



Blue Suede
CAMBRIDGE'S ROCK RAG *News*

No. 17

"PETERBOROUGH FEATURE"

40p

Blue Suede News

CAMBRIDGE'S ROCK RAG

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Cover Photo: The Detective (by Chris);
the winners of 1st Cambridge Rock Comp.
All contributions welcome - if you don't
agree with what's written here, don't
just slag off the mag, improve it by
writing for it.

THE MAG MOVES OUT

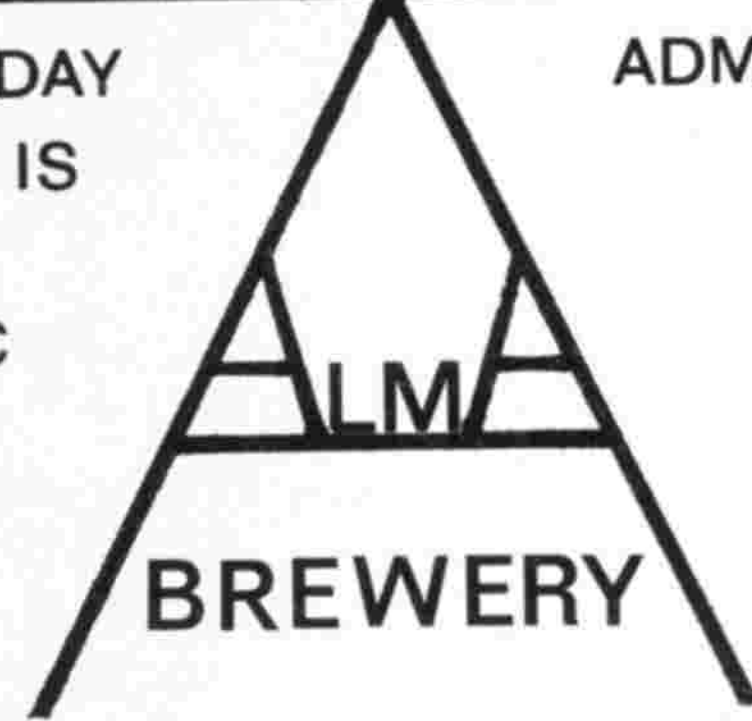
Blue Suede News is about to hit the road and try to cover the rock scene in a bigger area than the hitherto exclusively Cambridge focus. While this is obviously going to help put the magazine on a sounder commercial footing (I hope), it ought also to help the Cambridge scene by encouraging an exchange of information, and hopefully gigs too. The same, of course should apply to the neighbouring towns that I hope we shall begin to cover. It seems particularly important in the case of Cambridge, however, as our rock scene - such as it is - seems to be particularly insular. Hardly any of the bands here make any effort to overcome the lack of local venues by looking for work outside the city. The Exploding Hamsters are to be congratulated, I think, on their current campaign to conquer Peterborough - they're doing four or five gigs in as many days there, and still only just scraping the surface of all the options that much larger city offers.

Peterborough may be quite a bit further away from Cambridge than some towns, but because of its size, the link with us through Radio Cambridgeshire and the excellence of Andrew Clifton's reports for BSN I hope it is already becoming well known to Cambridge musicians and fans. I hope the arrival of BSN in Peterborough - along with the radio show - will help the reverse process too. To these ends I intend to try and get BSN sold in as many of the venues in P'boro as possible, as well as Andy's Records there, and hopefully the music shops too.

I shall be hoping the cover other local scenes too. Obviously Huntingdon is a prime candidate, being between Cambridge and Peterborough; I shall be looking for outlets there too - perhaps in the music pubs I mention elsewhere in the news columns. Suggestions for outlets would be welcome there, and in all the other surrounding towns, such as Ely, Newmarket, Haverhill, Saffron Walden etc.

Even more important than places to sell the magazine are your contributions. I need to know about the bands, venues and services in your town in order to cover them, so please write or phone and let me know about them. Just give me the information, or better still write about them yourselves. Reviews and features on local bands especially welcome, but articles on any aspects of rock, pop and associated matters all gratefully accepted. I can't promise to pay for printed contributions - at least not now, but if the advertising from the broader region flows in, who knows - but this magazine is read in some very influential quarters in the music biz in London and elsewhere, and writers as well as bands may be noticed by those that can afford to pay.

The object of this magazine is above all to provide information; from bands to fans, from fans to promoters, from promoters to services, from services to bands etc. etc. To this end the listings on the back page are free - and from the next issue will include bands and services from P'boro, Huntingdon and any other places I can learn about. Display ads are more than welcome, however - indeed without them there will be no free info service. Rates are cheap - from £7 for an eighth of a page, to £49 for a whole page, with bargain rates for more than one issue; don't hesitate to write or ring and ask for more details.

SATURDAY NIGHT IS LIVE MUSIC NIGHT		ADMISSION FREE REAL ALE
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NEWS

KATRINA AND THE WAVES, having returned from their couple of weeks in Nova Scotia, are busy preparing for the release of their EMI/Capitol album in various parts of Europe - though not, yet anyway, in Britain. They have been in Germany doing TV in Berlin, and are likely to be off to Scandinavia shortly. Meanwhile in The States the first single off the album, "Walking On Sunshine" has entered the Hot Hundred as a "bullet" and reached the mid-sixties, so an American tour is not far off. It's hoped that the band will be able to do a local gig before they get whisked off there - and in any case, Kimberley assures me, there's no question of the band deserting Britain however successful they are over in the land of the big buck.

THE BAND AID GIG at the Tech a few weeks ago was a great success. Not only was it very enjoyable, but it made a grand total of £1623.64p every penny of which will be going to Ethiopian famine relief. The organiser, Pauline Crouch, has asked me to say thanks for her to all involved in making it such a success - especially Fuzzy for the PA and lights, Derek Buxton for help with the publicity etc., Chris Chantry of the CCATSU for giving up one of their precious few gig dates in the Canteen and Andy's, The Alma and The Burleigh for selling tickets. Also of course special thanks to the bands who all performed so excellently on the night: 2 The Limit; Su Lyn; The Frigidaires and Your Dinner. Pauline is looking for somewhere to do it again - any ideas anyone?

