

Blue Suede

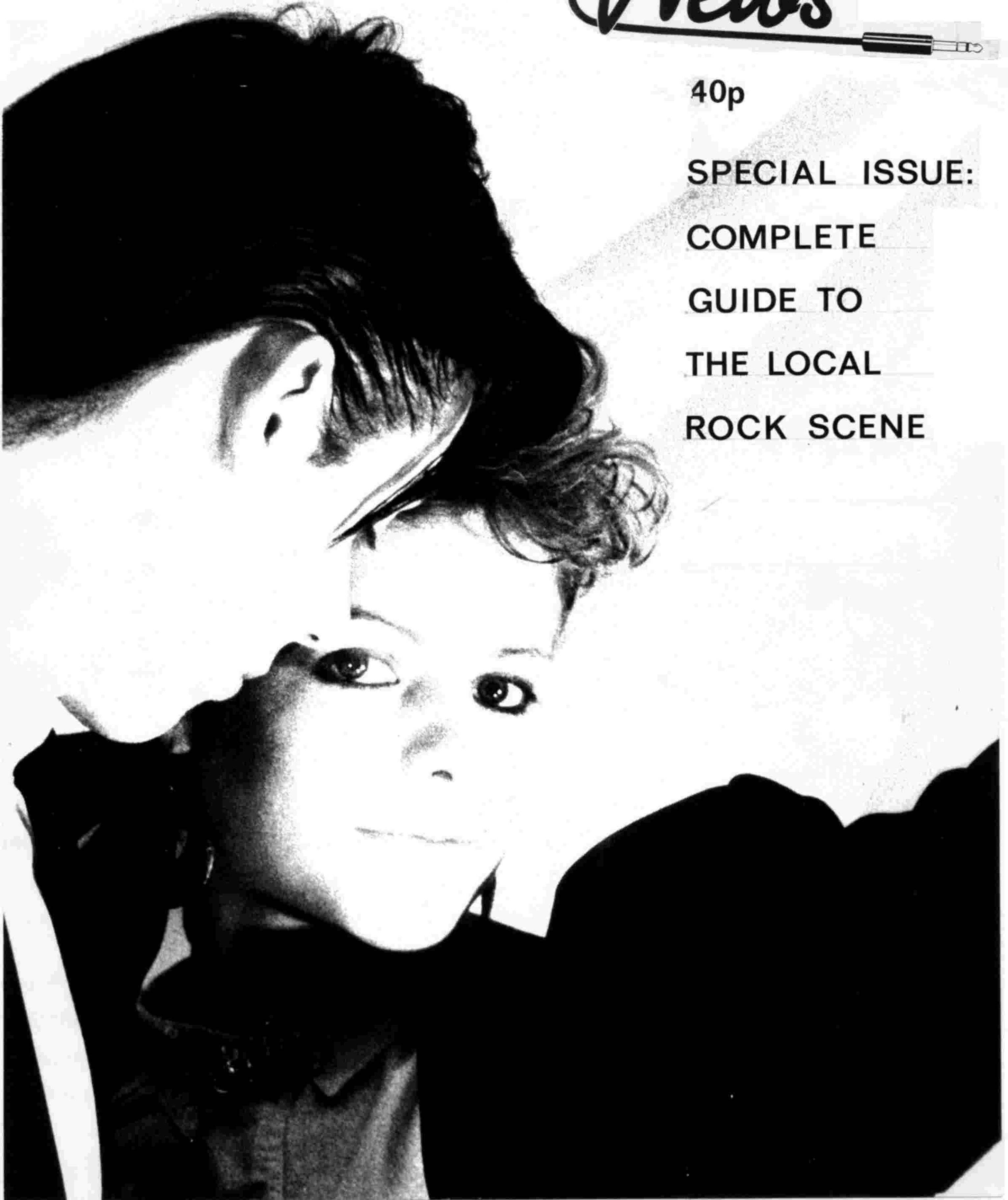
CAMBRIDGE'S

ROCK RAG

News

40p

SPECIAL ISSUE:
COMPLETE
GUIDE TO
THE LOCAL
ROCK SCENE



Blue Suede

CAMBRIDGE'S ROCK RAG

News

5, Beaumont Road,
Cambridge.
Tel. 248341.

Editor: Graeme Mackenzie

This special edition of Blue Suede News is the annual guide to who's who, what's what and where it's at on the Cambridge music scene. I hope it will be of particular use to new students and other new arrivals in the city. It is entirely the editor's work. Regular readers will note that it is not accorded an issue number, both because it is a special issue and because it is not professionally printed as usual. This is partly a reflection of the haste with which it is put together, since the Editor is busy elsewhere, and partly as an economy measure.

THE MEDIA

Blue Suede News exists to chronicle all local rock, pop and associated music - but it's up to you to tell us what's happening. It's open to all to write in, on local or national events and it comes out rather irregularly but roughly monthly. The next issue will be No. 21 so it's not just a flash in the pan. Back numbers and subscriptions on application to the editor - advertising welcome (indeed vital) and cheap. Look forward to hearing from you.

Other essential reading: Cambridge Weekly News - Jon Lewin's Rock Column; thorough and interesting. Cambridge Evening News on Tuesdays - Pete Mitchell's Pop column; disappointingly thin, but essential for you as publicity for events, records etc.

Stop Press, weekly - erratic rock coverage, but generally reasonably serious and accurate when it appears. Broadsheet, weekly - pretentious, prejudiced and generally unhelpful too over the last year; hope for better things this year, at least information. RADIO: THE ROCKSHOW on Radio Cambs; Sats at 12 midday. Complete gig guide; variety of music (some, but not enough, local).

THE BANDS

Though Cambridge doesn't have the greatest history of producing nationally prominent bands (Pink Floyd, Quiver, Soft Boys, Shakatak, Katrina And The Waves, Roaring Boys) it has always had a thriving local scene producing a stream of musicians who go on to better things elsewhere. Currently you will find Ricky Wills in Foreigner, Mathew Seligman in David Bowie's band and Andy Metcalfe in Squeeze - just to mention the chart-toppers; while in the past names like Jerry Shirley (Humble Pie), Fred Frith and friends (Henry Cow), Simon Boswell (Live Wire), Rod Latter (Adverts), Tot Taylor (Mari Wilson), Alvin Gibbs (UK Subs), Roger Jackson (Marilyn) and the three Dolly Mixtures (Capt. Sensible) have contributed to keeping the Cambridge connection going.

