



Bristol Archive Special

Issue 12 still only £1!

**New interviews with THE CORTINAS,
SOCIAL SECURITY, The X-CERTS and THE
PIGS plus VALDEZ and the CUT UPS as
well a farewell tribute to the Junction**

This issue we celebrate the fine work done by Mike Darby and his team at Bristol Archive Records. We have new interviews with four bands featured on the label, plus a round-up of BAR releases in our review section. Elsewhere, we pay tribute to, and mourn the passing of the Bristol Junction. We all thank Bob for countless great nights.

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Special thanks to our interviewees

Live photos: Dave

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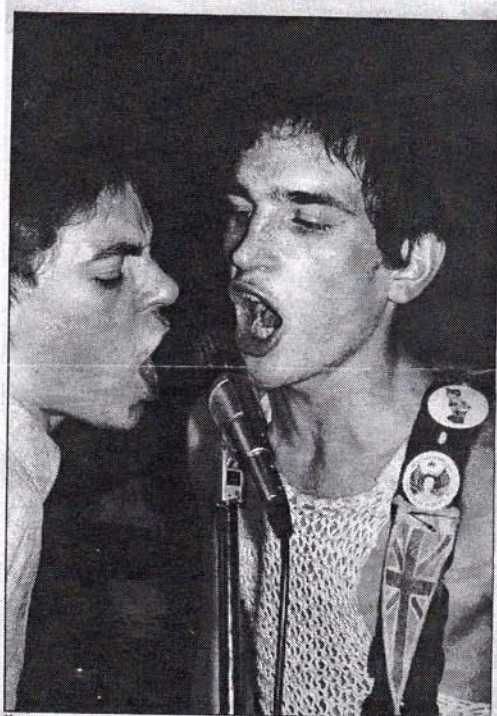
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THE CORTINAS

No need for too much of an introduction here, as Cortinas guitarist Nick Sheppard tells us all about the band's inception, the early Bristol punk scene, and touches on weird times as a member of the latter line-up of The Clash and playing on their final album *Cut The Crap*...



The Cortinas were the first Bristol punk band – how did you come to pick up on it so quickly? We were the right age at the right place at the right time!

Punk didn't happen overnight and we were listening to all the music that informed the other bands that started up in England at the same time. I think a real turning point for us was seeing the Ramones at the Roundhouse on July 4 1976 – we definitely started to write our own songs after that gig. We had been playing and doing gigs for about year by then – all covers apart from one song, Tokyo Joe as I remember. After that gig we started writing stuff like Television Families. I think we saw people like us in the audience at that gig, and it must have given us confidence.

What were you listening to before punk?

THERE IS NO BEFORE PUNK – look at Elvis! Lots of stuff – The *Nuggets* Compilation, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, ? and The Mysterions, James Brown, The Yardbirds, The Stones, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Roxy Music, The New York Dolls, Iggy, MC5, and that's just for starters. There were reggae records, funk records, jazz; all kinds of things that maybe didn't directly filter into the band, but we were listening to them. As a band our first big contemporary influence was Dr Feelgood – we also liked Kilburn and The High Roads, The Kursaal Flyers and The Count Bishops. Then the New York stuff started coming out – The Dictators, Jonathan Richman and The Modern Lovers, Television, Patti Smith, The Ramones, and we saw pictures of The Sex Pistols in the NME.

When and how did The Cortinas form?

Jer put the band together, he definitely had a vision of what he wanted, he was very hip – Dexter and Mike went to the same school as him. He found me via Mark Stewart, who I went to school with, and I bought Dan in; we had played in a band together before. We used to practise at the back of Jer's Dad's shop.

How quickly did other local bands form?

Well not quickly at all, really. I don't really remember any until mid 1977. Of course they may have been around, but they didn't register with me. Then they started coming thick and fast! Lots of people cut their hair and stopped playing Free Bird! To be fair, we were miles ahead of the pack!

Who did you rate?

Locally, I liked Social Security and laterly The Pop Group.

Which early Cortinas gigs particularly stick in the memory?

The one at Tiffany's that they cancelled, and had to pay us £500!

I kind of vaguely remember a lot of them. I remember our first gig at some church hall in Cotham pretty well, Hotwells Street Fair, Ashton Park Free Festival – a great gig at The Arts Centre, in a tiny cellar, like the Cavern.

Could you tell us about meeting Hugh Cornwell and playing the Roxy with the Stranglers?

Hugh Cornwell was staying at a friend of his' flat near the university, on holiday, and me and my girlfriend met him in the street. This would have been in the summer of '76. We started talking to him because we recognized him from seeing the Stranglers and hung out for the afternoon. I told him about the band. Later on, in Feb '77, he sent us a postcard asking us to play at the Roxy, so we rang up and said yes! I remember my mum telling me not to be too disappointed if people didn't like us.

Didn't you meet Miles Copeland there?

We got asked back by Andy, who ran the club, and at some point Dan's dad Pete, who was driving us up to London, and effectively managing us, must have met Miles – I don't really remember when we met Miles or Mark P. but it must have been fairly quickly.

Did you sign to Step Forward straight away?

I think there was an offer from Stiff as well, but we signed to Step Forward very quickly.

How well did the singles sell?

I have no idea how well, but I expect they did... I don't remember ever getting any royalties though.

What do you remember about the Peel Session?

Absolutely nothing apart from the fact I was wearing a blue sweatshirt.

And you also got the front page of *Sniffin' Glue*. Were you aware of how historic all this would become?

Obviously not! It was cool to be on the cover.

Why did you decide to change your image and sound for the album? What were you planning for the future as a band?

"Punk" lasted about a year maximum – after that it got stale, and the interesting music was made by people who moved on – kept exploring. We moved into a different space, back to where we had started in a way... Youth Club Dance, Heartache... I don't think there was any plan really, as Jer said somewhere, we didn't want to be Sham 69 and we couldn't be the Pop Group, so we tried to be ourselves, I suppose.

When and why did you decide to split the band?

We "went to the country to get our heads together" – drank loads and played darts in the pub, and then on the last night we were there, Jer and Mike said they didn't want to go on, so we split up.

What did you do next?

The Spics, The Tesco Chainstore Massacre, Joe Public, The Viceroy's, Leonard and The Cats, Bing and The Putters – those are the bands I can remember the names of... and shit jobs and the dole and some time in America. We did reform the Cortinas for about two rehearsals in about 1980, I think. We were rehearsing at Miles' house in London, and one night we turned up and The Go Go's, who were staying there – wouldn't let us in! So that was that!

How did you come to join The Clash?

I was playing in about 5 bands, and one day the drummer and bass player for one of them didn't turn up for rehearsal. I friend of my girlfriend worked for the Clash, and had told me they were auditioning, so because I was pissed off I rang her up. I went to an audition, which led to another, and got the job.

Judging by (Fellow Clash guitarist) Vince White's book, it seems to have been a bizarre experience. Would you agree?

To go from the dole to any band that big would have to be surreal, and yes it was bizarre. It was also a great deal of fun, very hard work and an amazing experience.

Have you read the book?

Yes I have – it's weird to be a bit part in your own life.

Were you disappointed with *Cut The Crap?* Hugely – words cannot express...

Are you pleased to see all the Cortinas stuff reissued?

Yes - I like that it's part of an alternative history – it's a link in a chain. I like that about it. I also like the fact that I talk to the other guys in the band. And, of course, I live in hope that Television Families will be used by Sony worldwide in an advert!

What are you doing these days?

I live in Perth, Australia. I sell people jeans and t-shirts. I'm a DJ (isn't everyone?). I play in a band called The DomNicks
www.myspace.com/thedomnicks **Shane Baldwin**

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security were one of Bristol's earliest punk bands, with a distinctive, slightly eccentric sound that the great John Peel famously described as 'Charmingly rustic'. He was commenting on a track from the band's only release, the I Don't Want My Heart To Rule My Head single, the first on Simon Edwards' Heartbeat Records label. No need for me to tell you more, as singer Phil Harrison helpfully goes into some detail...

What were you listening to before punk?

Before punk, I was listening to all sorts of music, but I always had a sixties fixation. I was particularly into Steve Marriott and Steve Winwood, and listened to Small Faces, Humble Pie, Spencer Davis Group and Traffic as well as The Kinks, The Beatles, Bowie, The Who. I also liked some of the pub rock stuff like Dr Feelgood and unusual stuff like the first Split Enz album. I was also into English folk music, Monty Python and reggae, Marley, U-Roy, Burning Spear. A bit of a mix.

When did you discover punk?

I discovered punk in the summer of '76, although I didn't see a punk gig until the following year. I was living in a village called Charfield near Wotton-under-edge in Gloucestershire, where I was hanging out with other bored teenagers and where I was considered a bit of an eccentric. I used to hang out in the old Virgin Records shop, near the bus station, and got friendly with Simon 'Sim' Adams who worked there. We discovered that we were into similar music, namely 60s stuff, and were both avid NME readers. I remember buying all the early punk singles with a passion, listening to Peel, going for my own punk look. I couldn't afford to go to London for Kings Road threads, so I bought 'my wardrobe' at jumble sales and made subtle alterations with a razor blade and scissors. My best mate Rob went one better with his attire and became known as the kid in the 'Fuck' jacket as he used to walk around Bristol with the said word painted on the back of his customised punk suit, long before John Foxx's similar look on the first Ultravox album.

What memories do you have of the early Bristol punk scene? As a kid out in Kingswood, it felt like only people from Clifton and Barton Hill were allowed to join!

My memories of the early Bristol punk scene are one of an outsider who arrived in Bristol on the 'surf of the new wave'. Basically, I had been working in a factory in Wickwar (home to Cath 'Mamma Mia' Johnson) going to as many punk gigs as I could in

the area. One night I went to Swindon to see The Damned with The Adverts supporting. Hung out with the road crew at the end of the gig, blagged a ride to London and stayed with them for the rest of the tour. When The Damned didn't have a gig, I went to other gigs and got to see The Cortinas a few times ... first time was at the Marquee in London (where by this time I was hanging out with a bunch of art student punks from Ally Pally... among their number was Adam Ant and Gina before she formed The Raincoats)... I got to know the band as good mates at other gigs (the Roundhouse, where they gave The Vibrators a good run for their money), and a great gig at the Exhibition Centre, to where I was travelling back from Penzance with The Damned road crew expecting to see The Stranglers. The Stranglers called off due to illness, so The Cortinas took top billing and played a blinder. I think The Pigs may have played that night but I can't remember for sure... By this time I was a full-time punk rocker, not really having a clue what was going to happen next and not giving a toss either. I got chatting to Dexter about the forthcoming Cortinas tour. When The Damned tour ended, I turned up at my factory job, having not been there for two months, and not surprisingly got the push. Literally the next day, I hitched down to Torquay, and hooked up with The Cortinas as they were kicking off their Step Forward South West tour with Gene October's Chelsea. And a wild time was had by all! Too many potential libel suits to go into details this time. Maybe, once I've taken legal advice I can tell a few tales. During the tour, in Exeter I remember Simon Underwood coming down telling us about The Pop Group's debut gig at the Bear in Hotwells (which was also one of Social Security's first gigs...ask Dom, he'll know). The tour ended and The Cortinas signed to CBS. Not being able to drive, I realised that my days as band roadie were numbered. Previously Dan's dad drove the band in his VW van or we travelled with the legendary ZULU P.A. crew from Windmill Hill. I was now based in Bristol, officially NFA but generally able to find somewhere to doss down at night due to 'enhanced punk credentials' through my connections with The Cortinas and The Damned. There were occasions when I had to sleep rough, usually after falling out of the Dug-Out (a second home) so I was glad to

strike it lucky when I landed a flat share in West Mall in Clifton Village with a woman who decided that I was astrologically compatible... I've never knocked astrology since! During this time I became aware of and immersed in the 'early Bristol punk scene'. There was a bunch of guys known as the Chaps (Bill Summers, Pete Summers, John D Spring to mind...great blokes), along with Vern and Mart who managed The Pigs and all the early bands, including The Pop Group, The Media, The Android Pups, The Primates and Social Security. We used to bump into each other down the dole office every week and a different gig every night. There was a good camaraderie in the early days...posing hadn't crept in yet... and loads more bands were about to form, get out and hustle for gigs.

Which of the early Bristol bands did you particularly rate?

I rated all the aforementioned bands for their own unique style. None of the early Bristol bands played obviously formulaic punk rock. They all had a unique edge and style, laced with irony and occasional humour. I became mates with a lot of them, and never made enemies with any of them. What was the point? However I did get into a lot of 'heated discussion' with posey London punks whenever they dared to slag off The Cortinas. In September '77, when The Cortinas signed to CBS I was no longer official roadie, but the band were more than happy for me to tag along to gigs, as I could talk bollocks for hours and lead unlikely singalongs of the cheesiest tunes of the 70s (if only I'd taped it!) which was useful for alleviating boredom on long motorway journeys.

How did you come to join Social Security?

I almost never joined Social Security. Dom had a left a message with Pete Swan (Dan's Dad) asking if I would join them, as Pete Thelk had left (to join The Stingrays with Russ Mainwaring and others). I had seen them and met them a few times. We had a similar sense of humour, musical taste and eccentricity. I almost didn't get the message as I had been in Birmingham the night before with The Cortinas, when they were supporting the Kursaal Flyers, and was going to hang out with their new roadie Glen at his gaff in Stoke and then hang out for the rest of the Kursaal's tour. Fate intervened. Somehow there was a spare seat in the band's van. Nick or Dexter may have gone off to London with Miles (Copeland) and Kim (Turner). Anyhow I ended up back in Bristol and got the message on the Sunday, did my first rehearsal on the Monday, and rehearsed every day until the Friday when I did my

first gig at a Rock Against Racism gig at the Bamboo Club in St Pauls.