THE WATERLOO HOUSE is a pub in Huntingdon (in the High Street) now putting on bands once or twice a week - usually Fridays, and occasionally Saturdays. The landlord, Martin Summers, told me they've been doing it for about two months and it's been quite successful - but he's disappointed that most of the Huntingdon bands are heavy, and he's looking for variety. He's getting a few bands from London up, but he'd be happy to hear from Cambridge (and Peterborough) bands of all varieties. Phone (0480) 57199.

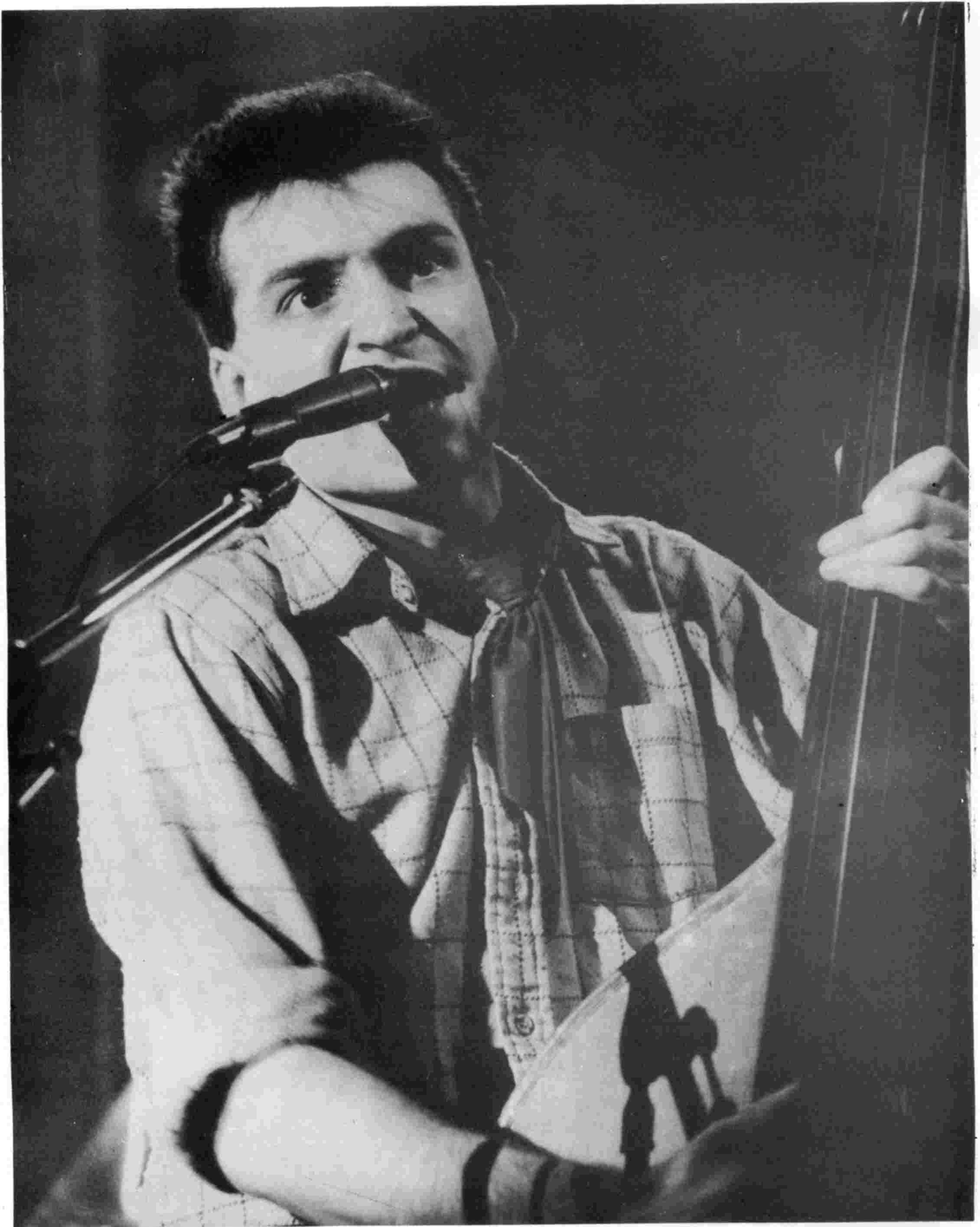
THE TERRITORIAL, also in Huntingdon, has a function room that can be booked for rock gigs - it holds about 120 to 150 people, and costs £30 to hire. It's already heavily booked up at the weekends for other events, but there are plenty of midweek dates available. Tel (0480) 51238.

THE FACE have a new line-up, and will have a new name when they can agree on it. Dave, Patrick and Mark have been joined by Gary Richardson on drums and Nick Russell on guitar, electric percussion and occasional bass. The question of a full-time bass player remains unresolved, though semi-pro Paul Lawley has been rehearsing with them. Unfortunately Paul's other musical commitments (from which he earns a living) may mean he cannot play with The Face permanently - indeed it was he that had to be elsewhere when the band should have been at The Burleigh the other day. All this is going on down in London, but the band hope to be gigging in Cambridge in the summer - at the May Balls of course - to coincide with the release of their next single on Wimp Records, and the end of Mark's law exams. The likely song was given an airing on The Rockshow recently, and very promising it sounded.

THE LONELY have a new singer - to replace Martin Bond. He is Steve Linford who works in art and design, like Ted himself; and if all goes well the new look Lonely will be revealed at The Alma in May.

ONE BY ONE, ex-Lonely bassist Ian Newman's current band are playing The Alma on April 27th. The band have a single out on Discovery Records called "I Kept My Promise c/w Broken In Rhyme" and the other members are: Andrew Robinson, vocals and guitar; Colin MacKay, percussion; Iain Williams, keyboards.