Most of these names you won't come across these days as they are well in the past, but there are a number of currently successful bands that either came out of Cambridge or have Cambridge connections, and bands that have recently left Cambridge in pursuit of fame and fortune that you will still hear talked of - and may even see performing locally. Top of the tree, following their No.8 hit in the UK charts (No. 9 in US) with "Walking On Sunshine" are Katrina And The Waves. Two of the band still live in the city - though they're mostly abroad these days - and guitarist Kimberley Rew retains an active interest in the local scene. Ex-students The Roaring Boys still appear from time to time, and their contemporaries Harvey And The Wallbangers (though in a different sphere of music) make regular return visits. Ex-Soft Boys, Robyn Hitchcock And The Egyptians, would like to play here again if somebody offers them a decent gig - their agent, who also handles K & The Waves, is local lad John Gammon at Concorde Management & Promotions; Tel. 01-735-8171.

Most recent exiles are last year's student raves President Reagan Is Clever - the band certainly are, and doubtless will be back from time to time to prove it. They join the previous years' local

college circuit favourites The Face - whose records you can find on the local Wimp label - who have changed their name to This Big Emotion and are also keen to come and play up here again (contact Dave Watson on 01-263-8476 or at London Records - part of Phonogram). Finally, not exiled, but split, are - or were - The Great Divide. Their name won't die both because they were the most clever and inventive local band since the Soft Boys and because not only do they have four singles to be remembered by (one on Wimp - plus a track on "Honey For Tea" the Wimp Compilation album) - two on Ensign, and one 12" on Blue Murder (through Backs) but Wimp and/or Backs are planning to release a retrospective album which will prove just what a sad loss occurred when they split up. As yet none of the various offshoot groups have come anywhere near matching the Great Divide at their best - and nor have any other contemporary local groups except Katrina And The Waves.

So what of the present contenders? There follows a personal view of the most important local bands of the moment, which I hope will act as some sort of guide as to who's who on the scene right now. It excludes most of last year's student bands since it's impossible to say if, and in what form, they will appear again this year. I shall be happy to hear from this year's crop of student bands with a view to inclusion in future editions of the mag - and you are welcome to write in with alternative views on (or corrections of mistakes about) all the bands mentioned hereafter.

YOUR DINNER

Still for many people the best live band in the city, but with a future plagued by doubts about their continued ability to get themselves together and translate that awesome stage power and musical eccentricity into vinyl that will take the nation by storm. While they continue to make occasional appearances in London - often supporting names like Toots And The Maytals or Lee Perry - one feels that their unsuccessful brush (off) with Virgin may have reinforced their lack of interest (ability?) in buckling down to the hard work required to break out of the local star status into national prominence. The heavy involvement of Chris and Mark in their recently created, and very successful Makka recording studio also means that some of their time and energy is being diverted into that instead of into the band. They also have a tendency not to play locally unless they are

played a lot of money, which is fair enough perhaps if they can get away with it, but it does mean your chances of seeing them at their best - i.e. live - are very limited (though they are very generous with their services to benefit gigs in aid of causes they favour). What will you see if you do catch up with them? A wierd and wonderful mixture of Madness and Talking Heads, white reggae, Affro, punk and shades of the sort of anarchic hippie influences that are reflected perhaps more in their lifestyles than their music, which is anything but laid-back. Make sure you see them if you can; if you can't they have one 12" out (on Food Gun, through Backs) and another one on the way soon. Contact: 240034/66534(Makka Studios).

HOT FLESH QUINTET will be an acoustic version of Your Dinner - when they appear.

SUN YA GAL feature Your Dinner's previous percussion player, Senagalese rhythm master Sgar Ngom, along with a couple of ex-Hondos and others yet to be decided upon. They'll be playing fairly free-form Afro influenced music, and will be well worth watching out for.

HONDO

Cambridge's only real reggae band - long-running and now down to a basic two-piece employing when necessary session players to fill them out. Hardly ever seen locally these days so I can say little about them except that they have always played well in the past and have had a couple of 7" singles and a track on the three year old Cambridge Compilation album on Wimp Records released over the years.

STORMED

More white reggae with Talking Heads influences (they do a stunning cover of "Psycho Killer") from a band who inevitably get compared to the Dinners - and never unfavourably. Being only a four piece (no keyboards and extra percussion - but they don't need the latter, having in Chris Mann an extraordinarily powerful drummer) they are sparser, more direct and in some ways more powerful, if lacking in some of the Dinners versatility and - when they're on form - their sheer magic. Stormed are also more overtly political in their lyrics, though they don't believe in ramming solutions down your throats. A great band with some great songs, though as yet no records out. They do,



BOO HEWARDINE - THE GEORGIA PEACH.

however, have a couple of tracks on the latest Compilation tape from Peeved Records. They play regularly so you ought to be able to catch them - do so, they manage to combine irresistible dance music with meaningful songs and a wish to entertain visually as well as aurally - and in the aural department may have a few interesting and novel ideas emerging as Chris Mann's solo projects develop and perhaps influence Stormed as well.

Contact: 321885/327211.

FLAB is one of Chris Mann's solo ventures. Very electronic, it's been compared to The Jesus And Mary Chain, and can be heard on the first Peeved Tape - and soon apparently live, which will be very interesting.

CHRISTOPHER IN HEAVEN is the other Mann solo project - otherwise known as Chris Mann Reggae Allstars, which just about explains it. Contact Chris on 871319.

MILLIONS FLEAI

Another band featuring Chris Mann, this is the new Mark Graham big band - but stylistically it's not much like the late-lamented SITFO, despite the presence of the same vocal pairing; the excellent Jane Edwards and Steve Breeze. As yet they've only done the one gig, and their appearances are likely to be rare, as the band are split between here and London, and all busy in other fields. Worth seeing when they do appear as they have a lot of potential, though as yet their musical identity is hard to pin down. They seem to have come up with a variety of obscure songs to cover - reflecting the various tastes of the members - the best known of which are "My Boy Lollipop" and "Superstition". They do have one or two powerful originals though, from the pens of Mark and of Steve Penn. Steve's presence not only provides another reminder of what we've lost with the demise of the Great Divide, but adds to his songs another great singer for the band, and a very powerful guitarist.