We did two sets (our set was pretty short) and went down well, partly down to a lot of mates being there and the shed load of cider consumed before the gig. For the rest of '77, we got loads of gigs. Highlights included opening for the Cortinas' 'homecoming' gig at the Locarno in December, the Windcraft skateboard Christmas party at the Exhibition Centre (with The Cortinas again and Huggett, featuring the legendary Tony Dodd, who ran a record store called Tony's Records in Clifton village) and seeing in the new year at the Crystal Theatre in Victoria Street, an eventful gig, marred early on by a few City fans who were looking for trouble after losing to Forest earlier in the day. Once they were ejected the gig was fine and attended by lots of new wave faces (including Steve Nieve from Elvis Costello's band and Danny Adler from Stiff Records band Roogalator as well as the usual Bristol suspects).

How did you come to be the first band on Heartbeat Records?

In '78, we decided to take a break from gigs for a month in order to write more songs and get a better set together. By this time Simon Edwards had become our manager. We had had a succession of managers, starting with 'Dartmoor' John Price, and various women we met at parties, who generally lasted no more than one gig, before Simon became interested in us. He was totally into the music and wanted to get into recording. (You need to ask Simon for how he got the whole Heartbeat Records thing going) I just remember Simon Blackmore saying that Simon E wanted to record us and that Tony Dodd (bless him) was going to put up the money to pay for it.

February '78 was a great month. We had a new set, played a blinder at the Anson Rooms supporting The Pop Group, recorded our EP and got banned by Mecca after graffiti-ing the dressing rooms and toilets big-time when supporting The Adverts and lost Simon as our manager. We were trouble with a capital 'T'. Dom has documented this well in the band's blog on the Bristol Archive Records website. To cap it all, Simon Blackmore announced that he was leaving the band to join The Colortapes and I chipped off to Paris to hang out with The Cortinas in their infamous week's residency at the Gibus

club.

When I got back, the EP was about to be released. It got to number 1 in Revolver Records chart (ha!) and John Peel played it. Well he played Cider, written on the bog to a nice riff by Simon B on his twelve string, which gave us our sound.

I still have my copy and the free badge! Whose idea was the badge?

I don't remember the free badge given away with the EP. Was it the natty mod one with the arrows? Can't remember whose idea it was either.

Simon agreed to a final gig, a double header with the Glaxo Babies at Bower Ashton. Nick Sheppard played with us in our encore (a Chuck Berry tune if I recall). Dom found our next lead guitarist, Russell, who had a bit of a Be-Bop Deluxe fixation and was a little bit too heavy metal for the rest of the band's liking. However, we had a gig to play...Hotwells Street Fair... and we honoured it, playing 'ironic rock stars' by turning up in the Cortinas' Mercedes van, resplendent with pink fur and Ted Nugent blaring out of the stereo, and borrowing the Cortinas' road manager, the legendary Dave Harvey to drive us there.

I didn't see Russell again until I bumped into him when he was with his new band Stereo Models, who featured on *Avon Calling*. Nice bloke, not mad enough for us.

Final version of Social Security featured George Harrison look-alike and play-alike 15 year old Tom Campbell on lead guitar. We played a wild Ashton Court gig, some of which was recorded and broadcast by Radio Bristol, although they omitted the bit when the man who was doing the P.A. shouted 'Turn the fucking amps down! You fuckers!' With Tom we also played the gig on the back of the van with the X-Certs. I don't remember it as vividly as Dom (again, see his piece on Bristol Archive Records) as the pit stop at the Waggon and Horses blurred my recollection of events. I just remember being chased by coppers and playing outside dole offices around Bristol. I was imbibing far too much of anything available by this stage and was amazed that we were able to complete a set when we played. I was hitting a wall and needed to stop, so I announced that I was leaving after what turned out to be our last gig, a Rock Against Racism gig at the Avon Gorge Rooms at Bristol University.

We all got pissed and everyone else felt that the band had run its course. Simon Cartledge (bass) and Tom formed the Gastaps, Dom played with various bands and still plays. I don't know what happened to Bill Sargent (drums).

I believe he's on Facebook, but I'm not. I'll have to get my kids to check him out as I like my privacy.

Me and Dom did a version of Cider at the *Avon Calling* CD relaunch gig at Fiddlers in 2005. That's the closest we've got to any sort of re-union. Although it came close a few years ago when Simon B 'depped' in Dom's Iggy tribute band called Dirt at the Polish Club. Simon C (bass) was over from Hong Kong (where he lives and works in publishing) and I was there too.

By chance I tracked down Bill's mum only to find out that he was in Spain, so the chance of the five of us being in the same room near a stage, with instruments beckoning, didn't quite happen.

Any chance of you playing at the Rebellion Festival one of these days?

We do stay in touch and keep planning a jam with Simon Blackmore. but these days we have proper jobs and families so it would need to be a 'More Bad News' type of experience if we were ever to play again.

Shane Baldwin

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THE PIGS

The Pigs were the second Bristol punk band to release a record, the *Youthenasia* EP, on the New Bristol Records label, with an original line-up of Ricky Galli, drums, Kit Gould, guitar, Nigel Robinson, bass, and Eamonn McAndrew on vocals. Bristol Archive recently released a Pigs vinyl album, entitled *1977* (See review elsewhere in this issue) and the band have now reformed, playing many live shows including the Rebellion Festival, Blackpool, in August 2010. Here they tell us about their short but busy early career. The interview was conducted with all the band members, via email and Skype, through guitarist Kit, so it's not always clear just who is speaking.

Dr Feelgood – *Down by the jetty*, Eddie & the Hot Rods – *Teenage Depression*, and Chuck Berry – *Motorvatin'*. Maximum R&B basically, cranked up really high, or as high as you could get it on a portable cassette player jammed in the glove compartment. The pub rock thing was kicking down the door, you could tell it was time for a change, but it was kind of a back to the future vibe. Then punk blew all that away. At Tiffany's it was Hi Ho Silver Lining followed by Anarchy in the UK. It wasn't hard to work out which side of that line we stood.

When and how did you discover punk?

It was probably a combination of John Peel, the music press, and Kit having a big sister in London. On the Peel show we heard the



Illustration 1: Photo by Tim Williams

What bands were you listening to before punk?

We were listening to all sorts of stuff as teenagers but probably glam was what we all had in common in our schooldays – David Bowie, Roxy Music, Marc Bolan plus maybe the Stones – *Black and Blue*, Alex Harvey, John Lennon. John Peel was an important source, taping whatever gets you through the night and all kinds of new stuff off the radio. That's probably where we first heard reggae tunes, Peter Tosh – *Legalise It*, Dillinger – *Cokane In My Brain* spring to mind.

Then Ricky had a green Riley Elf that became the band tour bus for a while. He had 3 cassettes in it:

Damned – New Rose, the Stranglers – Grip, the Buzzcocks – Boredom; nobody else was playing that stuff.

My sister was on the phone to me about the new bands she was seeing in London boozers like the Nashville and the Red Cow, the punk bands. One minute it was The Gorillas, next minute she was raving about The Jam. Her boyfriend gave me Anarchy for xmas, like as a joke: this is what you kids are into. By that time I'd got hold of a couple of things from Tony's Records in Princess Victoria St, like The Gorillas' Gatecrasher.

The first few records, it seemed like the punk thing was an extension of the pub rock R&B thing, from the distance we were at, and we were already into that. By the time we got to hear the first Ramones album, The Modern Lovers' record and the American stuff, it was clear there was more to it than that.

When did you form The Pigs, and were there any early line-up changes?

It was obvious something was happening and the new music we were hearing was our music – it felt like it was being made for people exactly our age, and so far as we knew it was being made by people our age (it was a lot later we woke up to the fact they were all a significant few years older). We'd had a couple of bands together at school, so we were more than just casually interested in new music. As people left school, the bands broke up. But when you're 17, you hear music with that energy and you get the message, 'anybody can play this music', your ears prick up. And when we finally got to see The Cortinas at the Granary – up till then we had them down as more of the Feelgood thing – we really got the message. And that's what did it. It was so energizing, it felt like we had to get our band started the next day, the same night probably. The punk train came and we all jumped on it, like a lot of people did, but we were the first ones on in Bristol, after The Cortinas.

Could you tell us about some of your early gigs?

Bishop Road Youth Club, that was the first one. There was a sofa in the middle of the stage, Eamonn was jumping up and down on it, lying full length on it, that caught the attention a bit. Basically it was the only punk show in town, there was nothing happening, so it wasn't hard to get attention from people like Vernon and John who were already plugged into the London punk scene. They were there, they were looking for a band. So once they took us under their wing we were away.

Is it true that you met Miles Copeland at Chutes when you supported Generation X?

That was the big night, we met him after the gig and he said he wanted to do a single. Billy Idol's sitting there, black hair, quiet, not talking to anyone.

Why did he decide to set up New Bristol Records rather than sign you to Step Forward?

He didn't. We decided to set it up, it was our idea, with Vernon and John, and he just went along with it. Buzzcocks – Spiral Scratch, that got everybody thinking, we can make our own record. Now, looking

back, it's obvious that if Miles Copeland's going to pay for you to do a recording, he's not just donating it to you so you can set up your own label, whereas at the time that seemed like an entirely realistic proposition. It's just naïve kids really that don't have a clue about the music business. Miles Copeland came on board, he was our London connection. Compared to us, Vern and John were more sussed, they knew what was going on.

Was yours the only release on the label, and if so, do you know if he had planned it as an ongoing concern?

There was another release on the label later, by Gardez Darkx. Never knew anything about it at the time, it was only coming across it on the Bristol Archive site that we heard of it.

Were you the second Bristol punk band to release a record?

Yes. Recorded it in August 77 but it never came out until November that year.

How well did the single sell?

About 7000 were pressed and they sold. We were in one of those alternative music charts, was it in Sounds? We were the top selling record in Bristol, number one with a bullet in Tony's Records.

Did it make a difference to you as a band? Did you start to get a better class of gig?

Maybe it helped, we started getting a few gigs through agencies. But it was late in the day by then. The main thing was riding on the coat tails of The Cortinas, playing the Marquee with them and that kind of thing.

You played the Roxy, but by January 1978 it was past its best wasn't it?

Yes, definitely. You looked around and thought, is this it?

Did the line-up change around this point?

No. There was a moment when Russ Mainwaring (Stingrays) was going to join, he was a mate from school. But it fell apart before that happened.

When and why did you split up?

March 78. The truth is, looking back, we don't really know why. The bubble seemed to have burst and we all moved on. There didn't seem

to be anywhere left to go with it at that time. We just did what kids do at 18 years old. The Pistols split, that's it, over. We wanted to do other music. We just got on with it. There were no grudges held.

What did you all do next?

Life got in the way. When the split happened it was almost a relief. Our families were saying 'You're not going to make a career out of music'. Some of us thought differently. We ended up scattered to the four corners of the earth, America, Italy, the South Coast, London. We kept in touch, we played some music together from time to time. And gradually, Bristol became the focus again.



Illustration 2: Rebellion 2010 photo by Jane Doe/Together Alone

When did you get back together?

When Bristol Archive Records asked if they could use our music. When you realise someone else is interested in it, it makes you go back and revisit it. And we liked what we found, we liked hanging out together again. It's a lot of fun.

Who is in the band now?

We couldn't find Nigel. Paolo is a great musician that we'd played with for a long time in Italy. Now he's back and forward to Bristol. He stepped in to play bass and it sounded perfect. It's the three of us and Paolo.

What plans do you have for The Pigs in the future?

Just to gig as much as possible and enjoy ourselves, and then who knows? Watch this space. It feels like we're representing the Bristol punk spirit

of 77 somehow. There's kind of a wish to put The Pigs back on the map. Back then our message was basically anti-establishment, which happens to be very pertinent now, it's always relevant. We're still putting the message across but enjoying ourselves at the same time, as opposed to being a surly, swaggering bunch of... cos you can't do that when you're 50 years old. At the time it was our thing, our moment of rebellion, we were riding the punk train, we went with it and we got off. It's only after 30 years of normal life that you realize how special it was, and so to go back and capture it a bit, cos you realize

now, there hasn't been another one of those. Now we're thinking, shit, that was brilliant, it doesn't happen, hardly ever, it's like an eclipse... so being able to go back and capture the atmosphere, and it's not just the bands, the audience as well, the songs, just

something really special. We had a lot of fun then, we're having a lot of fun now. Basically that's what it's about. To live that kind of experience at 18, it's nice to go back. But if some new material comes out of it, great. We know we could give a better rendition of the songs we've got. So the future? Who knows?

Shane Baldwin

THE X-CERTS

people could be in a band, rather than the traditional four piece set up. There were so



Illustration 3: Cardiff Sophia Gardens on The Clash '16 Tons' tour

The X-Certs were one of the finest punk bands that Bristol has ever produced, though they are not as well remembered as some. This may be due to the fact that, though a popular live act, able to pull crowds of around 500 into Trinity Church, their record releases were few and far between. They also mostly came later, when the band was moving away from overt punk, so little of their punk material ever made it to vinyl. They contributed the track Blue Movies to Hearbeat's 4 Alternatives EP, and Anthem to the *Avon Calling* album, both in 1979, but didn't release a single until 1981, when the Recreational label, owned by Revolver (Bristol record shop and distributor) released the excellent reggae number Together.

Here, singer and guitarist Clive Arnold, these days a director of *Eastenders*, tells about, amongst other reminiscences, the band's other recordings, line-up changes and hobnobbing with The Clash.

When and how did you discover punk?

I grew up on early 1970s glam rock and was fifteen when punk arrived. One day I was a kid at school, learning to play guitar with aspirations of being in a band and then suddenly there was this music - simple 3 minute songs that not only could I play, but also write and sing about issues that seemed relevant to me at the time.