VENUES IN CAMBRIDGE: There are signs of rebuilding activity at City Limits; there are rumours that The Globe in Newmarket may open for rock bands, and there are definite plans to try and stage gigs - albeit somewhat MOR - at the ABC Cinema (which, as The Regal, in the old days was THE venue for visiting bands - The Beatles played there twice; the Stones, the Shadows and all the big names of the age appeared in what was then a 4,000 seat venue. Now it will be much smaller, but still bigger than anything else here). Now for the bad news: there are stories going about that the Council officials responsible for hiring out the Guildhall are - in contradiction of the elected Council's policy - refusing to, or at least making it difficult, hire the hall out for rock gigs. BSN and The Rockshow are on the case and will be reporting soon. In the meantime if you've tried to hire it and had problems, please let us know.



ROVER BILL AND THE TELEPHONE BOYS? Watch out you trendy London Country/Folk and Hillbilly bands, the professionals are teaming up to show you how it should be done; Nick Barraclough, Gerry Hale and The Rover Boy Combo should make an interesting combination, shouldn't it?

CHEOPS are in the process of installing the gear that will make them the first 24-track recording studio, with digital mixdown, in the city. In the meantime they are offering cheap 2" 16-track studio time - £69 for ten hours (£59 for 8-track 1" time). Phone 249889 to book.

ROGER CHATTERTON of Kite Studios on the other hand is off to travel the world with Katrina And The Waves, though what will happen to his studio I have yet to hear.

STREETLIGHTS' Bob Mardon is also going with The Waves and it seems likely that his lighting business will be taken over by newcomers to the area - though not to the business - Star Hire.

STAR HIRE are a PA and lighting company that has been operating for the last ten years or so out of Baldock, but they have recently moved to Godmanchester and decided to provide a small-scale local service as well as the big rig for major national acts. In recent years Star Hire have worked with the likes of Orange Juice, The Bellestars, Mink De Ville, Aswad and Miles Davis. They regularly do the Nice and St. Sebastian Jazz Festivals - and the 3 stages for the Notting Hill Carnival. For the local service they are going to employ a full-time operator and have constructed a special purpose-made PA system, along with lights and truck - and they have asked me to emphasise that they are as dedicated to doing a good job on the small scale as they are on the large. This week they did the Cat Club in Cambridge's notorious Guildhall - and, especially considering how empty the place was, they produced a very impressive sound; the best I've heard in there for years. Star Hire can be found at: Unit 22, Roman Way Industrial Estate, Godmanchester, Cambs. Telephone: Huntingdon (0480) 411159.

HONDO & STORMED are likely to be playing this year's Notting Hill Carnival - along with another 46 bands over the weekend!

THE LODGE studios have asked me to point out that they are interested in hearing from new young bands who have something original to offer and may need a hand to get some material recorded. They gave Your Dinner a considerable amount of free studio time to record their current single, and may be able to help out with other aspects of getting a record out through The Enid's independent distribution and publicity network.

NEW BANDS - well, new to me since the last issue - in and around Cambridge: BILLY PILGRIM - featuring the excellent songwriting talents of Paul Weston. MAC AND WHITE - describe themselves as "a three piece playing all sorts of our own pop/rock". Playing Burleigh April 17.

THE HERBS - playing Burleigh April 9. THE KILDARES - playing Burleigh April 16.

THE FAT BAND

RED ARMY CHOIR - student band praised by Jon Lewin in his CWN column; as were:

THE FEVER GARDEN

THE HOUSE - more students, as are:

IDEAL DAVE AND THE SUPERBS

CHARLOTTE'S PARTY

NEW SWIFT - HRSFC drummer.

SOUL FACTOR II - ex PRIC bass player Ric Moore's new outfit; again the object of praise from Jon, and I believe their tape has found much favour with Wimp!

PRESIDENT REAGAN IS CLEVER themselves are still in the process of adjusting their line-up in the wake of Ric's departure. A new vocalist is soon to join the rest of the band, who now are:

Tim Keogh, bass (ex-The Magnificent Kevin); Adam Carey, guitar and sax (ex-Swansea band The Lost Boys); David Hildrick-Smith, keys and vocals; Justin Lord, drums (ex-Sex Dwarfs).

STAX CADILLACS were also kind enough to get in touch and tell me about their line-up, which is:

Pete Coates, vocals and guitar; Saul Rosenberg, bass; Lorne Somerville, keys; Tim West, sax; Tom Morris, trombone; Giles Chaundy, tenor; Dave Ackroyd, drums. Sorry I didn't get to the gig last term, I look forward to seeing you this coming term - let me know where and when.

The same goes for all you other student bands please - indeed ALL bands; it costs nothing to get your name and contact number on the back page, and your gig mentioned in the news column or gig guide.

EX- WOBBLY JELLIES, Keith Legoy, Callum McColl, Phil de Palma and Stu Atkins have formed a new band, along with one Mark Jowatt on bass and A.N.Other on keyboards. As yet the band has no name, but you can hear what they sound like at The Burleigh on April 20th.

HILLS ROAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE put its galaxy of bands on show in a mega-gig at the college on April 19th. Tickets will be on sale to the public - ring Rosemary Lant on 314389 for details - and the line-up is: New Swift, Montreal, Backlash and Double Yellow Line.

STRAWBERRY FAIR this year is on May 25th.

POPPING IN PETERBOROUGH

ANDREW CLIFTON looks at Posh-Rock

Peterborough has considerably more pubs hosting rock bands than Cambridge does. Furthermore, most of them have free admission. This is good news for the music fan, but it also means that the landlord is going to play rather safe; even if a publican pays a group only £30 they will need quite a few thirsty followers to make it worth his while. Several pubs had Mick Chelly, proprietor of Better Music guitar shop in Lincoln Road, as a sort of A&R man during 1984. This guaranteed a circuit of good quality live music. The pool of select groups was small and when close to Christmas some were attracted away to social club parties and more occasional pub venues, pubs like The Heron and The Peacock were left without bookings. Obviously, at the same time even more up-and-coming local bands were left with nowhere to play. To some extent this is the cause of the belief that Peterborough has lots of venues but only bands that play "r'n'b" or "rock" - usually used as derogatory terms.