Contact Mark on Stretham(9889)600.

THE HAPPY HOUR

The new project for the Great Divide's drummer Ed and The Face's bass player, Trevor, who here sings and writes much of the material. Early days yet, which probably explains why too much of that material sounds the same - and all in a melodic early Orange Juice type vein; a bit different for Cambridge and

from their previous efforts (the bass player was in The Brink, a sort of punk/Simple Minds type band) and as such worthy our our future attention. Contact Ed on Fowlmere 578.

THE GEORGIA PEACH/THE BIBLE

Potentially the most interesting of the Great Divide's split-offs since it features the extraordinary talent of Boo Hewardine teamed up with ex-Wobbly Jellies, Milestones, Telephone Bill and millions others' drummer Tony Shepherd, who here turns to the keyboards as well as things percussive. As ever with Boo there are some great songs and inspired presentation - though as yet the lack of a full band seems to restrict their live impact. I can't wait to hear the results of their recent studio session in Spaceward though, some of which may appear on vinyl via Backs, through whom the Great Divide put out their last single. The lads are looking for lots of gigs so book them now, or at least see them.

Contact Boo 353137.

FEET FIRST are a jazz/funk outfit featuring, among others, the Great Divide's first bass player, Steve Bone.

PERFECT VISION

John Peel favourites from Cambridge, this largely ex-student band feature among their number one of the best bass players in town in James Daniel, and his colleague from an early venture called The Students(that also featured Tony Shepherd, now of Georgia Peach) busy rock journalist Jon Lewin - whose column in the Cambridge Weekly News and Gig Guide on the Radio Cambridgeshire Rockshow provide the best means of finding out what's on week by week. Partly because Jon Lewin is renowned for expressing his criticism of other local bands rather harshly (though often the content of his criticism is fair even if the language he uses goes over the top - or used to; he's mellowing in his old age, a bit!) and partly because his own band is a bit of an aquired taste - which his critics don't want to bother aquiring - PV are not universally popular in the city. Early criticism tended to centre on their use of a drum machine (though once they did have a drummer) which was blamed for making them a mechanical band. That they were rather mechanical can be seen in retrospect to have had little to do with the machine and everything to do with their material and their performance - and incidentally with their response to

6.
criticism. As current Smash Hits staff writer Chris Heath wrote for BSN while still a student here two years ago, PV tried to make a virtue of being - as I described them myself at first - a 'difficult' band. Now however that they've been accorded praise from high quarters, and of course now that they're that much older and more experienced both as performers and above all as songwriters, they've learnt to be more relaxed and confident in their approach to their business, with immensely rewarding results. They've two excellent 12" singles out on their own "Leave It Art" label (through Backs) and another may be in the pipeline. In some ways they're a band suited to expressing themselves on vinyl, but recent live performances have been something of a revelation to one like me who did find them difficult to enjoy at first. Though their are still one or two overly mechanical numbers left in the set, they sing with more tunefulness and play with more melody while in no way losing their intensity and attack - indeed paradoxically they're even more intense now than ever, quite capable of weaving their own sort of spell over the listener prepared to surrender to their own peculiar rhythm. Hard work at first maybe - and the band think it should be, after all they put a lot of hard work into it too - it's well worth getting to know Perfect Vision and their work since they are without a doubt an original, interesting and (lyrically particularly) important band. Whether they are ever commercially successful on a national scale remains to be seen - it's quite possible that they'll continue to evolve towards a more commercial style without, in their own terms, selling out; a bit like New Order perhaps? Who knows; in the meantime they play regularly around both town and gown, so judge for yourself.
Contact Jon and Steve on 313564.

THE DEVIANCE

Living proof that a drum machine does not condemn a band to being mechanical this high powered intellectual trio (all currently engaged on Ph.D.s) happen to have some of the best commercial songs I've heard out of Cambridge since Katrina and The Waves, along with excellent playing and singing. Indeed, in Jim Scopes they have a singer (and songwriter) of immense talent who despite still being a little nervous on stage has great presence and 'star quality'. He's backed