What local bands did you rate?

I always quite liked The Spics, they had a good sound and introduced me to the idea that loads of

many of them on the stage!

When did you form The X-Certs and what was the original line-up?

I was in my final year at St. Mary Redcliffe and punk had given me the opportunity to form a band before I was good enough to be able to play a twenty minute guitar solo! Word got out and anyone who owned an instrument seemed to become a band member; eventually the line up was slimmed down to Simon Justice, Neil Mackie, Phil 'Taff' Lovering and myself. Simon and I were at school together and Neil and Phil were introduced via friends.

Is it true that you were originally called Psychos?

First name was Psycho. I remember the first home made poster by Phil read: Psycho, a new band is coming, you have been warned! You Have Been Warned became a very early song.

When and where was the first X-Certs gig?

First gig was at Simon and I's leaving school disco at St. Mary Redcliffe - loads of people were still hanging out with the band at that point so it was an X-Certs gig with others doing songs too, but the core of the gig was The X-Certs. It was before we had any of our own material, so we were doing Sex Pistols

covers, etc. It became quite an event - Taff wasn't allowed to play, so he got pissed in the music room beforehand, then we upset the German exchange students because Neil was wearing a punk t-shirt that had swastikas on it, I think people took the opportunity to get onstage and insult the staff and we eventually had the plug pulled on us by one of the teachers! The first proper X-Certs gig was at The Crown Pub in Old Market. There was a hall/room out the back where we used to rehearse, eventually we let people know we were putting on a gig and performed our own material for the first time.

Which early gigs do you particularly remember?

I remember supporting The Angelic Upstarts at Trinity Church, The Only Ones at University Union (where The Vice Squad also played), [but sadly, not the same gig! - Shane] but probably the biggest was opening for The Clash at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff.

Any memories of recording for 4 Alternatives or Avon Calling?

I remember the sessions well. Turning up at Crescent Studios in Bath, these were our first sessions in a studio, these guys were so professional they even had a coffee machine!

By that time you were pulling audiences of up to 500 in Trinity Church, so why no single at that point?

Not sure really; Simon Edwards had put us on the 4 Alternatives EP and Avon Calling compilation album for Heartbeat Records but a single was never discussed until Revolver Records came along.

Could you talk us through the subsequent line-up changes?

Initially Phil was replaced by Chris Bostock on bass and then Simon by Kevin Mills on guitar. We were all simply developing our individual interests and goals and so change was inevitable.

When and why did you and Neil decide to take the band in a different direction?

I don't remember any of us sitting down to discuss what our 'sound/direction' was, it just happened. I guess it was only natural that Neil and I would gravitate to the music we had grown up with in Easton and Barton Hill, there was a lot of reggae and when we began to experiment as a band it just felt right. It proved to be incredibly popular at gigs and we enjoyed playing it, simple as that.

What were the best times with the later line-ups? Supporting The Clash must have been a

highlight.

Supporting The Clash was a huge event for us; The Clash were really good to us and I have some fantastic memories of the night. Recording Together, the single, was a highlight too, it felt like we were maturing as a band and playing really well together. Also around the time of Together we were getting slicker at recording demos at GBH Rehearsal Studios and then taking them to Crescent Studios to record for release. Queen & Country and Visions of Fate were recorded around this period, which turned out to be towards the end of the band's life.

Those appeared on The Bristol Recorder compilation of course; how did you come to appear on that? And is the version of Fussing and Fighting on The Bristol Punk Explosion from that recording session?

We were invited to record three tracks for Bristol Recorder 2 which was to have a Peter Gabriel contribution on the record. We recorded Queen & Country and Visions of Fate plus the Culture cover Stop The Fussing and Fighting. We had recorded all three tracks as a demo at GBH before going to Crescent Studios. It is this GBH demo version of F&F on The Bristol Punk Explosion, with backing vocals recorded in the toilets for atmos!

And after 4 years, you finally put out a single. Could you tell us about that?

We had quite a following in Bristol and Revolver Records invited us to release a single; we went into the studio to record Together and another track as the B-Side, it all took a little longer than expected though and ended up without enough time to record the second track. Instead, Steve Street took what we had already recorded and mixed a dub version called Untogether. We added bits as we went along and had a great time, the result was spontaneous, fun and really good.

When and why did you split up?

Chris is a fantastic musician and was whisked away to a professional musician's contract in London (along with some other great Bristol musicians), we couldn't find a suitable replacement, the single was released and we were trying to gig to promote it. We played a gig in London which was a shambles - after that it all dissipated into 12

nothing. The time had come anyway, we were all pushing in different directions and wanted to do something new.

You were a great inspiration to us, as well as a great practical help with support slots and advice and encouragement, so I've always thought of The X-Certs as a sort of bridge between early Bristol punk and the 80s scene. Would you agree with that?

That's very kind of you, I wasn't aware at the time that we were having any kind of influence at all, but the interest in The X-Certs that Bristol Archive Records has generated is incredible and I feel very proud to have been part of the scene. To have been an inspiration to The Vice Squad? Wow, that is a huge compliment, thank you.

What did you all do after the split?

All went our own way. Chris was in London, Neil joined The Crazy Trains, Simon was working and buggered off to train to be an actor.

What are you all doing now?

Chris has just got a Masters in IT and works at South Bank University, Neil runs the UK's only Taiko Drumming group - Mugenkyo (see them, they are fantastic), Simon had a successful high tech sales/marketing career and is now a student doing a PHD in Modern History, Taff is still playing with Disorder. No one knows what has happened to Kevin Mills (Kevin where are you?). I am a TV Director, mainly Eastenders

Is it true, as Simon Edwards says, that your episodes of Eastenders are the most violent ones?!

No!

And finally, why-oh-why did you never release everyone's favourite X- Certs song Fight Back? It wasn't even your idea to include it on The Bristol Punk Explosion, was it?

Never knew it was everyone's favourite - but very glad to see you have put that right by including it on the compilation.

Oh, one more thing, where was that version of Fight Back recorded?

A GBH Demo.

Shane Baldwin

BRISTOL ARCHIVE RECORDS

the X-certs



fussing & fighting

New Album - *Fussing & Fighting* now available from Bristol Archive Records
<http://www.bristolarchiverecords.com/>

Spot the Bristol punk still assaulting our eardrums 33 years later?



See page 35 for the answer

VALDEZ

Well every issue we cover someone prominent in the Bristol punk scene, but the question is why haven't we gotten round to Chris Valdez sooner? The answer is he was living in Midsomer Norton, so he didn't qualify, but as soon as he moved to Bristol an interview was organised, then forgotten about, then done, then forgotten about again, then finally finished, so here it is!

Would you like to introduce yourself?



Chris Valdez, singer/bassist of Valdez, co-runner of Cider City Records and all round nice guy. Also done a few fill in stints in other bands once or twice but Valdez is how I ended up here!

What was it like growing up in Midsomer Norton – how punk is Somerset?

Growing up in Midsomer Norton was by and large good....I'd imagine it's much like any other mid-size town. There was normally enough to keep me busy

but at times it can get frustrating dealing with the peaks and troughs of living in a town rather than a city. When I was 17 we started visiting The Wunderbar regularly, which is where Valdez played its first gig back in 2001. It's still nice to go back.

How come you make several references to cider in songs and naming the label, yet you don't drink the stuff. Is it a Somerset thing?

Actually I think that was more the influence of Jamer Turnip, who had a two year stint in Valdez. Believe it or not, there were ideas for more cider songs but I didn't want us to be remembered as 'That band that sings songs about cider'. Even when I drank there were far nicer things to drink than rotten apples...

Why move to Bristol? How do you rate the scene?

I'd been travelling in and out of Bristol most weekends for several years anyway, plus I work here full time. I also like the fact I can go out on an evening and not have to drive 15 miles. Coupled with that, I live far enough out of the centre that I can go in my garden and not hear too much hustle and bustle, so I've got it good. The scene is getting so much better these last few years. Wind back five or six years, and it was dying on its arse. Three years before that it was strong again....I think it all goes round in circles. But compared to a lot of the other cities I've been to, we've got nothing to complain about here. It's sad that Bob lost The Junction recently, but hopefully things will continue to go strong.

You've also lived in Leeds, how does it compare to Bristol?

Leeds was a very heavy duty city. I lived there for 3 years, and made some great friends, but I left with a lot of emotional baggage. If you embrace it, it can be great, but it pretty much chewed me up and spat me out at the end, maybe because I let it, I don't know. I like going back to visit but I don't think 14

I could hack living there again. As for the music scene, at risk of sounding like I'm slagging the place off, it was great to see a touring band most nights of the week if I wanted to, but it's also very cliquey. A lot of 'You're not cool because you do/don't like that band' rubbish. I did however make many friends through gigs, and will always be forever grateful for the time I spent there.

You're probably best known locally for fronting Valdez, how long has the band been going and what where did the name come from?

We started back in 2001 with two school friends, Lee and Martin. We extended to a four piece the following year with our other mate Tom. We had a few fluctuating line-ups before Lee, Tom and Pez (the drummer by that time) quit in late 2004. The name came from the Exxon Valdez oil spill that Lee used to constantly pronounce wrong, and it kind of just stuck. In addition, one day we were watching Scooby Doo and the villain turned out to be Snor Valdez, the owner of the theme park. I took that as a sign.

How many people have actually been in Valdez over the years and have you finally got a stable line-up with members in the same geographical area?

Christ, if you count people who filled in on tours or played but didn't get on any releases...I think it's 14. It's been for a multitude of reasons...some people have just wanted to move on. Some have walked in expecting something and walked away disappointed. Others have come across as nice people and turned out to be completely insufferable on tour...for whatever reason, it's given us a varied past! But each and every person has brought something different to the table, whether it has been positive or negative...it's always a learning experience! Rhys joined in May 2008. Myself and Matt were looking for a drummer, Jamer Turnip recommended 'That kid from The Cunts', so after a bit of tracking down via Myspace we got him to try out and he's been with us since. Having him in the band has felt right since day one, and with us all being in Bristol, we have been able to write a ton of new material...I think when we were spread out, and changing members, there was a two year period where we literally didn't play one new song.

Did you ever think of changing the name when the rest of the band quit? What if any alternative names did you come up with?

Not at all. At the end of the day, I formed the band, I asked the others to join, and having them leave was unfortunate...but in a way it was a blessing in disguise as I was able to go back to the drawing board and re-work moving Valdez towards what I had always intended for it to sound like. Having the art punk influence was a welcome change at first but it diluted our sound way too much. People would come to our gigs and see a band that looked like it didn't know whether to try and sound like Negative Approach or the Manic Street Preachers. After Lee, Tom and Pez quit, I was on the phone the very next day recruiting the members I had always had in mind in case I needed them.

How would you describe the sound and has it changed much since *Exception Becomes the Rule* especially since you're now a 3 piece?

Now, I'd describe us as 80s style hardcore but with some intelligent musicianship thrown in. Perhaps a mix of Negative Approach and earlier Bad Religion.

What do you do for inspiration now that Bush has gone, and are you consciously trying to write hit singles as some of the new stuff in pretty catchy?

Haha! The fact you describe it as 'catchy' is a compliment, but it's always just been our intention to make music and if we like what comes out, we'll stick with it. We've never been after that hit single, and if any band in this scene is, they'll be disappointed. For inspiration we really just take our experiences and views on the world and churn out lyrics that get our point across, but don't preach. The world's a shit hole and we all know it needs some serious work, but nobody wants to go to a gig to be told what to think.

What have been the highlights for the band so far?

Too many to mention, but the ones that come to mind were being able to tour the USA and Europe, releasing a record on my own label, putting out a split with Electric Frankenstein, and sharing the stage with some of our idols.

How was the Rancid support slot as I'd heard you weren't their great fan? How did it go, especially as it was the first gig in a long time plus with new drummer?

I'll admit I wasn't a big fan, in fact I hated them...until Matt asked me what album I had, and it turned out *Indestructable* is considered their worst. I gave them a listen again, and, whilst they're never going to be my cup of tea, I can see why people like them. We were completely shitting it when we supported, as it was the biggest crowd we had ever played to, and it was Rhys' first gig so it really was a trial by fire. But the boy nailed it.

Is there is a place for small DIY labels in the world of downloads and CDs?

I think the world of downloads and CDRs have really made smaller labels work harder to make an imprint on the market. Labels just can't release a CD anymore and expect it to sell...they have to have great artwork, maybe some liner notes...when I put a CD in my PC and videos and all the little nick nacks come up, it's great, as that's not something you can download, at least not very easily. As far as helping new music get heard, the price of CDRs has meant bands that previously would have been out of the picture can make a run of a hundred CDs for less than the cost of a typical night out. So at the bottom level, it's great, but for little labels like Cider City, we've got our work cut out for us! It's not as bad a time as people would have the world believe....we're still shifting a fair amount of CDs.

I notice you've now got your stuff available via itunes. How is this working out and is it something you'd recommend for small labels?

Absolutely. Nobody's under any illusions....everyone downloads now. When we put out the TSOL record, I went online a week later to find it already being shared on blogs and P2P programs. I can't get

angry as we've all got a free song here and there, but there are still a loyal group of people who will get their credit card out and buy the album online legitimately. I'd say recently, 75% of our income has been through digital sales through Itunes, eMusic...even people downloading the tracks as ringtones, which I thought died out ages ago.

How did you manage to do deals with the likes of Welt and TSOL, who have been pretty big bands in their time, on a label run from a house in Somerset?

Hard work and not overpromising! Nobody likes it when they're guaranteed the world and it isn't delivered. Jack from TSOL has been a good friend over the last few years, more than he knows, and when we were branching out and wanting to put out a larger record, his work ethic seemed to fit in with our relaxed take on things. I literally just pitched the idea to him and he was up for it! The same goes for Welt. I was in Denver on Thanksgiving 2006 when a chirpy Californian called me up....I'd left him my number some weeks before but didn't expect him to call back. From there on releasing Welt stuff and Jason's solo work was a pleasure.