Mick Chelly's band LEGEND would certainly not see these terms as derogatory. Legend play at least one gig a week in the city, and sometimes three or four. They seem to search out any pub or club with a music licence and have built up such a following that they can guarantee to pack it.

I last saw Legend at the Norfolk Inn, Lincoln Road. This pub has a fairly big open space in front of its one bar; here the audience stands to watch the bands who play in the large, arched fireplace each Tuesday and Thursday. Between sets music fans can play the video jukebox.

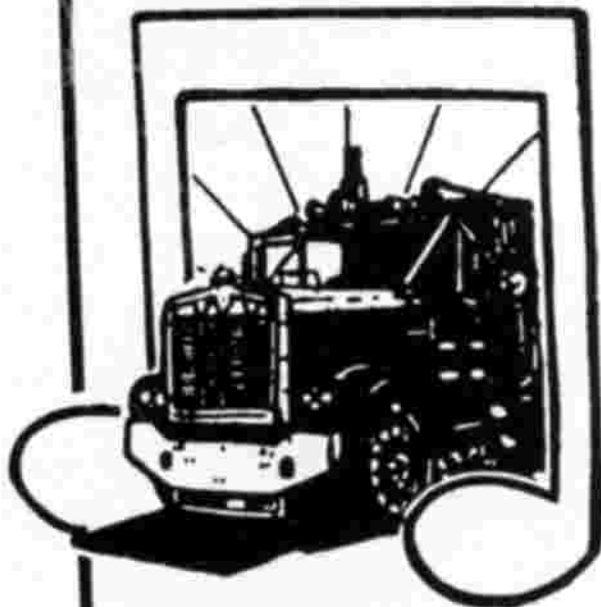
Legend played a wide variety of material - "Knock On Wood", "Light My Fire", "In The Midnight Hour", Beatles songs, two Lynyrd Skynyrd songs (surely you can guess which) for example - as tightly as one would expect from a band that gigs so often. Sensibly they play well-constructed medleys for most of their set; there is none of the embarrassing tuning-up and inane banter that mar the performances of beginners and superstars alike. All is conducted with good humour. Instrumental virtuosity is obvious without any displays of excess; guitar effects are used extensively but tastefully. Asked to describe the sound one would say 'early seventies', but then be unable to name a group from then that they are like. Legend have learnt several of the lessons of '76/77.

In their second set Legend played some of their own material and revealed an interesting flaw. Legend don't try to duplicate the original recordings of their cover versions, so one becomes used to a Legend sound - and yet, ironically, when it comes to their own material one starts thinking "that's a Dire Straits song; that's like Dr. Feelgood...." They even have a reggae song made up of Bob Marley titles, which seems even more incongruous. They always finish, however, with a cover which they do try to imitate - voices and all - very successfully: "Another Brick In The Wall."

Legend's main rivals in the area, in terms of sheer numbers of gigs played (and T-shirts sold) are ENERGY. This band too has a huge following. When they played the Glasshouse recently we all had to stand packed together like bottles in a milk crate; I cannot remember not being able to sit down there before. Their fans were paying 75p for the privilege of seeing a group they see free in local pubs most weeks.

Energy are more likely to be commercially successful - they are also younger. A year or so ago I described

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them as "Mud meets heavy metal". Now they are more contemporary albeit still eclectic. They play covers ranging from Rush through Z.Z. Top to U2 and Big Country. Like Legend they are able to mould these into their own sound (although I suspect this is due to more limited technical skills), but their own material fits in too. Their main asset though is, of course, their embodiment of their name. Dressed in tracksuits, sweatshirts and plimsoles they prance about throughout their set in a manner that would put most aerobics classes to shame. Unfortunately their first single did not capture their live appeal at all, and - unless it receives exceptional production - I suspect the next, "Too Good To Lose", won't either.

Another group whose name has increasingly copped up on the gig guides since summer is THE MADCAP LAUGHS. The Syd Barrett title led me to hope that this would be a new psychedelic band, but when I heard them at The Crown I was disappointed in that way - but encouraged in that they were not just a run-of-the-mill heavy rock band. Their choice of material, all covers I think, was notable for its unusually strong storylines - Dylan's "Hurricane" and The Beatles' "Rocky Raccoon", for example - and various bluesy ballads such as "Johnny 99" and "Flatfoot Sam". Of necessity the vocals are clear and expressive, and they also have two very competent electric guitarists who alternate rhythm and lead from song to song (although I was disappointed that they did not do so from verse to verse; one guitarist taking two indistinguishable solos in a song seemed pretty pointless). The Madcap Laughs are probably a bit too 'laid back', although for this reason I thought their version of Dylan's "One More Cup Of Coffee" was preferable to Legend's unnecessarily aggressive rendering.

The Crown, by the way, is nearly half an hour's walk along Lincoln Road from the city centre (The Norfolk Inn is about fifteen minutes), in New England. Its second bar has an entrance on Crown Street and has been renamed "Friends". When you walk in it looks unpromising; with close-patterned flowery wallpaper and mock gaslights it looks like a Victorian living room. When you look up though, you see a ceiling full of spotlights and speakers. It hosts several groups and popular discos each week and has brought welcome life to the now rather inappropriately named area.

Whereas I had seen groups at these venues before, I had not until recently been to either The White Lion or The Peacock - both have gigs on Monday nights when I am usually working. Over my holiday I had a Monday free and visited the two. Unfortunately it was snowing very heavily. When I arrived at The White Lion to see CUT 'N' RUN this seemed somehow appropriate. Inside it was almost deserted; huge - just like the saloons in western movies. Amusingly the first few customers in out of the blizzard resembled Alaskan prospectors.