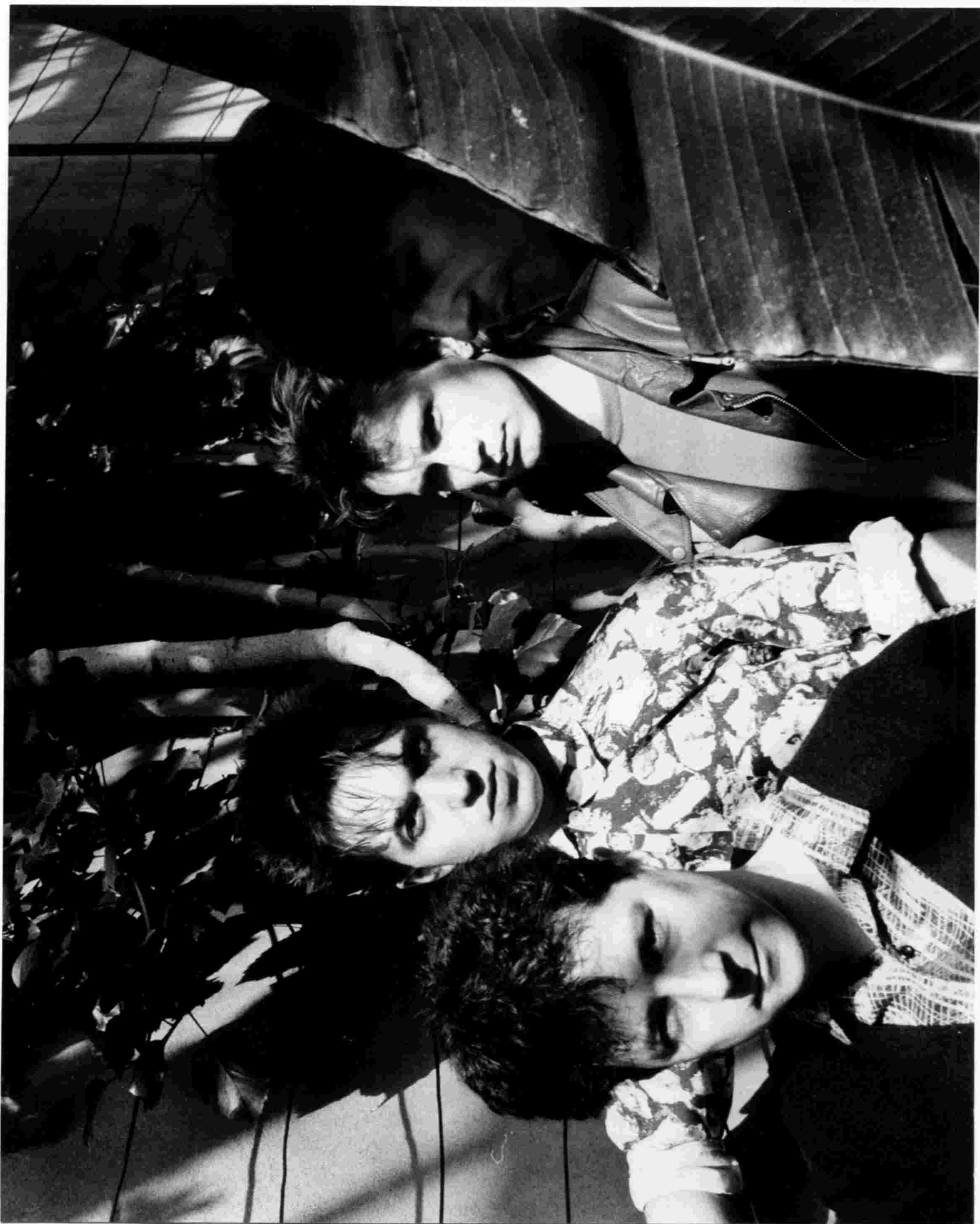
up by a very solid bass line from Dom Emery and some very striking guitar playing from John Thuburn who can turn on the solos like Mark Knopfler but generally eschews them in favour of a slightly chunkier sort of Johnny Marr approach. The band's musical influences are very diverse, stretching from The Cocteau Twins to Led Zeppelin, via the likes of Magazine, Sisters Of Mercy and The Teardrop Explodes - but it's from the latter rather than the original 60s bands they have been compared with (e.g. Love) that they get their slight psychedelic influences. Like all the best bands you'd be hard put to find one label to cover them, so let's just stick 'good', because that's what they are. No records yet, but it's worth buying the Peeved Tape, Vol 1, just for them.
Contact Dom 60124.

EXPLODING HAMSTERS

Eight piece latin/salsa/funk band featuring the best brass section in town (or in fact, half in town since at least one of them is living in London now he's graduated). Very tight, hard working outfit with some excellent songs, two of which you can hear on the Peeved Compilation Tape, Volume 1. It'll be interesting to see if the Hamsters can stick together now that they're all in the ex-student category and having to worry about where the next crust is coming from; they may well find, however, as proven entertainers that they can do better than most in earning quite a few crusts from their music. Quite whether they can create an original enough persona with sufficient material worthy of a wider audience remains to be seen - but for now they are one of the most popular live acts in the city.
Contact Jane 63172.

CAMERA SHY

Runners-up in this year's Cambridge Rock Competition this pop/funk outfit have attracted quite a bit of interest in London as well as locally. They are another duo, Graham Buxton and Chris Bartlett who use session players to record with and play live - not that they actually have done a lot of the latter since the competition. Graham and Chris are both seasoned performers, however, and are proving to be quite talented songwriters and arrangers, so it will be worth watching out for any gigs they may arrange in the future, not to mention for any records that may come out of their busy recording activity. Two tracks on



PERFECT
VISION

the second Peeved tape.
Contact Graham on Histon 3816.

JAILBREAKERS are Graham Buxton's other band of the moment. They are a very 'live' rock 'n' roll band playing it as it used to be played in the fifties and sixties, and are based in Haverhill.

EXCESS TEMPO

One of the longest running bands in the city, they used to be called (and still are by many of us, since they persist in changing their name) Tranzista. They not only share a drummer with Camera Shy (he's the very marvellous Chris Maitland) but they slightly similar in musical style. If anything though Tempo are less soulful and more big-production pop. Indeed their live show is a pretty spectacular technological triumph, though unfortunately not all the music measures up to their best two or three numbers which are very good indeed. Since perseverance is half the name of the game in the pop world (and our own Katrina And The Waves prove the point) Excess Tempo may surprise a lot of local cynics yet; and in Ray Northfield, their manager, they have an asset that many of the other (and some of them potentially better) town bands lack.
Contact Ray on 247802.

THE LONELY

Veterans of the Cambridge scene this band has over the years had members who have been in or played with the likes of K and The Waves, Roaring Boys, Squeeze - as their leader local legend Ted Koehorst will be the first to point out. Ted himself is a fine guitarist and over the years has written a number of good songs for the band, which with an excellent drummer in Martin Scott (who works for Phonogram) and singing bassist Bob Jakins to assist in arrangement always comes across as very professional and keen to share their own obvious pleasure in playing with the audience. One track on Wimp Comp. album and a Cassette album of their own material called The Lonely Years available from Ted; they tell us that there's a vinyl album on the way, so look out.
Contact Ted on 246670.

THE LIGHT BLUES are Ted's other band - a never-rehearsed r 'n' b jam with variable line-up that usually features Radio Cambs DJ Nick Barraclough on vocals and the truly wonderful Pete Towers on guitar - Cambridge's Mr. Blues indeed.

THE 909s are Pete Towers regular band, except that they can't find a decent blues singer to complement the second guitarist/singer Jon Ward. His driving Wilko-type playing is the perfect foil for Pete's exquisite solos and with the right singer and regular gigging this band would wipe the floor with the many r 'n' b outfits about town. 243144.