What are you're biggest sellers so far?

The TSOL record for sure. Jason Welt's solo EP is a close second. The Valdez album just went out of print last month!

Who does all the great art work?

I've always loved the work Chris Davies at Artskull (www.artskull.com) does. He did the Valdez and TSOL albums, plus our split with Electric Frankenstein. He's realistic, timely, cost effective and fucking talented. Recently though I've dabbled; the Welt EP was partly done by myself and I did all the artwork for the Jason Welt EP, bar taking the actual photos. It's been a learning curve but it's nice to look at a CD and know that the front cover is thanks to myself.

Did you have any mixed feelings after TSOL reformed again when you had released what was at the time a live album of their last ever shows?

Not at all. I've always been a huge fan, and knew that any 'break up' by them should be seen as a 'hiatus' and temporary. When they released their new album, we had a quick resurgence of sales. Plus, anyone who gets to see TSOL is in for a treat.

With the Jason Welt release you not only organised an acoustic tour but also played guitar on that tour. How did the tour go? Were you ever worried about two bass players going out doing an acoustic gig?

We just both walked into it, seeing it as a challenge and not knowing how it would go. Jason has been playing six string pretty much full time the last few years, whereas I got back into guitar (rather than bass) literally a month or two before the tour. Jason is possibly the person who most closely matches my tour working ethic; he's in it for fun, but puts 110% in at all times, and is a pleasure to be on the road with. When he flew back to the States it was like saying goodbye to a new brother. What I liked most was that, at a time where people really are jumping on the alt-country bandwagon and playing any old dreary shit, Jason's doing acoustic music with balls in it.

You used to put on quite a few big shows in Bristol, why did you quit as a promoter?

When I started, it was a joy, as I could be part of seeing my favourite bands come to Bristol. Towards the end, it got way too much of a task. I would be trying my hardest to get people out to gigs, but when you're stood in the venue, with no more than a loyal few gig goers watching someone who's travelled 3000 miles to play to you, you begin to re-think why you're still doing it.

Another thing that was getting too much was the political nature of it all, which still goes on. I'd get emails from bands who felt a sense of entitlement to be on gigs, or demand a certain place on the bill. I put up with it as a necessary evil, but the dwindling numbers really told me I should get out.

You put together the Lonely Kings tour earlier this year, are you planning to bring them over again or did the events on that tour put you off promoting for life?

I don't think we'll be touring with them again. We're all still friends on a personal level, but I think the

Lonely Kings have different expectations from touring than us, and to how people should be treated. In any case I don't bear them any ill will.

Is your perfect holiday sitting in the back of a van visiting all the dives across the USA with some underrated band doing their merch or roadying? How does this fit in with your girlfriend's ideal summer getaway?

It's all a question of balance. Since being with my girlfriend, I've been able to do both touring AND holidays. The last tour I did, I was quite short on leave from work, so I was jetting back into work as soon as the local gigs were done, and turning up to the rest of the gigs barely out of my work uniform. Last year I was away for a month as I was on a break from my job, which also meant I could take a proper holiday without repercussions. I do love touring and everything that comes with it, but I spent too long burning the candle at both ends, so I have to fit some slobbing in time in somewhere.

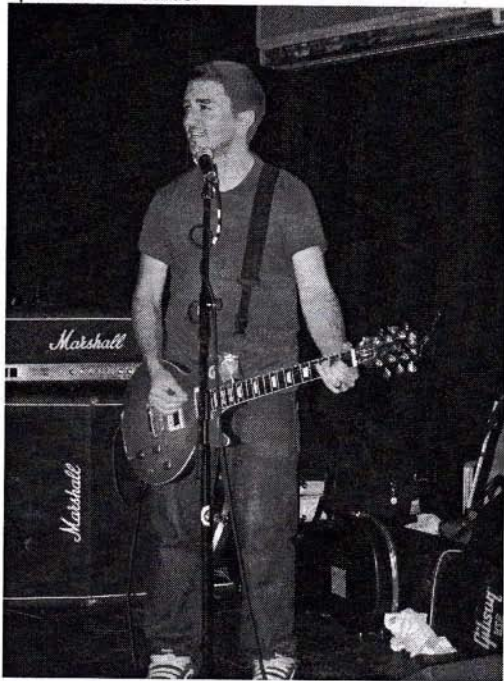
So finally what are your plans for future?

Just planning more of the same. Keeping the gigs coming in, getting a new album out and keeping the label strong. I'd really like to get out and play the US again as, from personal experience, I have seen towns that go crazy at the prospect of proper English punk bands playing. But we're just taking it each day at a time. *Dave Lown*

See <http://www.valdez.org.uk/> for latest news on Valdez and for the label see www.cidercityrecords.com/

THE CUT UPS

Once in a while you see a band live and know you just have to interview them, and one such band was the Cut Ups, not just because they'd just released a great album on HHN, but they are so damn entertaining live and such thoroughly nice blokes. I spoke to Jon Curtis.



Who are the Cut Ups and how long have you been together?

Hullo! The Cut Ups are a punk rock band from Exeter. There are four of us; there used to be three. Reza and I started the band with Adam Searle in 2004; our first show was December 23rd 2004. We had a good time, but Adam got itchy feet. He left, moved away and then moved back. In the meantime, Reza and I started writing our second record. Jack Hyde joined us on bass guitar, and when Adam returned he started with us again, this time playing lead guitar. Adam is a genius, but perhaps full of too many ideas - he finished our new LP and then moved again. He now lives in Brighton, and Ted Reynolds climbed aboard the Good Ship Cut Ups. We are now the tour de force we always threatened to be perhaps!

Do you really sound like Tom Petty meets The Ramones? Plus being from Exeter, is there also some sea shanty thing going on from time to time in your tunes?

Yes, I think we do! When we wrote *The High and Mighty* which is our new LP all I listened to was Tom Petty (particularly the song *The Dark of The Sun*; if there's a better piece of rhythm guitar in the world of radio rock, I haven't heard it!) and *I Don't Wanna Grow Up* by The Ramones, which I realise is actually a Tom Waits song, and so I encouraged the studio engineer Martin to stop eating Chocolate Digestives and make the record sound more like these two acts. Did it work? Who can say? There probably should be more guitar harmonies.

Sea Shantys (is it shantys or shanties, I don't know) [shanty singular, shanties plural - Nautical Shane] are perhaps part of our sound. I want to be in some way accountable to our locale, and I couldn't really do a Seth Lakeman, so shantys is where it went! I have tried in vain to get accordion tracks onto two of our recordings in recent times, but both have been quashed by concerned band members; watch this space!

Do you take the Fugazi thing a bit too far; lifted lyrics on 1st album, song about Joe Lally on the second and tour tee shirts with a picture of him on the front (though I might have got that wrong, but I'm sure I remember you selling such tee shirts at The Croft)

Yes you're correct about the shirts, and about the abundant Fugazi worship and tribute. Do we take it too far? Perhaps! I wrote to Ian Mackaye and Joe Lally and sent them t-shirts. They wrote back, but we don't know if they are wearing them! If there's band to take too far, then they are it. That's all I can say; I love em!

Is being in the Cut Ups really like being in communist Russia?

Yes, I run a tight dictatorship where the obsequious get far and those who rock the boat and question our manifesto are sent to far away places.

Do you talk too much between songs and ever get to the point where you think "What am I rambling on about?". Any examples you'd care to mention other than the

question above which was a quote from your gig at Bristol recently.

Oh yeah, all the time. I wish I could stop. I can't remember the worst, but certainly there are all sorts of occasions where it doesn't work, and no-one is interested, or I'm just in a funny (not humorous) mood and it gets worse and worse!

Did signing to Household Name make much difference, were you a fan of any of the other bands on the label?

I think the key is that people are taking notice before they hear the band; folks have come out and bothered to pay cash for records and shows before they have any idea what we sound like! It's almost a standard mark; Lil and Kafren are trusted purveyors of punk rock to the UK and Europe, so if they think something is good, then other people think it must be okay! Records that HHN have done that I am particularly fond of are *Civil Disobedients* by Capdown, the second Lightyear LP, *It's Not Rocket Science* by Captain Everything and anything Hostage Life have done...

What would you say were the differences between your first and second album.

I think I was prepared to take our time on the second LP; the first was just literally me panicking that I had to do something soon or else I might explode. And I think also the extra guitar, and the creative input of the four of us made loads of difference. Plus I tried to make it less about me!

Who does your art work as the 2 LPs seem to have a very different style?

Shaky Kane who is a comic book illustrator (he used to draw for *Deadline* and *2000AD*) who lives in Exeter and used to work out of The Cavern Offices; he's a funny guy with a real penchant for filth! He took a North Korean piece of propaganda of a soldier smashing The White House and turned it into that!

Mark Smith is a friend of ours; he drew the new LP sleeve - he is an incredible illustrator; you can find more of his stuff at <http://altpick.com/marksmith>

Did your Nan really write High and Mighty or did she just rip off someone else's tune?

Dear old Nan had a good ear for a tune, but she was a shameless blagger. who knows where it came from?!

Does having a drummer of Iranian decent have much of an effect on the band other than having a song called Reza Is From Iran?

We have encountered no resistance to having a member of a non-white ethnic origin in our band, but Rez's twin sister has encountered having to deal with far-right goons who make claims about her rights to dwell in this country. That song was written for her. Her name is Rossi Mirehsan (pronounced Ro-see)

What is the pirate truth referred to in That's What Pirates Are For?

Ah, Jack Hyde's least favourite song! Well, in our country we are encouraged to believe that any kind of 'illegal activity' basically undermines society as a whole. So, graffiti or skateboarding or downloading or whatever basically shows that we are unfit citizens of the United Kingdom. Piracy in the current bourgeois state of existence can be the label applied to anyone who makes choices that aren't exactly what the government wants us to take. And so the pirate truth is the belief or recognition that laws can sometimes be wrong, and the unlawful can sometimes be right. I am happy to stop Angelina Jolie or Clive Owen from earning quite as much for their next film because I watched a pirate copy of something, and I do not classify this as stealing. Watch out anarchists! I'm in town!

Care to explain what Jake verses the Christmas Tree is all about?

Yes, happily. About a year ago, a lad from Plymouth called Nicky Reilly, who had learning difficulties, travelled to Exeter on the coach, borrowing £10 from his Mum for the bus ticket. He went to the toilet of a café (where Chris from OK Pilot was having his lunch) with the particular idea of arming a nail bomb that he had in his rucksack. He did something wrong and the bomb went off in the toilet. He hurt himself, but everyone else was fine. He did a terrible thing, but of course the government and the media starting throwing terms around like terrorist and Islamist and so when it went to trial they sentenced him to 18 years in Belmarsh. The song takes the perspective that of course he tried to do an awful thing, but the response highlighted for me just how keen the newspapers and the authorities are to label whole swathes of people, and to not look at those individuals as people but to write them off as a threat to our entire way of life. I don't
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buy into this idea, but instead hope that there will be a time when we view people like Nicky Reilly with as much pity and compassion as hatred and condemnation. The End I'm singing about is both the end of Nicky Reilly's life (because what kind of life has he got currently?) and the hoped for end to this way of thinking. Our politicians have shown that they are very happy to dole out punishment to the British public, but they themselves are given a thousand chances.

Who are your favourite bands to play with, are you ever in awe of The Computers?

Yes, often in awe of them; they are doing some brilliant things all the time! I always love to play with Strike Anywhere and The Arteries; playing with Joe Lally was incredible, and so was The Lawrence Arms...

Are you playing Greenbelt festival this year, how did you end up on the bill as I presume it's not your typical punk band gig?

Yes, we are, and we were booked by our friend Pippa who also runs the Cavern in Exeter. I've been to Greenbelt maybe the last 5 years, and have seen all sorts of good stuff- Billy Bragg twice was special! In a world of sponsored, corporate festivals, Greenbelt is actually a huge breath of fresh air, whatever your view on the basis for the weekend. I love it there, and hope that the kids respond okay to what we're trying to do!

Exeter - what the scene like?

Yeah, great. It's entirely built around The Cavern Club, run by Pippa and David (from Annalise); they have employed so many of us through the years and have put on so many incredible bands. We also have loads of bands doing good stuff- Computers, OK Pilot, Dead City Stereo, The False Arrests, Brothers, Kids Return, Some Sort of Threat, Chaps and Rat Attack. Zines are a bit slow, although Izzy from Chaps does loads. We are all part of a collective, No Stars No Stripes that puts on punk rock shows at The Cavern. We're very fortunate!

Now this is where it gets a bit complicated, who are Brothers?

Brothers are a punk rock band from Exeter - The Cut Ups connection is that Reza plays drums, Ben from Dead City Stereo plays guitar and our friend Anna (she is in a band called Targets) plays bass. They sound like None More Black and are excellent!

but they still had a bit of a KNW feel) who looked familiar. Who are they and how do they differ from the Cut Ups?

Yes, I miss Kids Near Water too, but alas they are gone! Kids Return feature Jack Hyde from The Cut Ups; they are what the older music fans would call emo - its like Rites of Spring I think. They differ in that they have talent and looks.

What are the links with Annalise, are they ever likely to reappear?

The link is me - I play lead guitar in Annalise - I was on the last record, and the big news is that we have just started writing the next!

How does it work out with the Cut Ups, being in other bands?

I think it helps to inspire us - I should mention that Ted also plays in Chaps, so we are all in at least one other band. I think it's important to not just be set on one thing, and some of the other bands are part of different scenes; particularly Chaps and Kids Return; this kind of input can only be helpful! But it can get a bit busy at times; my diary's a mess!!!