It gradually became apparent that there was some doubt whether Cut 'n' Run were going to make it through the snow, so I decided to see THE BLUE MIST at The Peacock. I walked round the corner and down Bridge Street past Noel Cantwell's "Canters" and the new "Rinaldo's" nightspots which are bringing some life to the city centre (although not on such a night as that), to the start of London Road.

I was pleasantly surprised to find The Peacock so full I could only just get inside the door. With its potted plants and tables and chairs it looks like the sitting room of a private house; you expect the guitarist's mother to burst in and tell him to "turn down that row". The Blue Mist must have felt this, for after a couple of numbers they asked whether they could turn the volume up. "Of course" replied the landlord, "we usually have it so loud that the windows are close to bursting." Surrounded as it is by car parks and allotments, The Peacock can get away with this. In contrast to The White Lion, The Peacock is small, but it must be the best pub for any band just starting on the live circuit. You wouldn't need much more equipment than you rehearse with; it is too homely to be the slightest bit intimidating and you could fill the place if you worked on your friends and the publicity.

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THE BLUE MIST

As for The Blue Mist it wouldn't be very fair for me to say much about them as they are on my record label, although I did feel they performed too many obvious cover versions in their first set. They undervalue much of their original material, a synthesis of '60s beat and contemporary pop.

After that I returned to The White Lion but only two members of Cut 'n' Run had arrived. Fortunately they had contacted Steve Godfrey of TRAYLER and together with a drum machine they were gamely working their way through rock's equivalent of 'standard repertoire'. Their professionalism and dedication was admirable considering I must have been the only member of the tiny audience who was not related to them. Anyway it made me resolve to see the full group sometime.

This all seems to confirm that Peterborough has a very conservative rock scene. The reality is a little different: Peterborough has enough venues to provide groups like Legend and The Madcap Laughs with quite a good income, but its most contemporary-sounding groups such as CARE FOR A WALTZ? and PLASTIC HEROES are out performing in the major cities, and even further afield - as with the aptly named FIVE GO MAD IN EUROPE. They may play Peterborough only a small percentage of the times Legend do, but it will be in more venues on more occasions than most Cambridge groups play Cambridge.

That said, I must add that I remain somewhat disappointed by Plastic Heroes. When I first saw them over a year ago they seemed to be influenced by the most pretentious and doomy aspects of Spandau Ballet and Ultravox. I saw them again recently and they have tried to liven up the act, but by doing impersonations of

U2 that Mike Yarwood would be proud of - a similar route has been pursued by THE INLINE, recently enigmatically billed at The Glasshouse as "THE NEW WORLD IMMIGRANTS, Corby's answer to U2". All manner of bands, whether pop, punk or heavy metal, play U2 material these days, but to base your own material on Bono's vocal inflections and The Edge's guitar phrasing seems pointless, an admission of defeat. Plastic Heroes really must create their own sound or at least make sure that their newer, more powerful arrangement of R. Dean Taylor's hit "Ghost In My House" is their first single.

SUDDEN SWAY's much anticipated second session has at last been broadcast on John Peel's show. It was not as accessible as "Let's Evolve" and "The What And Why Present", the two items that made up the first session and themselves so different from anything else on Peel's eclectic programme.

MELBOURN ROCK CLUB

Fri 5 April
COLONEL GOMEZ

Fri 12 April
BORDEAUX

Fri 19 April
DUMPYS RUSTY NUTS

Fri 26 April
LARRY MILLER

Fri 3 May
FRIGIDAIREZ

Fri 10 May
NO GIG

Fri 17 May
LAUGHING SAM'S
DICE

MELBOURN SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB
THE MOOR, MELBOURN

The session comprised two "problem-solving broadcasts" sponsored by Cozytech and Sunnytech, divisions of The Society For An Untroubled Ecosystem Everywhere, sandwiched between demonstrations of "Hypnostroll Fast Life Data Collection", all under the aegis of Sudden Sway's Conceptat the ideas agency. The overall effect was like a collision of "The Hitch-hiker's Guide To The Galaxy", "Will Powers", "Saatchi & Saatchi and the Ambient series. Initially bewildering, then amusing, the tracks had a serious underlying theme. The "problem-solving broadcasts" were adverts for organisations promising a utopia run by some kind of sinister, paternalistic plutocracy: "Tomorrow's world in safe hands - while you play." Together the two sessions hint at an excitingly original vision with multi-media possibilities: computer programmes, posters, holiday brochures, games, never mind records and tapes.

On the following night I was surprised to hear VIRGINIA WOLF in session on Tommy Vance's "Into The Music". This wittily-named American band arrived in Peterborough in September, having toured France, Holland and Germany - including TV performances in the latter. Augmented by one or two locals, they performed regularly on the Peterborough circuit, rivalling Legend and Energy in number of gigs, playing mainly AOR, although occasionally getting heavier.

Unfortunately I only ever caught the last few numbers of one of their sets in an absolutely packed Gladstone Arms. The landlord believed they were one of the best bands who had ever played there, and they certainly gained a large following in a short space of time. Their Vance session, though, sounded oddly under-produced, and sadly none of it

sticks in my mind. Virginia Wolf played their last gig here in January and set off for the Bahamas on the liner "Oriana" as the resident band. From the Caribbean they will travel to the States to seek a record deal.



More recently THE LLOYD WATSON BAND demonstrated electric blues on a special '60s edition of Pete Sayers' show on television. They really stood out in a programme that missed its opportunities; there are many interesting young '60s-influenced bands who could have featured but the rest of the guests were middle-aged cabaret artistes wallowing in nostalgia. Members of the Lloyd Watson trio are middle-aged too, but their material - the blues - still seems timeless to these ears. Highlight of the show was an interview with Lloyd Watson's bassist Colin Hodgkinson. He recalled discovering the blues whilst performing in a Shadows-style band and his days with Alexis Korner (readers may have seen a whole concert of this duo's playing broadcast on Channel 4 last year); he also described how he had recently journeyed, at two days notice, to the Caribbean to record with Mick Jagger, and then played a solo version of Jesse Fuller's "San Francisco Babe" on the bass guitar in the fully-chorded style for which he has become justly famous.