BETWEEN THE LINES

This Harlow based band (but with a Cambridge bass-player) have exactly the singer that the 909s need in the marvellous Madjitey. Carl is the successor to a line of locally connected black soul singers stretching back to a fellow called Fitz who played with Foreigner's Cambridge born bass player in the Soul Committee in the sixties. Whether singing a slow blues or an up-tempo r 'n' b/soul number he's a natural and while the rest of the band don't provide him with quite the right sort of material to make the most of his talents, they are nonetheless a storming r 'n' b/soul band well worth booking for the college bop where bopping is really required.
Contact Jumbo on 892736.

FRIGIDAIRE

The most popular Cambridge-based r 'n' b band for the last couple of years; guaranteed to get any party going with their raw-edged rendering of some classic covers in the rock 'n' roll and blues vein.
Contact 247136/316420

2 THE LIMIT and RONNIE THOMPSON'S WASP CLUB are two more very good r 'n' b bands doing mostly, but not exclusively, covers.
Contacts: 2 The Limit 845026
R.T.'s Wasp Club 357495

DOUBLE YELLOW LINE

Very impressive young pop/progressive rock band with increasingly funky overtones. Have always been very good players of their instruments, but now they're developing some good songs and excellent presentation too. They may well have a bright future.
Contact Tim on Cottenham 50405.

MONTREAL are a much heavier band from the same stable (well alright, school) as Double Yellow Line. Not quite as talented, but with some useful songs of the genre of their own. 315776.

VANISHING POINT

The local remnants of gothic punk come together in this interesting and entertaining band. They play well and feature an incredibly hypnotic front man in singer Dave Middle - he's not got the best voice in the city, but he's certainly one of the best performers around. They're a band intending to go far and may well do so as they gradually slough off that gothic skin and find their own particular identity - which I hope involves them in avoiding overlong numbers such as have tended to mar their shows and tapes in the past. Their new tape, which I have not actually heard yet, is reputedly a great improvement on the last; and they are a band that have taken the trouble to go out and get gigs outside of the city to spread the word further afield - something other local bands could learn from.

Contact: Histon 4504.

GLASS ASYLUM

Perseverance pays, and Glass Asylum are proof of it. Descended from a line of bands who were often among the most chaotic in the city the present line-up are rapidly learning to deliver the goods in a distinctly Soft Cell/Bronskis vein. It's not off course everyone's cup of tea, and live they still need to tighten up and gain further self-confidence, but their recordings (on the second Peeved tape) show considerable potential.

Contact: 276408.

SNAP! CABINET

Another somewhat idiosyncratic band with a long history (as Fish Turned Human they made a couple of records 2 or 3 years ago) the present line-up veers between the mechanical-electronic mode and a very intense style somewhat reminiscent of the Velvet Underground at its height. Seeing them live one gets the feeling that if they could throw off the need to project "wackiness", get their act together seriously (but not unhumourously) they might well have something rather special, but at the moment it's difficult to be sure. Decide for yourself if and when they play again.

Contact: 323571.

DR. SKULL AND THE CROSSBONES

The band that pops up everywhere and anywhere. Originally a rock 'n' roll busking outfit, now they sometimes play with drums and greater amplification - and to great effect. Great fun. 322438.

KARMAN JIVE

Wimp Records' latest prodigies, this male/female duo sound all female (and not unlike all-female seventies group Fanny - but without the rock instrument mix and the balls). They sound very sweet and competent, and awfully well produced on their tape (from Wimp) but ever so ordinary. There are just no songs that jump out and grab one. However there is obviously some talent there as performers so something may yet emerge - in the meantime it would be interesting to see them live, which as yet I don't think they've essayed. Contact Cottenham 3875

MOOD ASSASSINS

Wimp Supremo David Gowar's own band, the Assassins are a moody bunch indeed; tough, rocky techno-pop with some hard-hitting political lyrics to help save them from occasional comparisons with modern Billy Idol (in vocal style at least - though the music is heavier). Tight and impressive live, the Mood Assassins have quite a following and are well worth investigating - though they're not for the faint-hearted. Contact: Cottenham 3875.

DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER

Impressively played and tight jazz/funk from a band featuring as its singer a previously non-vocal drummer - who sounds remarkably like Eric Clapton as a singer - and a rather fine American drummer. The music the band plays reminds me a little of Colosseum, though good as he is the drummer is not Jon Hiseman (who is - who is he, you ask - check your rock history books). A more contemporary comparison would be with an up-tempo Shakatak - plenty of good keyboards to the fore, and a number of decent if not particularly remarkable songs. Contact: 313297.

REAL TO REAL

Very hard-working hard-rock band with one of the most impressive voices on the Cambridge scene in Mary Hannigan. Contact: Crafts Hill 50271.

ONE NIGHT STAND

Heavy rock/metal band featuring elements of Samurai/Sheer Khan. Contact: 314772.

THE CLAIM are a skinhead punk/oi band. Contact: 352340.

THE NIMRODS

One of the most exciting young bands around at the moment, they come from that section of the town's youth that has already spawned Your Dinner and Stormed, to name but two - which means the emphasis is on raw, raucous dance music with a definite whiff of cordite and no concessions to those of a delicate disposition. Early days yet to say quite how they'll develop - indeed whether they'll manage to stay together (their remarkable drummer Amanda, who used to be in all girl Dinners offshoot Rhythmic Itch, has apparently just joined the circus as clown/juggler and general 'performer' - she's always been that anyway). Catch them while you can, therefore, and be assured of a rhythmic treat somewhere between the white reggae approach of the Dinners and the psyched-up rock 'n' roll of The Herbs/Kildares. Contact Mossey 870327.

THE HERBS

Perhaps the most exciting of all the new young bands to emerge this year with their aggressive mix of surf music, psychedelia and basic 50s/60s rock 'n' roll. The new new-wave starts here as did 1975 and 1963 by going back to the basics of the first wave - pure, raw-edged, rock 'n' roll played fast and furious to get the kids off their pretty, introspective backsides and back on to the dance floors where energy and commitment count more than looks and the style that money buys. The dance floor at a Herbs/Kildares/Stormed/Nimrod's gig is definitely not a place for the faint of heart since 'idiot-dancing' has become all the rage - and perhaps the bands need to be aware of their responsibilities to their fans who don't appreciate an elbow in the face; not to mention the venues and PA companies whose equipment are at risk from the selfish idiots. Nevertheless let's hope that the return of the perspiration factor will eventually get the record companies sweating too; when they do, and they go looking for bands to sign I wouldn't mind betting that 'Jez' Quayle and his guitar will be up there among the contenders, be it with The Herbs or somebody else. He, and the band, are young yet but even in the few months of their existence they've improved almost beyond recognition - the better they play their instruments the more attack they can put in their performance without falling to bits; and the more they play

the tighter they get. Where the Herbs already score over their close friends and rivals The Kildares, is that they don't put speed and volume above all else, especially above tunefulness, melody and clarity of lyrics. It's their concern for these aspects of their music - which is reflected in and helps further their songwriting abilities. The Herbs are getting the mixture right and in the long term they may well be the next best thing to come out of Cambridge since The Waves. Contact Jez on 860665.

