

## 29/June/2011 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette) – talking MUSIC

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *The Rocky Road to Dunstable*



While tributes to aging soul stars of the seventies might not be my particular cup of tea, it looks like the ‘Dunstable Rocks’ event on June 18 was a great success. I was unable to get down to Grove House Gardens as I had a gig a fair way away, but I drove past on the way out of town and it looked like there was a big crowd braving the occasional showers and enjoying the music. All power to the elbow of the Dunstable Town Council who organised the gig, but “Dunstable Live” is not a great name for the event. It’s one of those content free labels that doesn’t really give you any idea of what the event is all about.

Having some kind of themed event associated with the town is actually a great idea, though not a new one. I’ve just been gigging down in Barnstaple in Devon where they’ve been running a fringe theatre festival for the last five years to stamp a bit of individuality on the town. Locally we have Luton’s famous carnival to and even the local village of Flamstead has its Scarecrow Festival to give it a bit of a fillip (see [www.flamstead-herts.co.uk](http://www.flamstead-herts.co.uk)). But since Dunstable stopped having its Folk Festival there’s really not been anything to make it stand out from the crowd.

But if you consider the connection with the soul circuit from the California Ball Room and the continuing popularity of the Cali-R events, the council might just have hit on a winning combination. ‘Dunstable Rocks’ is a particularly lame label – as ‘rock’ can represent anything from Buddy Holly to Queen – a great way of confusing and annoying anyone who can be bothered to read on. And the choice of the Bay City Rollers – a band whose own bass player (Ian Mitchell) quit telling Rolling Stone that "I'm getting out before I stick my head in a gas oven" - seems a bit random. However a soul influenced festival, or series of gigs over summer, would give the town something that would both please the residents and pull in the crowds from outside.



Don’t forget that this Saturday the Luton Youth Festival returns to Leagrave for its sixth year. There will be three stages of live performances, adult and children’s bouncing castles, inflatable’s, glitter tattoos and even a fire show so there’s something for everyone. The organisers assure me that this year’s festival delivers its most eclectic line up yet, from Hip Hop to Heavy Metal, Poetry to Punk, Physical Theatre to Funk with dance, pop, musical theatre, gospel, folk and reggae to name but a few. The festival starts at 11am and finishes at 6:30pm and takes place in the grounds and buildings of St Luke’s Church, High Street, Leagrave. Surf to [www.lywag.org.uk](http://www.lywag.org.uk) for more details.

--

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> and on MySpace at [lutonscene](http://lutonscene.com).