Any final thoughts on how to make punk rock a force again?

Its got to be to do with righteous anger I think; most of the best bands come out of a time of political suppression, and I'm sure we're entering another time that will be comparable to Thatcher, Reagan, Nixon and Vietnam. Selflessness plays a part too; lots of punks are fine, so they don't bother to complain - there's a lot to complain about! Look around, get educated, get passionate. don't let anyone tell you what to think, but try and reassess! Up the punks! Thanks for checking out The Cut Ups, and taking the time to write to us! We really appreciate it!

Dave Lown

Also I saw Kids Return recently (disappointingly not Kids Near Water come back, who are probably my favourite Exeter band of all time,

REVIEWS

Album Reviews

VARIOUS ARTISTS Bristol -The Punk Explosion Bristol Archive *****

Bristol was always a bit of a punk backwater, not in terms of content but in terms of recognition. This CD is confirmation of that – packed full of great stuff by bands that you might have loved, underestimated or completely missed at the time, most of whom (at the beginning, at least) never really grabbed the nation's attention.

The first Bristol Punk group that *did* get some attention, The Cortinas, start the ball rolling with their Defiant Pose, a classic tune which surely needs no further introduction from me. Following in their footsteps come a raft of bands that may or may not have quite been punk – who cares though, the music reflects the variation in those days when no one really knew what punks should look or sound like. The Pigs' two efforts are scratchy but worthwhile and Social Security provide a couple of noisy poppy tunes, far better than I remembered them. The Primates give a pointer to the future of punk with a great bassy (live) Generation Warfare. I never quite got the X-Certs, but lots of local punks did, and the inclusion of a couple of tracks here shows their versatility if not their influence on the local scene. After their (X-Certs') reasonable but lengthy version of Culture's Stop Your Fussing and Fighting, Vice Squad remind us that this *is* a punk compilation after all and crank the pace up several notches with their second single Resurrection and then Disorder go ballistic with Complete Disorder, a dreadful but somehow likeable ditty. By now the punk sound has undergone a change and the next few tracks are a bit formulaic (Chaos UK, Court Martial, The Undead, Lunatic Fringe). Chaotic Dischord provide what's probably the low point of the album but even their effort is not without its redeeming qualities (it's short) before Onslaught finish the whole thing off with a resounding shout with (take a deep breath) Thermo Nuclear Devastation of the Planet Earth.

Good stuff from start to finish then, quite a few tracks never previously released. And while you've been listening you should have been reading the sleeve notes; more information than can possibly be absorbed in one sitting and with lots of pix as well - almost worth the price alone.

This isn't an album packed full of classic punk tracks but it *is* a great historical document detailing the first few years of punk's development in a provincial town. We always knew that Bristol's

punks could do the job as well as anyone else, but this definitely proves it.

Roger Salter

VARIOUS ARTISTS Bristol -The Punk Explosion Bristol Archive *****

The perfect accompaniment to this zine has to be this compilation. Defiant Pose - what better way to remember The Cortinas who are probably the best known of the first wave Bristol punk bands. Some of the other first wavers, like The Pigs and Social Security, have almost indistinguishable sounds. The 48 Hours and Verdict tracks really make you sit up and listen, as do the X Certs tracks as one is the in-your-face Fight Back while their other contribution is a 9 minute reggae track. Disorder's Complete Disorder is as good as the title suggests and I'd forgotten how good Chaos UK's 4 Minute Warning was. We end quite appropriately with Onslaught, yes the thrash metallers, and the first song they ever wrote which was Thermo Nuclear Devastation of the Planet Earth – well you can't get a bigger explosion than that. Also includes Vice Squad, Chaotic Discord and excellent sleeve notes. A fine historical document. *Dave Lown*

THE CORTINAS MK1 Bristol Archive *****

Those loveable people at Bristol Archive did a sterling job putting out two Cortinas download-only sets, live album *For Fuck's Sake Plymouth*, and a collection of demos entitled *Please Don't Hit Me*, but here we have something more tangible. *The Cortinas MK.1* is a 500-only vinyl album containing all four tracks from the band's two Step Forward singles, plus demo tracks recorded at GBH studio in Bristol, engineered by Andrew Peters and Steve Street. The first 100 copies come with an insert that includes photos taken at the Fascist Dictator session by drummer Daniel Swan's brother Stephen (those may well be sold out by the time you read this, but it may be worth checking the label's web site), and there's also a short run of about 100 CD copies, with imitation LP covers, hand-made by Sam Giles, complete with spine and inner paper covers. *Shane Baldwin*

THE PIGS 1977

Bristol Archive ****

The Pigs were the second Bristol band to release a record, on New Bristol Records. The label was financed by Miles Copeland after the band met him at a Generation X gig at Chutes, and they spent 12 August 1977 in Sound Conception Studio. There, the Pigs recorded their whole eleven track set, from which four songs were selected for the *Youthanasia* EP - the title track, of course, with *They Say*, *Psychopath*, and *National Front*.

The single sold in respectable numbers, gaining airplay courtesy of John Peel, but it proved to be the band's only record, the rest of the tracks left to gather dust - until now. Like the Cortinas above (do we see a life-long pattern developing here?) this release of all eleven tracks by Bristol Archive is limited to 500 vinyl copies, the first 100 with a special insert containing a new band interview and rare photos, and 100 CDs in a dinky imitation cardboard LP-style sleeve.

As for the music, this is classic lo-fi '77 punk, fizzing with brittle youthful energy, delivered at breakneck speed. Eleven tracks in 23 minutes and 48 seconds - job done! *Shane Baldwin*

SEPTIC PSYCHOS Rotten And Rancid Dirty Old Man***

Septic Psychos were formed in Chesterfield, in 1979, by the wonderfully named Mick Shakespeare and his equally wonderfully monikered brother Chiz, on bass and vocals respectively. The line-up was rounded out with Neil Hawkes on drums, and first Phil Goodwin then Paul Riley on guitar, and the band spent the next two years working up a set. In 1981 they released a four track cassette on their own Brain Splat label, then Pax Records included two of the tracks, *The Thatcher and Not Wanted*, on their stupidly named compilation *Punks Dead? Nah, Mate, The Smell's Jus Summink In Yer Underpants*. It proved to be the band's only recorded output, and they split soon after.

Last year, however, Mick and Chiz reformed the band, and at last we have a full Septic Pschos album. And it was well worth the wait - *Rotten And Rancid* boasts a much fuller sound than the old material, and though there are no particular stand-out songs, the album as a whole packs a mighty 80s punk/hardcore-style punch. *Shane Baldwin*

BRASSNECK With Something Amiss Self Released ***

The latest EP from the Hampshire based Brassneck sees them continue to develop their pop sensibilities, combining elements of the Beautiful South and Dexys Midnight Runners to produce generally pleasing results. Lead track *Mess of*

Contradictions has an addictive bassline and catchy harmonised chorus while *Too Much*, *Too Drunk* is an amusing tale of youthful excess. I wasn't so keen on *Treasure It Because You Care*, *Natahsa*, mainly because I don't think co-lead vocalist Kat works as well as Ben (although she's fine on the harmonies). *Depression Is A Young Person's Art Form* starts off well but is spoilt by a slightly tedious spoken word middle section and its eight minute duration. Overall then a decent EP and if you're into this type of thing certainly a band that may warrant further investigation. *James Smith*

ORDER 66 Star Wars Pop Self Released ***

Order 66 are that rarest of beasts, a fraternal based Surrey punk band whose entire oeuvre is based around quotes and ideas from the Star Wars universe. I must admit, my internal 8 year old thinks this is a combination we should see more of. So, caps readily doffed in respect for the idea but are they Boba Fett or Ja Ja Binks?

Red Six kicks things off with melodic ultra-lite street-ish punk, tuneful enough in a kind of Sum 41 way with a chorus that implores us to 'suit up and have some fun' - be afraid, for these are the guys who dress up at comic conventions. *Waist-length Cape* follows up in pretty much the same vein, with added stoppy-starty bits. *Rebellion* gets unwisely pseudo-political, sagely noting that 'the bad guys wear black helmets, and sometimes white' whilst only man could build a 'planet smashing machine'. Okaaay *Obi-Wan*.

The band are on stronger ground with *Anger Management*, which is about Chewbacca going to an anger management group that includes Darth Vader. Ideas like our wookiee friend giving the 'My Name is Chewbacca the wookiee and...' AA speech and Vader secretly thinking everyone in the circle is a 'week minded fool' make this a great idea for a sketch, if not necessarily a song. But hey, they keep it short and sweet and as a band that made my juvenile mind think 'mohicans and lightsabers - together at last!', its hard to be too hard on them. Bless. *Dave Spiller*

LOQUI Hermes Pan (single)

Sturdy

No stars

There are so many reasons to dislike this
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single. Pronounced Low-Key (you see what they did there?) and marketed as a 'punked out Andrew Lloyd webber', they clearly have visions of this as a clever-clever genre skipping/smashing crossover hit, but it just sounds a bit like Chumbawumba really. And a bit like James. Plus the b-side is surely just an excerpt from a rubbish musical. Oh, and the final 'bonus' track is an unwelcome uber-earnest acapella rendition of the A side. So many reasons...*Dave Spiller*

LYDIA LUNCH Queen of Siam
Cherry Red ****

Queen of Siam was Lydia's first solo release post-Teenage Jesus and the Jerks and begins as it means to continue with Mechanical Flattery (isn't he the guy from Riverdance?) featuring her trademark soft yet snarling vocals mixed in with something of the dissonant atmosphere of her friend Alan Vega's Suicide.

Which brings us nicely to the legendary 'Hungarian suicide song' - Gloomy Sunday (google it) which is covered here and doesn't sound out of place at all; more surprisingly Spooky really is a cover of the song you probably know best via Dusty Springfield ('a spooky little girl like you') and pretty faithful at that, in a sleazy downtown New York kind of way. So far, so sultry, but Of course Lunch is no one trick pony - after Los Banditos segues from Nancy Sinatra into arabian jazz, Atomic Bongos switches direction, ups the tempo and delivers a bass heavy stomp that almost sounds like a scuzzier Go-Gos. Elsewhere we have various combinations of menacing big band jazz, screaming guitars, reverse tape loops and maniacal laughter whilst Lunch narrates the twisted tales with cool detachment. This album apparently never really sold when originally released, but has gained a cult status as the years passed and if this reissue should bring this underrated set to new ears like mine then so much the better. *Dave Spiller*

WASTED LIFE/RATMONKEY (Split CD)
Dirty Old Man

Split release with six tracks from one and eight from 'tuther. Let's do **WASTED LIFE** first shall we? A Stoke-on-Trent five piece, formed from members of Dead Heroes and The Rough Kutz these chaps have progressed from playing covers live to this, their debut. Angry punk is their tag, which is true enough. Very throaty vocals - almost death metal in places! - and kinda rocky/trad punk guitar. Pretty tidy, nothing too original though and gets pretty repetitive in places. Not quite going somewhere? Socially critical lyrics, the odd oohooohoo and a splash too much reminiscing about the good old

days TM. If you like your punk melodic but rough and not performed by six year olds this may be for you ***

RATMONKEY take over from track seven with Punk By Numbers. Well raw, this Black Country trio. Bizarre intro about rats from slave ships raping monkeys. Ohhh-kay. I'm pretty sure that it's not a racist analogy. Moving on, this is a fast paced riot-like selection of tunes. Lyrically immature - yes? Troutlips - really? Ill-advised Pretty Vacant-ish intro to Union Jack which fails to go into the main body of the song. But warts and all releases like this hold their charm well and there is plenty to enjoy here. Don't Tell Me I've Got Cancer is probably more heartfelt than it sounds and a few of the chorus' lend themselves to a chant-along on the first listen. I reckon this sounds at its best after about three or four pints, so accordingly it gets ****1/2. *Ed Bateman*

THE NERVE SCHEME Punks Not Punk Jailhouse **

According to their MySpace, The Nerve Scheme, sound like 'An angel having an orgasm'. Right. I mean even if I believed in angels, which I don't, I imagine them orgasming sounding a bit more Sophie B Hawkins's vocals in her first album (proper punks will be lost here) or Nicky Wire on a rainy day. Not like US semi-hardcore come punk cheese. This does not necessarily detract from TNS, but is a serious point that they themselves felt the need to raise so must be addressed. The music on this 'angelic release' is not jizz as such, in fact it starts okay, but increasingly becomes a bit clichéd. A bit jizz-like perhaps? The vocals are a bit weak here and there and overall, for all the effort they have clearly put in, nothing sticks. Unlike jism, angelic or otherwise, which gets everywhere. Unless you are one of those weirdos who does it in a sock. Maybe that's what TNS are, less an angelic orgasm, more an angel's spunk sock. The artwork is crossed junkie needles. Trying too hard? Well Fat Mike tried to buy coke off them once according to them. Yes then. *Ed Bateman*

REVENGE OF THE PSYCHOTRONIC MAN
Make Pigs Smoke

TNS ****1/2

These guys, according to the press blurb, worship Alan Partridge. No really, they have 23

just done a five-date tribute tour to Radio Norwich's prodigal son, ending in his home town. Revenge Of... are not from Norwich, they hail from Manchester and formed in 2005. They did a split release in 08 and have been working hard touring their arses off. This, their first full-length release, is fucking awesome. Its nuts. Its noisy. Song titles include Cosmopolitan Horse Tits, Mainstream Music Is Shit, Felch Death Fuck Storm and I Know A Cracking Owl Sanctuary. I'll write that again...I Know A Cracking Owl Sanctuary. Genius. These guys are the VIZ of punk. Each track is delivered at breakneck speed via a globule of pure punk flob that burrows straight into the brain causing high excitement of the P-Zone (the Punks Cortex). It sounds fresh and when it finishes – all too soon – just press play again. I Know A Cracking Owl Sanctuary is the only exception, a ska intermission, breaking up the album nicely. Good work. **Ed Bateman**