THE KILDARES

The Kildares arrived at about the same time this year as The Herbs and play a similar psychedelic-tinged rock 'n' roll out of the garage and trash tradition. If anything though they are more in the tradition of new wave English punk thrash, with all the emphasis on loud and fast and little concern for melody and lyrics. Initially exciting - especially after a dose of Radio One - it quickly begins to pall and come in danger of being boring simply because it all sounds the same. It doesn't help that some of the band are already apallingly arrogant - they seem to think that stirring up some excitement on the dance floor, and doing it while drinking a bottle of Jack Daniels per person, makes them ready to scorn things local and become big stars. Who knows, maybe they will; and in any case we should be grateful to them for providing that initial burst of excitement at a time when many were beginning to despair - let's hope they can keep their heads and learn how to build on that promising start. Contact

THE RAYONS are yet to appear, but will be an offshoot of The Herbs and Kildares.

STRANGE BREW

Young punk/thrash band in origin, now moving towards being a very entertaining 'rock' band writing quite serious socially-conscious songs AND some quite hilarious looney tunes. They're fronted by a natural comic in Gary Brown, who's also turning into something of a music promoter these days, and can be guaranteed to put on a good show. They used to be called Albert Tatlock's Barmy Army and possibly they should have kept the name even if they did have to change the style. They have a 9 track demo tape available. Contact Gary 243424.

THE HERBS



EXPLODING HAMSTERS

COLONEL GOMEZ

Hilarious and well-played Heavy Metal pastiche by as un-pretentious a band of local (well, Ely) lads as you could hope to meet. Stars of the Whistle Test coverage of the Cambridge Rock Group Competition and winners of the audience reaction poll in that event they are guaranteed crowd-pleasers with their send-up of everything heavy from AC/DC to Steppenwolf. Though renowned for the devil costumes and pigs heads and shaking flab, they are also a more than competent heavy rock band who can easily outplay many of the serious metalurgists that infest the fens.

Contact : Ely 740900

TRUX

Possibly the best of the serious local heavy rock/metal bands, but one it's almost impossible to see in Cambridge itself as there's nowhere for them to play where they can earn enough locally. Apparently moving away from the metal department, and soon to be recording a new record - so watch out to find out. Contact: Crafts Hill 31550.

THE FORCE

Ambitious and fairly new heavy metal/rock band who have had some difficulty getting gigs due to their mass of equipment. That gear does them proud on their demo tape, however, and on it they sound more than likely to become firm favourites among fans of keyboard-oriented metal (shades of Yes in there too).

Contact : 832843.

ROVER BOY COMBO

Rockabilly specialists who delight in digging up rare blasts from the past and playing them with vigour and enthusiasm. They do it very well; but it's a pity that their rigid three-piece formula and adherence to the one type of music leaves so little room for variety in their set. Very popular nonetheless, and naturally a great bopping band.

Contact: 355702

MAC AND WHITE

Don't let the fact that they're nearly all accountants put you off (I'm told), M & W are an entertaining and go ahead combo playing fairly middle of the road rock rather well.

Contact: 840436

WORLDS END BAND are a guitar dominated, rather 'light' rock band - sounding often rather like Wishbone Ash of old. They play very well and write prolifically - and indeed perform regularly.

Contact: 246327.

CHARLOTTE'S PARTY are unlikely to be seen or heard during term time since their bass player and Charlotte herself are away at University elsewhere. They are, however, another fascinating throwback to a bygone age, sounding at times uncannily like mid-seventies Fleetwood Mac - complete with wah-wah pedal and flute. That said, one has also to say that they are rather good at it, and Charlotte has written two or three fine songs in that mould. Their latest demo has a fascinating arrangement on one song featuring french horns as the brass section. Two of their earlier songs can be found on the first Peeved tape. Contact (if around): 833202.

FAST FRIENDS are another band reviving the wah-wah pedal and sounding as a result a little 'progressive'. Their live show is technologically very impressive and they do have a harder edge to them that they like to call new-wave (old new-wave, if you see what I mean, in view of what I say about the arrival of the next wave!).

Contact: 841420.

JULIAN DAWSON/THE FLOOD/BEVERLEY BROS. Mr. Dawson is a remarkably talented singer, songwriter, cartoonist, guitarist and harp player. The Flood is his German project (he used to live there, spending some time translating Nena's lyrics into English) which involves an ex-member of Can, among others. They have one single out so far - on Midnight Music - and hope to have an album and new single out this autumn. In his spare time Julian sings as a duo with Nick Barraclough calling themselves The Beverley Brothers and doing a pleasant mixture of 60s and 70s rock 'n' roll/Country and Western standards.

Contact Julian on 323158.

VITAL SIGNS are a promising melodic hard rock band. At the moment they seem to concentrate on their own material, some of which is pretty good. If they were to incorporate a few classic rock covers to get the audience going they could be very popular indeed as live local entertainment.

THE VENUES

The greatest problem on the Cambridge music scene is the lack of decent venues for the multitude of local bands to play at - not to mention visiting name bands. When the Corn Exchange conversion is complete in December of next year (1986) there will, at last, be a decent 1500 capacity concert hall available; and, so long as the present City Entertainments Officers are free to do so, it will be putting on name rock acts. In the meantime the only place you're likely to see anybody remotely well known from out of town is The Guildhall or the Tech Canteen.