PEOPLE'S RADIO

By JULIAN HYDE

After having been down to our local BBC station to spectate live, energetic radio over the last couple of months, the idea for this article was sparked off. I thought that I might be allowed to offer some of my thoughts on Radio, collected from past chats and experiences.

Just before leaving my home base of Leicestershire, I was sadly able to watch the gradual collapse of the brave Leicestershire Community Radio. Possibly using them as a model community station, I can convey some of the admirable ideas LCR began after the breakdown of Centre Radio, an ILR station. The gap left had soon to be filled. Attractive was the plan that the LCR operation was to be run on a personal level. An 'action' desk was to be incorporated, with the purpose that ordinary members of the public could come into the station with ideas and news. These were to be processed by professional staff with public collaboration and co-operation.

Phone-ins were to be a regular feature with advice and counselling, and with statutory and non-statutory agents being present to represent and forward their views. For example, employment agencies, Help The Aged, Chambers Of Commerce etc. With an active listeners organisation, and attention to the regular audience surveys, the community station would have been certain to have gained the whole county's endorsement. Unfortunately the competed for franchise was won by another bouncy new ILR station. A needed alternative service ("We do not wish to compete with BBC Radio Leicester") may have been lost. A tighter communications bridge, linking the isolated rural areas, the airforce base family communities, the larger market towns and the industrial city, would have been provided by the prepared station. The basis of the station's idea was to use local ideas, culture and history of the county to work out a programme schedule.

Of course any viable station aims to provide a "sound entertainments programme" for the whole of its city and county and the needs of its people regardless of class, sex, race or language. Allocating time slots to those whose say is neglected - e.g. ethnic city groups - can become a racial attitude. A balance must be sought. The valuable versatility of radio for that

purpose is summed up by Steve of 'Free The Airways' campaign. "Radio is now so inexpensive and technically simple that it could be used by any group who needs to get their message across." He referred to the many who don't always receive fair coverage of opinion on the existing media e.g. the unemployed, trade unions, homosexuals.

To close this article, here is an optimistic point for those feeling that pirate radio has wedged itself into a rut. I return to Steve to conclude: "Too many of the pirate stations see pirate radio as an end in itself. The thrill of being on air and broadcasting your own kind of music should only be the beginning of a useful community service."

I hope all stations will eventually evolve or branch out eventually to become harder, indispensable city nuclei.

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DAVID BRAGG'S

BOOKS & RECORDS

OK, as is his wont, the editor has given some space for me to waffle on about records, books, or whatever; so here's my latest selection for BSN.

First off, compilations: A fair few around at the moment, and very good some of them are too. Afficianados of the Australian scene ought to get "Beyond The Southern Cross" on Ink Records. It includes tracks by some of the lesser known bands such as The Clean (who are actually from New Zealand), Samurai Thrash and the now defunct Whirly Whirld, plus things from the more well-known Tactics, Triffids and Severed Heads (who are soon to visit the UK). French cult label, New Rose, have released a sampler called "La Vie En Rose", pressed on pink vinyl and in a pink box. Again well-known bands like Shoes or Chris Bailey are on it, plus new finds like The Primevals from Glasgow or Plan 9. Both of these samplers are double albums so they're not as expensive as first seems.

If you fancy the pschedelia from the USA check out The Rebel Kind on Lolita. Being a French import it is somewhat cheaper than The Radio Tokyo Tapes on Ear Movie. However, purchasers of both will be able to tune in, turn on and drop out with the likes of Three O'Clock, Unclaimed, The Point and The United States Of Existance, plus regulars like The Long Ryders and The Bangles.

Making Waves used to be more folk orientated, but they've landed themselves Big Daddy and their modern r'n'r pastiche bound LP. An amusing platter, worth listening to so you can play spot the influences. The Georgia Satellites have a mini-LP out on the same label. Nothing pretentious, just another rock band. However, worth a listen. I've found it quite nice and certainly better than some of the dross on the loose at the moment.

As far as 'local' bands are concerned Robyn Hitchcock and The Egyptians' "Fegmania" is well worth the money. I feel that with this album and band he's finally come of age. Not putting down any previous efforts, just that this is better. They should be on the Whistle Test on April 16th. Katrina And The Waves' remixed album is very good as well - import again, so the price is

well over the top; let's hope for a UK release.

On to books: Omnibus have two pocket discographies, of Elvis Costello and Eric Clapton. Very comprehensive and well worth the £4 or so each, even though they might look a little small at first glance. There's a book called "Turning On - Rock Of The Late Sixties" from Orbis; this is a must - it's £6, and is basically collected from all the '60s articles in "The History Of Rock" series. Don't get it if you have the series, but if you don't, this book is invaluable.

Penny Stalling's "Rock 'n' Roll Confidential" is full of illicit and dubious scam on the 'pop world'. Don't know how much of it is true; don't care really! Anyway it's from Vermillion, and costs just under £8 (and Steve Kerri's still reading my copy).

Well I reckon that's about it for this issue. As far as live bands in Cambridge go at the moment, I recommend The Red Army Choir, Fever Garden (especially when they've a few more gigs under their belts), The Herbs (as per Fever Garden - see my review elsewhere in this issue), The Deviance (who I've yet to see actually playing a full set, but I live in hopes); and outside Cambridge, watch out for The Long Ryders, True West (catch them both together at The Mean Fiddler in Harlesden - which is being filmed for The Whistle Test - on April 18th), Green On Red and Severed Heads.

