Shapes**, **Bowfinger** and **The Defekters**. The festival in its fourth year and was started to raise money for local charities such as the Pasque and Keech Cottage Hospices so you can have fun and do good at the same time. The event kicks off at 2pm and runs till 2am the following morning with a Live Stage as well as Acoustic, Club and Chill Out tents. The festival takes place at The East End Stables near Harlington. Check them out on the web at www.eastendvalleyfestival.co.uk.

The following weekend you can catch this year's Dunstable Festival with Jacqui McShee's **Pentangle**, Ashley Hutchings's **Rainbow Chasers**, **Roland Chadwick** and **Rick Christian** on the main stage on Saturday night (Sept 1) and **Sons of the Soil**, **Grapevine Blues Band** and **Lauren Field** at the afternoon concert on the following day. The fun starts a day earlier this year with a special edition of 'Up the Swan' on the Thursday (Aug 30) at the White Swan featuring singer / song writer **Martyna**, A Johnny Cash Tribute from **Alan Hewson**, **Toni Wood** and **enQ**. On Friday the festival ceilidh at St Mary's Social Club hall in West Street features **MoonDance** with one of the UK's top callers **Roger Watson**. All the events are free apart from the ceilidh with tickets £6 / £3 (under 12's free). For more details see www.dunstable.gov.uk, www.moondance.org.uk and www.enq.org.uk.

Other events this weekend;

- Tomorrow PDM presents **I.R Tiger JJK**, **Harriet Initials** and **The Vision** at the hat Factory in Bute St, Luton. Doors open at 8pm and entry is £3(Box Office 01582 878100 or www.pdmmusic.com).
- On Sunday from 7.30pm **The Suspects** are launching their 'Things We Do' single at The Leaside Hotel in Luton (www.myspace.com/thesuspects06).
- Also on Sunday you can hear soul classics ranging from Aretha Franklin to Beyonce from **Sasha Stevens** at The Nags Head in Dunstable 8pm till late (01582651051).

29/Aug/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Dunstable Folk Festival



Tomorrow night sees the start of the eighth Dunstable Folk Festival when **enQ** along with special guests **Martyna**, **Toni Wood** and **Alan Hewson** put on a special Festival edition of the 'Up The Swan' music night at the White Swan in High St South, Dunstable. Toni Wood and enQ have a long history with the festival, appearing on the main stage at the very first festival back in 2000 while for singer / songwriter **Martyna** ([ww.myspace.com/martynamusic](http://www.myspace.com/martynamusic)) and **Alan Hewson** this is the first time on the programme. According to Big George (BBC Three Counties) Martyna's piano based crafted songs are "are unaffected by the machine" while Alan has just returned from a sell-out concert of his Johnny Cash tribute at the Broadstairs' Pavilion. Add the powerful voice of Australian songstress **Toni Wood** and the funk up celtic rock of **enQ** you will get a night to remember.

On Friday **MoonDance** will be putting on the traditional festival ceilidh at St Mary's Social Club in West St Dunstable. This year's special guest is **Roger Watson** who is perhaps one of the best known and experienced dance callers and melodeon players in the country. Roger has his roots in the dance revival in the late 70's with **The New Victory Band** but has kept at the forefront of the scene with his afro/anglo dance project **Boka Halat** which was chosen to be the first band to play at the new Grove Theatre when it had its official launch party. Saturday's main concert in Grove House Gardens features Jacqui McShee's **Pentangle**, Ashley Hutchings's **Rainbow Chasers**, **Roland Chadwick** with **Rick Christian** acting as MC and providing musical links during the changeovers. Sunday's afternoon concert features **Sons of the Soil**, **Grapevine Blues Band** and **Lauren Field** with a full set from **Rick Christian**.

Keeping with the folk theme; the Hitchin Folk Club reopens next Sunday (Sept 9) with a concert from folk superstars **Dave Swarbrick** and **Martin Carthy**. These two performers have had a tremendous influence on the way the UK music scene has developed over the last forty years and Martin has influenced such artists as Bob Dylan and Paul Simon on the international scene. Entry costs £12 (or £10 for club members and takes place at the Sun Hotel in Sun St, Hitchin. For more information call 01462 812391, email goodmusic@hitchinfolkclub.co.uk or surf to www.hitchinfolkclub.co.uk.

On a different tack, apologies to anyone who turned up last Thursday to see **I.R Tiger JJK**, **Harriet Initials** and **The Vision** at the Hat Factory. I got the date wrong it was actually on the Tuesday. Anyway, next Tuesday (Sept 4) you can get a night of brutal thrash and death Metal with Luton bands **Attika**, **Senduri** and Bedford's **Sunset Suicide** with the possibility of a fourth band to be added to the bill. You can check out the booked acts on MySpace at attikatheband, senduriband drainedofcolour (Sunset Suicide) or find out more details about all the PDM gigs at www.pdmmusic.com. Doors open at 8pm and its £3 for admission and there are no age restrictions at the Hat Factory.

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