THE GUILDHALL has a capacity of 600 to 800 - the fire regs say more people are allowed in if there are seats! It is very tall and echoing and not ideal for rock music, but it's all we've got, though we don't often get even it. Technically it is available for anyone to hire - but if you try to hire it for rock gigs you'll quickly come to appreciate the true meaning of 'red tape'. It's true meaning is 'obstructionism' - certain people in the the place don't like rock music and will do their utmost to save the Guildhall from it. In effect the only people able to put things on there are The City Council Ents Dept. who run a monthly gig called The Cat Club there. Even they have to pay (another dept. of the same Council) the exhorbitant hire charge, which rather restricts their options in getting decent bands at prices the kids can afford.

C.C.A.T. CANTEEN. Again by no means an ideal venue; though the low ceiling means the acoustics are good, the thick pillars and lack of a seperate hall for the bar make the layout awkward. Nonetheless it has hosted some good gigs with its 400 odd (official) capacity. But, once again, officialdom obstructs rock music. The CCATSU who, in total contrast to the hithertoo (well for the last five years) apathetic CUSU, are keen to put on gigs can't get hold of the place for more than two gigs a term. Still, at least they try. When are CUSU going to try and put gigs on at Lady Mitchell Hall, which though also not ideal (no bar, seats and desks - but great acoustics and good capacity) used to - a long time ago now - have some excellent gigs. CCATSU Tel No: 312518.

MIDLAND TAVERN. Only occasional live groups (though increasingly popular); but reggae disco most nights. No stage, but lights and best atmosphere in town.

BURLEIGH ARMS. Currently the most regular music pub, with live bands up to 6 or 7 nights a week. It has a small stage (unfortunately it's quite a small place - 200 at a bigsqueeze I suppose) and lights, but no house PA. Reg the landlord is very friendly and keen to help local bands - but he's also a businessman with a living to make, so have a good haggle with him over the terms of your gig and be clear what arrangement you've made. He publicises a whole weeks gigs at once so you would be well advised to add your own posters too. Bring your friends to the gig - the more people you pack in, the keener Reg will be to have you back!
Bookings: Reg on 316881/241996

THE ALMA is restricted to music on Saturdays only. It's also restricted (since there is one local resident out to close it down altogether) to only 150 people so get there early, it's very popular. No stage; free entry and fixed band fee; no lights; no house PA; obligatory jew's harp jam with band on at least one number by Nick (Lord Brett De Vinton) the landlord, who's a bit of a character! Well booked up in advance due to popularity - and well worth a visit just to see the local musos 'hanging out' at the place to be seen. Also worth a visit on other days of the week as one of the nicest pubs in town, and onethat sells Marston's Pedigree too.
Bookings: Nick on 64965.

THE TROLLEY STOP. Up market cocktail bar/resturant with regular music nights covering jazz, blues and rock. Entry free for less well known acts, but a charge for name acts (for instance, Dr. John on October 25th). Run by the same company as run the Rock Garden in London so they have some good acts, and the management know what they're doing. It's a nice place, but unfortunately not ideal as a music venue, because of its shape and size - no stage, lights or PA; but they do have an internal video system.
Bookings: 323434.

BOAT RACE. Recently survived attempt to stop it putting on music - like most places in Cambridge - but is restricted on decibels. Again not ideal for bands, with no stage, PA, Lights etc. but has the reputation as a nice place to play if you're not too loud or way out.
Bookings: 313445/63789.

SEA CADETS HALL is the most readily available hall in the city. Unfortunately it's a bit of a dump, and on the edge of town and only holds 250 people - but it is about the only place you'll see Heavy metal and punk. Bookings Tel: 93 50405.

MAN ON THE MOON. Very nice little venue with stage and some other facilities - because it hosts the Cambridge Modern Jazz Club on Friday nights (and they have some very good bands, often of interest to rock fans). Unfortunately the local residents won't let it be used for rock bands as such - though it does feature interesting events like Attila The Stockbroker and his ilk from time to time.

Bookings: 350610.

CAMBRIDGE ARMS. Jazz/Folk/MOR.

GOLDEN HIND/PORTLAND ARMS. Folk.

ANCIENT DRUIDS. Recently acquired music licence, but what for as yet unknown.

SCHOOL HALLS. Some hireable for rock gigs (Coleridge); some not (Hills Road).

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE HALLS. Most colleges have their own halls and put on regular gigs, but for students only.

RONELLES. Nightclub that can be hired on quiet weekdays for gigs.

GRADPAD. The University Centre reflects the prejudices of the older members of the University - i.e. no rock music except at an exorbitant price, both for hire of halls and for the food they insist you put on at the same time.

Though lacking in venues outside of the Colleges for gigs, Cambridge is well served by all the paraphernalia you need to put on a gig. Listed below are contact numbers for PA Hire, Lights and Outside Bars - there are others in all the fields though these specialise in rock events. Don't forget if you're planning a gig that Publicity is the key to a good crowd. Contact all the media mentioned elsewhere, and don't forget to poster the town and the colleges. In the town you may need to flypost; it's illegal - it's also essential! If you want somebody to do it for you contact Mr. Billstickers (a.k.a. Colin) on Cambridge 355782.

For recording your music - and even if you can't afford to make a record or tape to sell, a demo is useful for getting gigs, and vital for getting airplay on local radio to advertise your gigs; - not to mention essential to get you your record contract when the time comes - there also follows a list of recording studios. Within the city itself CHEOPS should be 24 track by now; MAKKA and THE KITE are 8 track - prices vary, within and without the city, so shop around for a good deal.

When you've recorded your demo you may want to try and get a local company to put it out as a tape or record. The two local concerns who do anything more than putting out their own band's stuff are WIMP RECORDS - who do make records - and PEEVED who concentrate on tapes. The former put out a Cambridge compilation album three years ago, "Honey For Tea"; the latter have just released two compilation tapes called "The Eye Of The Storm" and "A Head Full Of Noise" with another in the pipeline when they've got enough stuff - so you could be on it if you get in touch with them (Steve Hartwell). There is yet another compilation tape being put together by Pete Ingram of Depending On The Weather which should be out soon. There are a number of ex-Cambridge people working for majors in London who like to keep in touch with local bands, notably DAVE BRAGG at Island Records; DAVE WATSON at London (part of Phonogram) and don't forget Tot Taylor who runs his own label COMPACT (who launched Mari Wilson). Finally in the national media certain people like to know what is happening: John Peel & Richard Skinner at Radio 1; Jonathon Romney at NME; Colin Irwin at MM; Chris Roberts at Sounds; Chris Heath at Smash Hits.