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CAMETAL MATTERS

By LYN GUY

Well, as Mr. Mackenzie promised in the Rock Competition issue, here I am again. Although it is well out of date, I have included my 'Groundhogs at the Rock Club' review as it was such an excellent evening out at Melbourn. They will be back on July 5th and are well worth the trek into the wilds. Also to be seen at the Melbourn Rock Club are Rock Comp audience award winners Colonel Gomez on April 5th, the return of Dumpy and his Nuts on April 19th and (one of my favourite club bands) Larry Miller returns on April 26th. All these gigs are highly recommended, so don't say I didn't warn you if you miss all the fun. The Melbourn Rock Club stands a good chance of becoming THE PLACE to play in this area, provided you - the punters - can be bothered to support it. Summer is coming, so go on, get out of town for a change to a warm, friendly atmosphere and some (usually) good Rock. I'll be looking out for some new faces in the coming months. Now on with the show....

When THE GROUNDHOGS played at Melbourn I knew Maurice and Co had pulled off quite a considerable coup the minute I drove into the carpark; parking spaces were at a highly unusual premium! I am just old enough to remember the Corn Exchange playing host to Tony McPhee's original band, though at the time the sort of blues/rock they played wasn't quite to my taste. But, times and tastes change and now, 11 years on, the blues are beginning to acquire an ever increasing appeal to my ears. So how could I resist this chance of sampling the music of Mr. McPhee as played by himself plus Alan Fish on bass and Mick Kirton on drums. Quite simply - I couldn't.

The band have been playing to full houses throughout their tour (some of them even selling out behind the bar!!) and Melbourn Rock Club was no exception. The crowd assembled easily topped any I had previously joined there.

The set was mainly a revival from the original albums such as "Hogwash", "Thank Christ For The Bomb" and "Split". It was raw, basic, bluesy-rock brilliance played with enjoyment and received with much appreciation. Alan looked very at home in a musical structure simpler than that of Tredegar, the band he left to join

Tony, and the bass line came through well. As for Mick - even with a plaster cast on his right wrist his drumming was very powerful and is, I imagine, quite phenomenal when on top form; he certainly did very well lasting through 2 hours on stage. Whilst they were playing I was thinking of Rory Gallagher and wondering why on earth hasn't Tony McPhee maintained the same status? It is guitarists such as he that paved the way for today's HM axe-heroes. On the night I heard him play blues through to hard rock and loved it. So far as I know only one song was played from the new album - the title track, "Razors Edge" - which was still basic but heavier than the old numbers. Not knowing the albums put me at a disadvantage as I was unable to catch the song titles. But I do know "Cherry Red" was played as part of four encores, after being called for all evening. Heads were bobbing up and down at the front and I was bouncing about in my seat. Ah yes, this was a most successful gig. Next time I shall be down the front minus my notebook and plus my dancing shoes.

Way back in the mists of time there was walking this earth a species of large hairy creature called mammoth. Now we have touring this country a group of five not particularly large, but reasonably hairy Welshmen - going out under the moniker of MAMMATH. Only I don't think they will ever achieve the mega-stardom needed to send them on a trail of mammoth metallic mayhem across the world. In fact I shall be surprised if they progress beyond club and support status. The problem isn't that they are bad at what they do, it is that Mammath have jumped upon the HM bandwagon, a vehicle which is so vastly over-populated that all but the very best find themselves left by the wayside.

At Melbourn I saw Mammath thrash their way through a set of typical HM featuring screaming vocals, duelling guitars and frantic posing. The lead guitarist seemed unable to decide whether he wanted to be Eddie Van Halen or Michael Schenker - he played Eddie's riffs whilst bent over a white Flying Vee in true Schenker crotch-thrusting style. They suffered from a total lack of light and shade in their compositions, even the obligatory

ballad (called "Baby") was overrun by loud, pounding drums. "New Orleans" got a few feet moving, so they played it again as an encore. After a break to sooth the singer's aching larynx, another three songs were repeated and a thrash version of "Paranoid" was played. On this particular night I had got my dancing shoes moving out of sheer boredom, but hearing one of HR's classics thrashed out so was just too much. Having seen every outworn cliché in the book used on stage, I retired for the night. Personally I'm sorry to say I'd rather see Mammath join the mammaths in extinction.

Being the only local HR/HM writer can be quite a hefty responsibility at times; knowing the local musos personally makes it very difficult to be objective when asked to review a gig or demo. So it was with some trepidation that I set my mind to reviewing State Of Mind's demo tape. Y'see, their particular style of heavy rock doesn't appeal to me. The band have recently added keyboards to their line-up and are putting new material into practice; also they hope to start gigging regularly. Anyway - to the tape, which I listened to more than once and came up with these comments. The main redeeming feature is the lead guitar; Elvis does play well, but after a while his solos

all begin to sound the same. He also tackles vocals and favours a nasal style which lacks variation in pitch and has little depth - definitely a better guitarist than vocalist. The vocals also tend to get lost in the mix, making the lyrics somewhat inaudible. This is a shame because, from what I did catch, there are some interesting ideas in there.

I heard references to dragons, wizards, battles and even acid rain (I think) - a change from the usual wine, wimmin and sex found in 'rock-n-roll' these days. The bass, keyboards and drums lack definition, sometimes sounding distorted and staying behind the lead guitar most of the time. The intro to "Call Of The Sun Dragon" does give the rhythm section a chance though - Martyn's drumming exhibiting a good pounding beat that sounds great at that point. All six tracks are very similar, the main difference being changes in tempo. Obviously the lack of a proper recording studio can be detrimental - "Bedroom Recordings Inc." as a label is rather appropriate as the tape does sound as if it was recorded in a large bedroom.

So, not my cup of tea; but I hope State Of Mind keep at it and work at extending their appeal beyond the bounds of Cambridge. Like my Dad keeps saying - "Everyone has to start somewhere!"

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LIVE IN THE CITY?