HALCYON DAYS Sounds of Swami TNS ***

Six tracks from altpunks Halcyon Days. Hard, heavy and not as easy to pin down as you might think. There is a lot in here from Black Flag, Faith no More, The Heads and Lillydamwhite, and many more, without being any of them. If you read their blurb they obsess about not being pigeon-holed and going different places. Certainly the six tracks are separate entities, boasting multi-vocals and complexity that many punk acts don't attempt, let alone pull off. This gives Sound of Swami distinction that other bands can only dream of but at the same time it will remain inaccessible to many who will just not get it. It's metallic in places, but punk overall - fast but measured in pace and well worth trying. I'd certainly like to see how these tracks translate live. **Ed Bateman**

4BITTEN No More Sins Rocksector * (for sending it in)

Okay, all together now. Raise arm and form fist. Now raise peter pointer and little finger to the sky to form the devil horn thing. Move head back a bit and now forward a bit more. Repeat. Occasionally say 'RAAAWWWK'. How does that make you feel? A bit sick? Cheesy? Like a spandex cliché? Welcome to the 4Bitten sound. This is a female-vocal based heavy rock outfit which would probably be more at home in the eighties on an arena tour than in a twenty-first century punkzine. "Follow me, this could be, your biggest fantasyyyyyyyyyy'. Um, no ta. By the way, rhyming celebrity with TV doesn't work. It sounds shit. Like the rest of this album. Strictly for those who like their guitarist to make strained

orgasm-come-death faces during solos. You know, Bon Jovi types. Probably got four Ks in KKiddyrang. Fuckin' awful. **Shane Baldwin**

KIRIA ONE Koochie Co Self Release? *

Female pop punk from London that is so sickly sweet you could develop diabetes from listening to it. Makes Arvil Lavigne sound like Sick Of It All and Pink sound like Napalm Death. Kiria was apparently once in Suck Baby Suck and Friction, though I've never heard of them. At the back of mind, I wonder if this is just really bad, or maybe some kind of spoof as one track features Paul Kaye (once famed as Denis Penis) called Live Sex On Stage which seemingly gets a lot of hits on the internet for some reason! **Dave Lown**

VARIOUS ARTISTS Trapped In A Scene Cherry Red ***

I doubt any sane man would say his favourite year of the British punk scene in the last 30 years would be 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 or even 1989. Can you name a good album from that era that was not American? The punk scene in the UK was dying on its arse, getting faster, more extreme and heading more underground as a lot of DIY-ers headed off into the rave scene. While it might seem to be a time best forgotten, Ian Gasper's final book of his trilogy on punk in 1980s documents it and this is the sound track. Napalm Death are the only really big name on it however, but there are number of other band in the punk/metal genre. The Stupids aren't as fast as I remember and I'd never heard their side project Bad Dress Sense who were pretty impressive. HDQ's track featuring Dickie Hammond is the best track by a mile, and come to think of it, why is there no Leatherface or Snuff here, who were probably the only two bands from the era worth a listen? **Dave Lown**

MORAL DILEMMA Agree To Disagree Pumpkin ****

This 3 piece stand out on the current scene (and not just because of the Gaye Advertisms of the bass player) fitting in with the crusty gigs but tuneful enough for any punk bill – in fact I first saw them on the bill with King Blues plus a load of acoustic acts. This is the band's follow up to *Right to Remain Silent* which is more assured but still

spiky with a nod to both anarcho and old school (particularly on Someone Else Lies which wouldn't be out of place on the last 999 album). Love the male/female vocal interchange - could Jesus Bruiser have been this good if Talia had stuck around? **Dave Lown**

COPY OF A COPY This Is It

Bad Moon ***

French hardcore band singing in English, or should that be American as they are heavily influenced by Strike Anywhere? Must say the name is pretty rubbish, as I suppose I was sent a copy of A Copy Of A Copy's CD. Pretty good at what they do, worth checking out if you like American hardcore but not Americans. **Dave Lown**

VARIOUS ARTISTS This Is Peterborough Too

Rowdy Farrago ***

Compilation of Peterborough bands that looks really professional (though a bit more info on the bands would be good). As usual the norm for these sort of releases is you get a few bands you've heard of (Dun2def, The Ruined, Caffeine and The Destructors), a couple you've never heard of that are worth checking out (Two Click Wish, I Only Date Models and The Fake Interiors), some real rubbish (Cameltoe, Angels Of Malice and Pet Slimmer Of The Year) and the rest which aren't memorable. Must admit I was always impressed by The Ruined and surprised they haven't gone further with their take on The Misfits. Having been to Peterborough this album isn't really a fair reflection of the place as it does have some soul. **Dave Lown**

THE DERELLAS Honeymoon Monsters

Crushworld **

Group formed by former members of the Vibrators (though not an original member), the Glory Strummers, Los Paralíticos and Infant Skull Surgery. Intro is rather reminiscent of the Damned, but then it's typical New York Dolls influenced glam punk and roll. Not a bad example of the genre, but only Freakshow has a memorable tune and the Carly Simon cover is rather uninspired. **Dave Lown**

ORANGE PHOENIX

Hellcat ***

Yes this is more like it, great intro into a nice chanty chorus. Okay, so I'm sucker for a nice bit of pop punk and this is a prime slice curtesy of Orange's third album. I know know it's nothing radical and it's hardly going to change the world, but it does sound great on a sunny Sunday afternoon until you get to the end with a pretty bland version of Perfect Day. **Dave Lown**

THE LOBOTOMIES

Big Bang

EHC ****

I must admit I was just going to dig out my standard Lobotomies review, but when I stuck the CD in my ears pricked up as I've always like these lads from North Ireland. They're great live but the sound on their past releases has been pretty ropey, but on this, their debut album, the sound is excellent particularly the drums and vocals. Still setting a frantic pace (17 tracks in 33 minutes) there are still lots of good guitar parts and cut up samples to keep this interesting for anyone who isn't just impressed by speed. Excellent debut. **Dave Lown**

REJECTED REJECTED Blind Destruction

Massprod ****

Debut album by Welsh valley boys featuring Payney from In The Shit and This System Kills come in a digi pack with cartoon graphics that look fabulous. When they started they did remind me of Riot Squad with that mix of Oil and anarcho. First release which was a split with Poundaflesh made a promising start and did contain the classic All Blood Is Red. On this release they sound even better; darker at times, more assured vocals (check out Think) and some nice rhymes. Sure it's still in your face punk rock, but this is a band that's definitely on the way up. Try a get a copy of this and see them live if you get a chance. Great album. **Dave Lown**

THE HOTLINES The Hotlines

Devil's Jukebox *****

Ben from The Hotlines seems to crop up in a number of bands I've seen, usually European pop punk bands and he even played on a recent Zatopeks tour. I've even seen The Hotlines a couple of times and they are one of those bands you see and think 'Have I seen these before?' then they play Psycho Girl and yes! There are bands that exist just because they have one great tune and Psycho Girl automatically gives this lot 5 out of 5 even though it shamelessly borrows from Plastic Bertrand. The rest of this has a great mix of pop punk with 50s rock 'n' roll like a posh Ramones. Scratch The Surface and The World Today are also stand-out tracks. I love this album - buy it! **Dave Lown**

LAST UNDER THE SUN Gone

Iron Man ***

Birmingham five-piece Last Under The Sun have been around since 2000 and toured the length and breadth of Britain, as well as Europe, but in all that time have only clocked up two albums and an EP. This is due in no small part to the fact that in 2008 the band were recruited en masse by Pid and Chris to join them in a new line-up of Police Bastard though they still operate under their own name. As for these (as far as I can tell, previously unreleased) recordings from 2004 and 2005, opener Time For Your Leaving is curiously dense, distorted to the point of fluttering but not especially fast, with chirpy vocals busy drums, and that goes for most of this album. *Shane Baldwin*

SUBHUMANS Same Thoughts Different Day

Alternative Tentacles ****

Not to be confused with Dick Lucas' Melksham mob, this Subhumans formed in Canada in 1978 and made their vinyl debut on the Alternative Tentacles compilation *Let Them Eat Jellybeans*. In 1980 Vancouver label Friends Records released the band's first album *Incorrect Thoughts*, but after they split in 1982, a label called CD Presents put out an altered version of the album without the band's consent and never made any contact with them, let alone pay royalties. Then, when the band decided to reissue the album, CDP claimed ownership! Rather than go the legal path, the band have instead re-recorded the whole thing, and it sounds better than ever – ballsy, punchy, mid-paced 80s punk of the highest order. *Shane Baldwin*

EASTFIELD Derailed Songs From the Scrapyard Bazsmeg ****

Not really a Jesse solo album and not really an Eastfield album, which is pretty obvious when you realise that it's 10 tracks clocking in at 43 minutes and the intro to the first track features drum machines and cheap synths, but it's still hitched to the Eastfield 3 chord tank engine. Does make for a fascinating sound with the eternal off beat lyrics (Hitch hiking With Mick Hucknall). A couple of tracks will be familiar to Eastfield fans who should love the 7 minute, rather mellow version of Gods Plastic Railway. I really like this album, particularly the spacey feel to Jeremy Dream, however I hope they get back on track and the next album isn't a 4 song double CD concept album on reversing the Beeching report. *Dave Lown*

FANZINES

SUSPECT DEVICE #50 A4 60 pages

SD makes it to 50 issues, which is quite an achievement, with interviews with Brighton promoter/scenester Ralph Vergeldt, Mike McKee, ex-Amateur Party and Armalite, old timers the Disrupters, Career Suicide, Higher Giant who are a bit of a super group, Union Town and nice catch up chat with No Choice with an interesting story about Simon Edwards on their Riot City single. Some travel logs and excellent live pictures. Excellent as ever, let's hope they can keep it up and go for the ton.

9 Lexby Rd, Totton, Southampton SO40 9HB.

SUSPECT DEVICE #51 A4 40 pages

So here is the next one, not resting on their laurels of hitting 50 issues in 25 years. This time they interview Anti You, the excellent Shitty Limits, Social Circle from Boston USA, there's a fascinating chat with Aston of the uber cool Boss Tuneage Records and Allen Silburn from the Brighton scene. Again excellent live photos and the usual top class zine.

9 Lexby Rd, Totton, Southampton SO40 9HB.

BARBIES DEAD #28 A4 20 pages 50p

Lots of local things about Plymouth, holidays, gigs, football and all things generally punk rock down in the far south west. Nice little zine and essential reading for anyone heading to Plymouth and all points west. Woodhouse, The Square, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9BW.

AGITATA #11 A5 28 pages 50p

Classic anarcho layout kicks off with the excellent Beginning of the End who are London/Poland D beaters, a scene report from Jakarta (it's in Indonesia) which was interesting, Visions of War, Not Enough label and Italian D beaters Kontatto, in fact it's all D beat but if you like that sort of stuff I'm sure you'll love this zine.

PO Box 202, Shipley, BD18 3WB.

FAILSAFE A4 24 pages

Big and glossy with interviews with Joseph Porter covering his time in the Mob and Zounds as well as Blythe Power, then there's Jennifer Blowdryer, who graces the front

cover, who is a writer as well as being the former singer with San Francisco's Blowdryer. Then there's TV Smith who's as entertaining as ever, then the final interview is with Red Kross, who I thought I'd seen but the time line doesn't fit so maybe it was a different one as the Red Kross I saw were bloody awful. Just noticed who's on the back cover when I was going to give it the thumbs up.
63 Milton St, Derby DE22 3PA.

BALD CACTUS #27 28 pages 50p
starts with a great quote 'What's a fanzine....it's like a blog on paper'. Again in classic A4 with lots of interesting bits and interviews with Section 13, ICH and Burnt Cross. Loads of reviews but the *Are you a pissed up crusty twat* quiz is worth the 50p on it's own.

145-149 Cardigan Rd, Leeds LS6 1LJ.

DVD

VOLXSTURM – Immer Hart am Wind 2 + DSS ***

In this package you get a Best Of CD, a live CD and a DVD with an hour and a half of live footage plus interviews etc, along with a booklet packed with info. Unfortunately everything is in German and therefore totally incomprehensible (for me at least). The band (the name means 'people's storm' apparently) claim to be Germany's premier Oi! band and have been going since 1991. The Best Of CD covers nearly a 20 year period and it's surprising how little the sound of the band seems to have changed over the years. In fact that's my main criticism – the element of sameness that runs through the material here. The first track *Biertrinken* is *Wichtig* (Beerdrinking is important!) seems almost an introduction, followed by *Burnt und Kahl* which pretty well sets the pattern for the CD, the intro building up to a few shouted Oils And we're off into a high speed buzzsaw assault reminiscent of GBH/Blitz. The sound is very tight and the backing vocals remarkable – almost sounding like a skinhead choir on some tracks, setting off the gravelly tones of vocalist Hinkel nicely. *Ohne Abait* is the high point for me, rattling along with the choir bellowing fit to bring the house down. There's more of the same on the live CD and the DVD shows the band to be pretty competent on stage.
Roger Salter.