RECORD COMPANIES

Wimp - Comberton 3875/London 691 8148

Peeved - Cambridge 352612

LIGHTS HIRE

Just Lites - 0954 50851

Softspot - 244639

D.Lights Design - 834212

Paul Vincent - 0462 894732

Star Hire - 0480 411159

Fuzzy - 870651

Purple Hire - 0462 894732

P.A.HIRE

Stavros - 245047

Roger Chatterton - 313250

Skysound - 358644

Cheops - 249889

Cambridge Rock - 316091

Fuzzy - 870651

Star Hire - 0480 411159

Purple Hire - 0462 894732

BARS

Outside Bars - Stretham 607

Cam Bars - 60340

Outside Inns - 353493

Manhattan Inns - 316881/241996

RECORDING STUDIOS

Spaceward - 9889 600

Kite Studios - 313250

Cheops - 249889

Skysound - 358644

School Hse Studios - Bury St Eds 810723

Stable Studios - Ware 871090/870520

The Lodge - Clare (0787) 27811/278035

Metronome Studios - Chateris 3949

Thatched Cottage - Bedford (0234) 771259

Ace Lane, Bugbrooke - Northampton 831800

Roger Gunkel - March 581608

Live Music - P'boro 67168

Makka - 66534

The Cambridge music scene may not be unique in the number of bands it has for a town of its size - though I suspect it is - but surely no other city with so many bands has so few places for them to perform; or indeed for name bands from outside to play at. Perhaps the latter point helps to explain the irritating isolationism and inwardness that is rampant in much of the local musical activity - both among fans and bands. I suppose Blue Suede News may be accused of promoting such an attitude, since its primary purpose is to serve the local scene upon which it certainly concentrates. However, not only do we welcome contributions about non-local topics if people write them (and the fact that not many people do may be further evidence of that unadventurous apathy), but there is nothing we deplore more than the waste of local talent that can't get themselves together to spread

their wings elsewhere (hence the way we continue to chronicle the successes of those few that do - maybe it will show others what is possible). Even worse is the related phenomena of those big local fishes who keep telling us how good they are (and how bad everybody else is, especially those 'lucky' enough to break out) but who are not prepared to put their instruments where their mouths are except in front of their adoring local clique of fans.

Does Cambridge have anything to offer the outside world anyway? The answer is undoubtedly yes at the moment. While there have always been a lot of bands rarely have there been so many good young live bands emerging at once as there are at the moment; and at the same time as some of the older more established local musicians are coming to terms with the art of recording and promoting their wares for the benefit of that outside world. As ever, in either category it's difficult to predict exactly who will (or could) succeed since a lot does depend on luck - though even more depends on doing the hard work and the right things to be in a position to exploit the luck when you find (or make) it. One thing remains true in Cambridge however. While many of the best musical combinations come from the fusion of town experience and gown ideas - which does partly explain the amazing fertility of the local scene - success is still more likely to come to the University-linked bands. Their privileged position is still likely to come up with the vital 'contact' that can make all the difference, and unfortunately Cambridge students do tend to be more ambitious and forceful and organised than their town brethren in promoting themselves. What is unfortunate about it is not that they should succeed, but that better town bands won't even have the opportunity to. And I say that as a 'grad' myself in an issue directed at the University because there is no doubt that right now the town leads the way in Cambridge rock 'n' roll. If you despair of the pretty boy pop and posing of Radio One and Top Of The Flops and are avidly awaiting the arrival of the next wave, get around town and you might find it's already happening. Better still you might want to join in, so that this time next year I or somebody else can report that the spirit of rock 'n' roll lives on and the long-awaited opening of the Corn Exchange as a major concert venue can be celebrated by city and University joining in live performance together.



The Thatched Cottage

THATCHED COTTAGE RECORDING STUDIOS

Just look at the gear

16 & 24 TRACK; DIGITAL & ANALOGUE MASTERING
STEREO DIGITAL REVERB(x2); DIGITAL DELAY(x11);
HARMONISER(x2); NOISE GATES(x8); COMPRESSORS(x8);
APHEX COMPELLOR; AURAL EXCITER; M&R GRAPHICS(x8);
EXPANDERS(x4); Plus various instruments including:
Fender Precision, Korg Poly 61 and 360 Systems
Sampled Keyboard with full range of orchestral
chips.

THE PRICE?

24T: £12.00p.h. ; 16T: £8.00p.h.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

GIVE US A RING AND FIND OUT.

P.S. Ever find that some studios sound great when you're there, but the tape sounds lousy outside? It won't here - the room is spectrum analysed, graphiced & treated. Your tape will sound great anywhere! (Providing of course that you are!)

THATCHED COTTAGE.

0234 (Bedford)771259.

BURLEIGH ARMS MAIDS CAUSEWAY

THE HOME OF
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
IN CAMBRIDGE

7 DAYS A WEEK

TEL: 316881/241996

ACE RECORDING STUDIO

1" MASTER QUALITY — £6.00 p/h
9 HOURS — £48.00 + VAT + TAPE

Top Quality Cassette Duplication (F770 Decks)

*Recent Clients — Alan Price, David 'J', Swans Way,
Mood Assassins, Karman Jive, Wimp Records,
Plant Life Records, Metro TV, BBC Radio Northampton.*

Tel MALCOLM — NORTHAMPTON 831800

Spaceward Recording Studios:



Close to Ely - which is not far from Peterborough, and even closer to Cambridge - the technology freaks have been at work. In an old village school has been created one of Britain's most advanced and prestigious recording studios. Here the stars come to relax in the rural surroundings while they make those hit records. But if Spaceward is now big business, it hasn't forgotten the local bands that were once its bread and butter. Between the big star block bookings they have time to spare, at special bargain rates, to help you with your demo tape or perhaps your first record. Consult the experts.

For further information ring Mark on Stretham (9889) 600.

SPACEWARD STUDIOS, THE OLD SCHOOL, STRETHAM, ELY, CAMBS.