THE SMITHS - Ipswich Gaumont

What can be said in the traditional guitar, bass and drums format that has not been already said?

In a series of chart attacks, from the fragile "This Charming Man" to this year's sublime "How Soon Is Now", The Smiths have founded a distinctive mix of plainsong and ringing guitar. They have established an off-centre pop that misses the mainstream but doesn't miss the point; they are (you might say) essential but not quintessential.

The media spotlight usually falls on front-man Morrissey. But for me, guitarist Johnny Marr is the power and glory of the Smiths. Though there was little in the way of guitar 'solos', their debut LP was dominated by the crystal sound of Marr's guitar. The band is not led, but driven by guitar.

So, can they deliver the goods live? Can they overcome the restrictions of their monochrome singer and workmanlike rhythm section to please this punter? Can the mopp-topped vegetarians bring home the bacon?

To the band's credit, the most powerful performances of the Ipswich gig came during the songs from the more difficult "Meat Is Murder" LP. The drama began to unfold in "The Schoolmaster Ritual", and there was a glimpse of the power that the band could command in "That Joke Isn't Funny Anymore". And they bravely used the ponderous title song from "Meat Is Murder" to bring their set to a subdued close.

By comparison, their earlier work sounded competent but felt uninspired in delivery. Even "Hand In Glove" - a rolling wave of guitar on record - was tossed indifferently to the crowd.

So the verdict on this showing must be good, but not great. The challenge for The Smiths now is to bring out the undoubted strength of their material on stage as well as on plastic.

TOM WHITE

THE LONG RYDERS - Dingwalls

I've been listening to this band on record for the past year, and finally a chance to see them, although I'd been warned that they weren't as good live as they are on record. So off I went to London.

After having interviewed the band at their hotel for the Radio Cambridgeshire Rockshow, I found my way back to Dingwalls to find that a lot of people had the same idea as me, including, to name but a few: Jake Riviera, Andrew Lauder, Pete Frame, David Hepworth, Andy Kershaw, Robyn Hitchcock, Andy Metcalfe, Robin Wills, Nigel Cross (of "Bucketful Of Brains") and Elvis Costello. Sid Griffin had broken his 12 string Rickenbacker the night before in Portsmouth, and Elvis had lent his to him at short notice.

Anyway I'm happy to report that the Long Ryders are the finest rock band I have seen since the Flamin' Groovies. Jesus Christ, these boys know what to play and how to play it. A combined sound of The Byrds, Burritos, psychedelic punk, Hank Williams and The Clash. My advice is go and see the Long Ryders soon; if you can't, then go and buy "The Native Sons", and wait for the next album "5 By 5" (I wonder what stone that name rolled out from under). And there's an upcoming Whistle Test special on them and True West coming to you screens in a few months.

DAVE BRAGG

THE HERBS - Burleigh Arms

Look out, Cambridge has a true garage band (well apparently there's The Kildares as well, but I haven't seen them yet). A strange sound, mainly because they have the tendency to throw in the odd jazz type chords - which confuses me, being brought up on the likes of The Kingsmen, Electric Prunes and 13th Floor Elevators. But these boys do not seem to be aware of their roots. Their version of "Hey Joe" was copped from the John Peel show - they have never heard of The Leaves' version, which I assume this was. They also cover "Sunday Morning" by the Velvets. The bass player also has an amazingly whining voice straight out of The Barbarians or Mouse And The Traps. So go and see them soon, but stand at the back or risk being trampled by idiot dancers at the front.

DAVE BRAGG

GIG GUIDE

APRIL

- Thu 4: Cambridge, Burleigh - I.B.O.E.
Bedford, Corn Exchange - Torbruk
- Fri 5: Cam, Burleigh - Orlando
Melbourn, SSC - Colonel Gomez
Northampton, Black Lion - Haze
- Sat 6: Cam, Burleigh - Frigidaires
Cam, Alma - Rover Boys
Cam, Sea Cadets - Seducer
Milton Keynes, Peartree - Haze
- Sun 7: P'boro, Glasshouse(lunchtime) -
Exploding Hamsters
P'boro, Gladstone Arms (eve) -
Exploding Hamsters
Kettering, Rising Sun - Haze
Norwich, UEA - Lloyd Langton Band
- Mon 8: Ipswich, Gaumont - Shakin'Stevens
- Tue 9: Cam, Burleigh - The Herbs
Ipswich, Gaumont - Shakin'Stevens
- Wed 10: Cam, Burleigh - One Night Stand
- Thu 11: London, Mean Fidler - Pete Rowan
and Flaco Jimenez
- Fri 12: Cam, Burleigh - Real To Real
Melbourn, SSC - Bordeaux
Colchester, Woods - The Specimen
- Sat 13: Cam, Burleigh - Your Dinner
Cam, Alma - The Detective
Cam, Sea Cadets - Caroline
Roadshow with Sohho

- Sun 14: P'boro, Key - Lloyd Langton
Stevenage, Bowes Lyons - Specimen
- Mon 15: Dunstable, Queensway - The Alarm
- Tue 16: Cam, Burleigh - The Kildares
BBC 2 WHISTLE TEST - Robyn
Hitchcock & Egyptians
- Wed 17: Cam, Burleigh - Mac & White
St. Albans, City Hall - Mama's
Boys
- Thu 18: Kings Lyn, Blue & Gold Club -
Dumpy's Rusty Nuts
- Fri 19: Cam, Guildhall - John Cooper
Clarke + ?
Cam, Burleigh - Compared To What
Cam, HRSFC - Double Yellow Line,
Montreal, Backlash, New Swift
Melbourn, SSC - Dumpys Rusty Nuts
Huntingdon, Waterloo - Short Stay

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Rover Boy Combo - 355702
Paul Edwards/In Parallel - 212352
The Detective - 68703
Mandy Morton - 351033
Toby Jug And Washboard - 240996
Holders Heroes - 860638
World's End Band - 246327
Su Lyn - 313250
2 The Limit - 845026
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