FAREWELL TO THE JUNCTION

Is there such a condition as *fanzine writers block*? This section is usually just a round up of all the Bristol gigs I'd been to in the previous months, but this issue proved to be very different as The



Text 1: dig for fire stage invasion

Junction, which provided most of the gigs that were reviewed, changed. Just over a year ago The Junction was sold and Bob, who had run the place for the last four years, was gone. I used to go to The Junction a lot and it was like a second home, or even an episode of *Cheers* where everyone knows your name, or at least knew you were the bloke who wrote the fanzine. What was great about the place was the fact there was always something interesting going on, all you had to do was ask Bob, who had an encyclopedic knowledge of punk and indie bands. He would tell you what was coming up that I'd probably like but also what I wouldn't like, even if this meant one less punter on the night. Jackie behind the bar would always have a pint of Guinness ready when I walked in the door. Gavin who was also worked behind the bar and sometimes did the sound would genuinely get excited whenever he was named checked in the zine. The other staff tended to be assorted members of Bristol bands, so you'd have Team Brick pulling your pint, who was about to release an album on Portishead's Geoff Barrow's label. Anyway, the place was pretty rough and ready, but I've seen some pretty great gigs there, so this rounds up the gigs at the end of Bob's era, after which The Junction kept the name but dropped the punk bands, and now it is no longer even called The Junction. It was renamed No.51, where you can have a pizza and listen to acoustic bands or DJs. Sorry, can't give you any more details as I've never been, nor am I likely to. So working backwards, I never went to the last official punk gig at The Junction which was The Pigs and Rita Lynch, and I didn't
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even go to the official end of Bob's reign, not because I was so sad about its end that I couldn't face it, but because it was a metal gig. The last official engagement I attended was the penultimate night, which really summed up the place and how it had become universally ignored by 99% of the population of Bristol when only a handful of punters turned out to see Dig For Fire, Ratface and Dr Spin. **Dr Spin** (of Anarchofolk) opened the proceedings by announcing he was Elton John; I doubt even Elton could have filled the place going on the level of apathy for decent music. Best described as whimsical political folk, the good doctor played a fine selection of songs about killing Claims Direct staff, Richard and Judy, and the end of the world. New song Biscuits had the air of Divine Comedy about it and the set ended with Outsideways. I was a little unkind the last time I reviewed **Ratface**, but still, when he arrived with a Lidl's bag full of electric gizmos and cables it hardly filled me with joy. Some clever backing tracks followed but I still can't get on with white boy rap (don't particularly like black, yellow, blue, pink or any colour rap) even if he does bounce like tiger for most of the set. Nice closer, which was a proper song and has Christmas number 1 written all over it, well maybe if someone started a facebook campaign for it. Seems appropriate that the last band I should see at The Junction should be **Dig For Fire**, a vastly underrated eclectic Bristol band who've played the place umpteen times. Tonight they are minus a drummer, with a bass-less bass player who only provides backing vocals, leaving Andy to play a solo acoustic set which ends as a drunken private party for a fortunate few. Low key start leads to a stage invasion by the third song, leaving only four people in the crowd (does four really constitute a crowd or does five constitute a stage invasion?). As for the set, there are new songs as good as the old songs and Andy has written some really good songs apart from when in was in Idle Tuesday. The set ends with Wood For The Trees followed by an encore of a Ratface number, Wet Song, which was excellent, then it was over. I had a last piss on the Fruit of the Doom logo in the urinal, passed the mirror in the bogs remembering the first time I used them and found a zombie putting on make up (Send More Paramedics playing with Grebo, The Filaments, Fireapple Red and The Foamers), passed under the fan on which the blood of Rat from Varukers mixes with DNA from a Zatopek and countless stage divers on its blades, then across the sticky floor, out the door and it was the end of The Junction for me. Before the penultimate gig there was a great gig at The Croft, with the Dutch Ramone-lite of The Accelerators, with a slightly

hung over Zatopeks along with the Guantanamo Babes and the lovely Hunchbacks, (but why oh why didn't Jo do backing vocals for the Zs like she did so well on the awesome *Damn Fool Music?*). While this was a good gig the greatest performance from the last zine to this had to be The **Zatopeks** playing a pub in Bath. It was all very strange in the bar, where everyone seemed well dressed, and I can't remember the last time I was in a bar where people stared because I was wearing jeans and a t-shirt (not designer, obviously, otherwise I would have fitted in). The Zs were in top form, with much leaping about during their classic '77 style meets rock 'n' roll top tunes, playing in a room off the bar to a small crowd till they played Daily Mail and singer De Nero set off round the bar singing 'The Daily shit, the Daily racist, the Daily fear of foreign faces, the Daily Mail, why do they Lie, the Daily Mail, I'll tell you why, cos hatred sells, the Daily Mail, the Daily Mail...', from the afore mention *Damn Fool Music*, to a pub that looked, to my eyes, full of Mail readers. Now that is punk rock – not paying £20 to watch a Crass cover band at the Academy! While I'm off on a tangent, there was another odd gig at the Reckless Engineer, where Canadian drunk punks with fiddles, **Dreadnoughts**, were supporting their heroes the **Surfin' Turnips**. How a pretty decent Irish punk band from across the Atlantic ended up such fans of Bristol's own cider commandos is mostly down to the internet. Their set included covers by the Clash and Pogues with a Turnips cover! While this was all jolly good fun, this was about the decline of The Junction, so back to another poorly attended benefit gig a The Junction with dark wavers (not electronic goths) Imprint, or it could have been a Sin D'rella solo set, which is the same thing, and Attrition was Sin and another bloke playing keyboards and delivering distorted vocals. First up though were a proper band in that they had real drums and guitars; they also had a singer in the mould of a New Zealand Sandie Shaw for the 21st century, in that she wasn't wearing any shoes, plus she could sing a bit. The band in question were **Call the Doctor**, a sort of Sleater Kinney meets Santa Dog; nice vocals and some decent tunes. 4.2" was slower than the rest and really stood out, then a pleasant set ended with the band rolling

round on the floor. As the drum kit disappeared I did my last round of fanzine selling, followed by a rambling conversation with Gavin the bar man.

Imprint were two persons (with two shoes – another barefooted singer), siren singer Sin with a bloke in black on keyboards and weird effects. At first I wasn't too impressed, but after a while it became quite mesmerising despite the lack of dry ice. Boy, this girl can sing, ending with a haunting version of Love Will Tear Us Apart which was worth



Text 2: the lovely Hunchbacks

the entrance fee alone. Another bloke appears on stage and Imprint become **Attrition**, who have been kicking about the Midlands for nie on 30 years and even featured on one of Crass's *Bullshit Detector* compilations. They had 22 CDs on sale, which was actually more than the number of punters who paid to get in. First bloke takes on more mumbled vocals with Sin still wailing and a joss stick appears for a cheap dry ice effect. Pretty dark at times, but with some nice samples and up-beat moments when Sin got the giggles, thus proving they were not goths. Night ended with an acapella version of Lonesome Town dedicated to Bob. Fascinating; I'll miss Saturday night at The Junction. Another benefit with an interesting line up which was very punk rock, featured some bands that made up the staple diet of The Junction's diary. **UTI** feature a couple of ex-Bad Blood members in singer Terry and drummer John, who was also in Disorder at one point; in fact I once saw him quit Disorder during the third song into a set at the Full Moon, and some bloke in the crowd got up on stage and finished the set. Things got off to a slow start waiting for Terry to turn up, eventually making the rock star entry walking through the door and getting straight on stage as the band started to play. There is an old idea of reviewing gigs by using the t-shirts a band wears to reveal their influences, and for UTI it's two NoFX, one Skid Row and a Disorder, which proves the theory right as they played short and snotty songs,

fast with aggressive vocals, however they can be subtle as well like, on Pigs PLC, which moves into a nice dub section with some weird guitar effects. Covers of Suspicious Minds and Egg Raid (Beasties Boys for the ignorant amongst you) live up a pretty decent set. Victims of geography **The Hunchbacks** play their first gig in ages, in fact they play so few gigs that each one is kind of special, because this is a special band who seem to be destined to be one of the great lost bands of the era, with only four properly recorded tracks on a three way split album, plus a couple of youtubes, to indicate to punk archaeologists of the future that they ever existed. They also played one of my favourite gigs ever at The Junction, which just happened to be Ramones obsessive bass player Davy's stag do. The story goes that he was drinking all day in Bristol with mates including Hunchbacks drummer Pete. When they wandered past The Junction, Davy asked if there was a gig on that night only to find his own bass on the stage. When he walked in the place was full of his mates from Birmingham bands. Loads of bands played that night, and loads of beer was drunk with regulars from The Junction all welcome, as it wasn't really a private party but a secret gig, and though very drunk, The Hunchbacks still played a blinder. Drummer Pete also featured in another of my favourite gigs at The Junction when I first saw The Zatopeks featuring a flying guitarist, as well as perpetual gig goer Vince on a ladder. Thinking back, there was probably only one better gig and that was Penetration, who came and played a pub to 100 people but still brought their own lights man, playing with all the enthusiasm of drunken teenagers. The Epoxies' first gig was pretty special too, with dry ice and lasers, then who could forget the much self-maligned Hacksaw and their snow machine? Getting back to the plot, The Hunchbacks from Bristol, Stafford and Birmingham, who play female fronted pop punk with a bitter sweet twist, instantly memorabile tunes and clever lyrics ('The rain is set to biblical' has got to be my favourite). Tonight they play the Same Old Songs second, with its driving bass and mesmerising drumming, topped off with shiny red guitar and delicious vocals (Okay, so this does sound a bit over the top, but I do really love this band). Hail Mary is even better and 29

deserves to be a big hit if they ever get round to recording it...Oh, and if people stop buying the shite that fills the charts. My Car Is So Cool is great despite the fact we all know car ownership is not cool - riding a bicycle in the pissing rain is! I Don't Want a Boyfriend makes The Ramones epic tune. I can't rate this lot any higher. **Gullet Punch** who followed them were just like their name says; if you like being hit in the stomach then this is the band for you. Finally, perennial Junction second favourites, Swindon two piece **2 Sick Monkeys** who headline. There are only two of them, a bass player and a drummer, yet if you close your eyes they sound just like No Means No. Great tunes and highly entertaining, playing so many gigs that I'm sure everyone must have seen them by now.

Yet another Junction benefit, this time with an aggressive country solo set by **Butcher** followed by **Edsels Fury's** garage covers, obscure enough for them to sound like new songs rather than being just another covers band (including one by Del Shannon) though they did play one original tonight. Their real aces are the excellent vocals of James from Kenisia and that they are all wearing team shirts. I miss Kenisia and EF are no real substitute, though they are a pleasant enough distraction and James still does the handstands at the end of the set. Again a rubbish turn out for another excellent band in headliners **Devilish Presley** who are a two piece that are part Gun Club, part T Rex and Sisters of Mercy. Starting with Voodoo Goddess they managed to recruit two go-go dancers from a paltry crowd with the promise of £20 and James reappeared to do his handstand trick again. Trucks was very good and Saturday Night Satellite was also excellent, and a hugely enjoyable set ended with Black Leather Jesus, which was hardly appropriate on a Sunday, followed by Billy Rattlesnake as an encore.

Enough of the the benefits and back to the normal Junction gigs for a mid week 90s emo night, and I was expecting a night of Get Up Kids soundalikes, especially considering the 'kids' in the names. First up from South Wales were **Saturday's Kids** who were Fugazi soundalikes with bawling child vocals. Nice tunes but awful vocals, very Harrypottercore. Next were a three piece from Chepstow called **Railway Ghosts**, who didn't have a bass player and it seemed all three members were playing different tunes at the same time. I'm sure they were strongly influenced by some American band from the 90s I've never heard off. I'm sure it was all very clever, but ultimately it was pretty tedious. **Twisted** from Leeds were a bit out of the place on the bill playing a sort of garage punk meets hardcore a la Shitty Limits. This four piece were really tight but had one

of the most embarrassing singers I've seen in a while. This kid was like some spoilt brat, dragging the mike stand around like a security blanket. Great band but terrible singer, ending the set with a Crucifix cover. Unfortunately, **Kids Return** have got nothing to do with Kids Near Water other than they come from Exeter; however they do feature a Cut Up on bass. They play what I would call proper emo; a bit intense, with lots of guitar building from down beat to a crescendo like on the excellent This World Is Burning and I'm Playing Video Games. A very good set despite some poor vocals at times, well worth trying to get a hold of *Tongue Tied* if only because they have a song on it called Ben Folds Was Right.



Illustration4: twisted

Two Austrian bands played on separate nights in one week at The Junction. Astpai supported Americans One Win Choice with locals **Killed By Hollywood** who play some pretty classy Choking Victim influenced stuff (the t-shirt theory has them influenced by Nausea, Elvis Costello, Rentokill and Star Wars) whilst next up are **Call To Arms** who sound just like Bad Religion, with some excellent songs; however they only ever appear when the weather is hot and sunny. **Astpai** were the first of the touring bands that night, and to be honest I'd never heard of them, but was reassured when one of them had a Red Lights Flash t-shirt, a band who had played early in the life of The Junction, driving all the way from Austria to play a hot and packed Junction with 5 Knuckle. Sadly, tonight it wasn't packed and Astpai weren't as good as RLF; however they still played melodic hardcore in a similar vein, still pretty fast but not as frantic as Attack Viper, who 30

they shared a split with recently. Pay Me Your Way and China Boys were kind of spoilt by some attention-seeking drunk in a brown suit. Definitely a band worth looking out for. Never heard of the headliners **One Win Choice**, who come from New Jersey and played some first rate political hardcore with a singer who was nearly as lively as the bloke from Paint It Black, when they played this very venue a couple of years ago. Less melodic than Astpai but a lot more entertaining, although the annoying bloke in the brown suit reappeared. One More Fight was excellent, as was Under Quarantine, and this really genuine band ended with What We Are and advise you to make the most of your voice: be useful.

Writers block's back with only four Junction gigs left to go. Cure? Three pints of Gem (not my favourite Bath ale, I prefer Bath Spa) does no good, probably needs something dark and heavy – Sam Smiths extra stout would be ideal or maybe Jennings Snecklifter. Put on some Alkaline Trio or maybe, god forbid, Dashboard Confessional, now where did I put the plot; hidden under beer bottles and depressing CDs. Oh yes, I remember the other Austrian band I saw in the space of a week at The Junction, they were Rentokil of course. How many other melodic hardcore punk bands are there in Austria? **Guantanamo Babes** were bottom of the bill, a decent three piece in a Dead Kennedys meets the Newtown Neurotics sort of way. However, their big problem is they are actually a four piece with the additional member being a rather irritating sax player, who just about ruins every song, playing a constant solo in the background, though Abandon Ship was excellent despite the sax. Next up were **New Day**, who were not to be confused with Leicester's New Days Enemy who I used to really like, but this lot were from Stoke, South Wales and Germany and were all a bit Willem Scream. A five piece featuring a skinny singer with bad hair and a Propagandhi t-shirt who was better at jumping around than singing. They were a lot like The Arteries, pretty earnest and in search of the rock epic, an attempt at which they finished with. More Cut Ups connections with **Bangers**, who are an Exeter three piece with CU's drummer and a female bass player. Don't know why I feel I should have to point this out, other than it makes a nice change from watching a bunch of blokes play punk rock every night. At times they were a bit Husker Du-ish or an urgent Hot Water Music with a down beat anthemic sound going on. I seem to have written New Villains in my note book at this point followed by the comment 'Nice support but I doubt I'd go to see them headline' followed by 'Seem like very nice people' in brackets. Your guess is as good

as mine what that meant, but then again I wrote it, so maybe I should know. Who I am I to criticise my own note taking? So it was time for more Austrian hardcore. Last time I saw **Rentokil** they were supporting The Flatliners at The Croft, but were bumped down to third on the bill to accommodate a local support, and as a result I only caught the last two songs of the set but I was still impressed (Flatliners were awesome that night by the way). Okay, so I used to love Red Lights Flash and this is about as close as you get without seeing the real thing. Despite being on tour since February (and now it was June) and a crap turn out, they still played with enthusiasm and some great big tunes. Excellent band.



Illustration 5: garden gang

A Monday night and some band I thought I'd never heard of on Hellcat play The Junction, with **Strawberry Blondes** supporting, who I was actually there to see as they'd been playing The Junction regularly since it opened, and that's when they were obsessed with the Manic Street Preachers rather than Rancid. They are one band who always get 10 out of 10 for effort and have some fine tunes like Voice of a Generation and Rise Up, but they always seem like a cut price Rancid from Wales, though I'd still pay for and enjoy their set rather than some American rubbish. Which leads me to **Left Alone**, who I had actually seen before, but were so boring I must have pushed it to the back of my mind like so many Sunderland relegation seasons. Should add that The Restrains were due to play that night, but split earlier in the day, shame as they were a pretty decent little band even if they never realised their cover of To Have And To Hold was written by Billy

Bragg not Rancid. I've spent some great Sunday nights at The Junction. Defiance springs to mind and another weird night with some post-Bratmobile band or even when Attack Viper headlined on an eclectic bill. Add this night to the memories as the bands who played were good but weren't greater than their sum, as there were times at The Junction when you could have a truly great bill made up of bands who didn't seem so great in a lesser line up. One such band were **El Wristo** who'd I'd describe as very hair slide (i.e. an indie girl band like Talula Gosh or the Shop Assistants) and kinda fluffy. Some nice female vocals and pleasant indie tunes made for a promising opening act. **Brothers** were back again with bass player and guitarist setting up their mic stands halfway between the stage and the bar, not something you'd ever see at the corporate Academy. Quite a spikey set that was far too short. **Deadrail** were up next, who were quite heavy and quite punk considering hardly any of you punk gig-going regulars turned out. Prove Your Love was very Husker Du-ish and the penultimate tune was sung in Welsh. They were good and I liked them. Last up were the full line-up of **Dig For Fire** who I've already gone on about enough earlier, but were probably the ultimate Junction band. They were great and ended with Remember That Time. Having said DFF were the ultimate Junction band, surely Hacksaw would give them a good battle for the title and probably deserve it after the gig when they were down to support Disorder, who forgot to turn up, so Hacksaw played every song they knew (now immortalised in the song Disorder Forgot To Come available now on youtube, or see Gavin and Bob painting the junction at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCrF-pizIH4> which is just as entertaining). So the **Hacksaw** reference brings us to the last time I saw them at The Junction on a fantastic bill (and I mean that sincerely folks!) with Eastfield and Garden Gang. Every reader must know about Hacksaw being a local, if not a south west institution, but for the uninitiated Hacksaw are singing drummer Roy from the Cess Pit Rebels and George who plays guitar. They are usually compared to a punk rock version of Steptoe and Son, two scrap dealers, but which one is Albert Edward Ladysmith Steptoe and which is Harold Albert Kitchener Steptoe – I can see a Hacksaw concept album coming along if either of them read this! So another Sunday night and the place is full with dry ice rather than punters as Hacksaw play their unique brand of punk rock to ten people in a smoke filled room. Hacksaw are big on gadgets, they are also very funny live and always self deprecating to the extreme which sometimes distracts you from the fact that they can write classic

songs, honestly, like See You On The Way Back Down, written by two old blokes who have shared many a bill with pretentious kids who think they are god's gift to punk rock. Tonight the highlight is Go Bath City Go, the football anthem they wrote for Bath City, obviously. **Eastfield** are another classic Junction band, as well as the band who sell more copies of this zine than all the writers put together. The very definition of a DIY punk rock band, this four piece former Birmingham band kick off with the three chord wonder of Mick's Dirty Bar before chucking in the classic Fare Dodging as only the second song; this was slight worrying as Garden Gang were travelling from Bavaria and hadn't arrived yet, but thankfully Eastfield have an extensive back catalogue and I could have happily listened to them play forever, or at least till Garden Gang travelled across Europe, and whilst I love Hacksaw to pieces, the same could not be said for them. Back to the plot again, with songs about trains, songs for Bob, more songs about Gods Plastic Railways and songs about Bert Reynolds, ending with another boring Eastfield song - more self deprecation, as it was actually a great song called Another Boring Eastfield Song. Encores of Eurovision classic runner-up Oh Arr, Just A Little Bit, then Last Train To Nowhere. **Garden Gang** finally arrive at 11pm, probably best known in the UK as one of TV Smith's backing bands and they could be seen as a sort of glam rock version of The Adverts, fronted by Sonny and Cher. Starting with All Around The Market, with prominent keyboards but with a bass payer in a Bored Teenager t-shirt, Moscow Pray is almost like Meatloaf would be if he was a skinny Bavarian. Highlights of a hugely entertaining night were Euro Disneyland Tomorrow and Data Transmission Party. Whilst this might read as the depressing decline of a venue, I have to say that there were still some pretty amazing gigs, and when Penetration came to The Junction, it was such an amazing night, because in a kind of way Penetration were my band. They come from Durham and I'm a Durham boy, I've always loved Penetration and sadly, I have to admit I once went out with a girl just because she looked like Pauline Murray. Penetration split before I ever had enough money to pay to see them - paper rounds in north Durham didn't pay that well at the time. I saw Pauline Murray in a 32



Text 3: penetration

couple of solo outings as well as Penetration at Morecambe, but to have one of your favourite bands of all time play your venue that you go to every week with your mates has got to be special. Even the supports were perfect, with **The Lone Sharks** who are so reminiscent of most of my favourite bands in that some of their songs are a bit like the Buzzcocks or early Magazine. Strangely, they feature the former lead singer of the Milk Monitors on bass, who only features on vocals on a couple of tracks at the end of the set, including one by his aforementioned band. Tonight they finished with a cover of No Fun. The second perfect support tonight were **A Head** who I always put in that anarcho/Subhumans Wiltshire scene of the 1980s, but since they reformed I'd seen them a couple of times on crusty bills. But tonight, if you forget the A logo they are probably closer to Penetration in songs than Crass. Last Night still sounds excellent, as does Isolation. I really like this lot, probably even more now that they can actually play. Sow a big rock gig comes to The Junction, with all dry ice, lighting rigs, roadies and guitar stands, but away from of all the big gig rock effects what strikes me is how small Pauline Murray is, even when she is

wearing platforms, because I was about 4 foot away from her. Bizarrely, she was wearing the same t-shirt as the last time I saw **Penetration**, which was at Morecambe. And just in case you think I'm some weird stalker, the only reason I know this is because I took some photos for a certain cheesy publication. Appropriately Shout Above The Noise started the proceedings and the sound was excellent, in fact it was ten times better than the last time I saw them. Lovers of Outrage followed soon then it was time for classics Life's a Gamble and Danger Signs. I must admit I'd forgotten how good they were till I heard them live. My main moan about old bands is they don't try new stuff, so it ends up a bit cabaret, but they played some pretty decent new songs. However they still played Don't Dictate, their cover of Nostalgia and Firing Squad, even commenting 'Aren't we getting a little old for this?' as an intro to Free Money. With lights, classic songs, being there with your mates and one of your favourite bands in touching

distance, this was a truly memorable night. Back to your more run of the mill Junction gigs, with a benefit for the anarchist book fair. **The Rejected** opened, however they were a late addition to the bill which was a shame as I missed most of their set, which was unfortunate as these Welsh valley boys are really good live, featuring Payney, ex-In The Shit and This System Kills playing guitar with some young tykes in an anarcho outfit with big choruses and tunes. I really only caught Conformity, which closed the set. Jesus Bruiser failed to play due to guitarist Mile damaging his hand. **A Heads** play again but with a different bass player due to holiday commitments. Tonight, even though they are an old anarcho band from the 1980s, they start with Juvenile Poser which sounds remarkably good with some exceptional female vocals. Wallflower was not what you'd expect from a band lumped in with the crusty brigade. For a band who must be in their forties by now they are still so enthusiastic and seem to have spent their vacant years adding to their sound, especially on the folky intro No More Wars. I really enjoyed their set, probably more than that of **Cross Stitched Eyes**, who were a solid US 80s-influenced punk rock five piece with some crusty overtones. Unfortunately, tonight they were down to a four piece as they were short of a guitarist as one of their two was stuck in Belgium over some border control issue. Whilst I enjoyed their set, even though they did have a really tall, intimidating lead singer, I imagine they would be a pretty powerful five piece, with Dead Kennedys being an obvious reference due to the fact they are on Alternative Tentacles records.

Another interesting night was the Last Trailer Park trash night at The Junction, featuring punk and rollers **The Setbacks** who have many a fine tunes but play all too rarely. Never quite sure who **The Cheaterslicks** are as they seem to me to be the same band as Kill Van Helsing, or is it just that The Cheaterslicks have the stand up bass with the skull on? Yes, they are that sort of band - maybe polite psychobilly? But just when their set was getting a bit like predictable psychobilly they chucked in a great cover of New Rose. Another of the regular bands at The Junction were **Dragster** who are a female fronted punk come psychobilly-influenced five piece. Fi is an excellent front for the band and she exudes sexuality in a way your half-wit TV wannabees could never imagine, even if they had imaginations. They are very much Stooges meets the Misfits meets the Cramps fronted by Betty Page's image, distilled into a voice with songs like Psychotic Zombie, Teenage Motorcycle Killer and Eat The Dirt. A wonderful set ended with Redneck, dedicated to the band's

second home (Bristol) then Killer Bees with a drum kit thrashing finale.

So my final ever Junction gig is on a wet March night. I cycle there but have to park my bike across the road, as the pedestrian rails outside have been moved due to renovations of the road junction outside The Junction, from whence it got its name, having previously been known as the Pie and Pint. I've seen many a fine band at The Junction; I've seen bands drink cans on stage, I've seen many drink pints of cider and I've seen a few drink shorts, however tonight is the first band I've ever seen drink bottles of Baileys on stage. The band is question are a three piece called **Cop Out** from Sheffield, who play sort of Hot water Music/Milloy style gruff, melodic punk. I was impressed, but not as much as when I saw 4 Dumb Kids at The Junction supporting Phoenix Foundation, as they have got to be the most unappreciated band from South Yorkshire ever. The headliners tonight have got to be one of the hardest working punk bands of the last few years. **Off With Their Heads** can't live anywhere as they seem to be constantly on tour, even managing to pull a decent crowd mid week. Their appeal seems to be based on an old school base to their sound, but with anthemic choruses, big hooks and an uplifting sound. In fact it's just pretty classic punk rock played with boat loads of enthusiasm, even on slower tracks like Leave Me Alone. Definitely a band worth seeing. So how to end this, the end of an era? How to sum up The Junction in words? Sod it, it's impossible, but you could look on youtube and watch some old gigs. To you they might just look like poorly shot live recordings, but to me and anyone who ever went to the Junction they are great memories of probably the finest venue ever in Bristol.

As I finish this I'm listening to early Billy Bragg as that's what The Junction was like - not pretty but honest, down to earth, lovable, inspirational and truly DIY. Must really end with a huge thank you to Bob who ran the place for four years, providing countless memorable nights for umpteen people only to end up ill and bankrupt. I love you man, **CHEERS Dave Lown**

John Cooper Clarke The Thunderbolt, Given some of his past, erm, 'lifestyle choices', it has to be said that these days John Cooper Clarke looks in remarkably fine fettle.

According to those in the know, due to his association with the early punk scene, Cooper Clarke's outstanding talent as a poet has never been taken entirely seriously by the literati, which is probably true. So what they would make of his current stage show, which is mostly stand-up comedy with sprinklings of poetry, we can only imagine.

But who cares about that – tonight's Thunderbolt show was sold out well in advance, and a good natured, enthusiastic crowd lapped it up. His hilarious, rambling monologues took in such diverse subjects as the Hammer Horror Dracula films, the post of Poet Laureate and the Queen mother.

On the poetry front, we were treated to the likes of Hire Car Baby, The List Of Shit That Don't Exist, Burnley, and Attack Of The 50 Ft Woman, as well as newer works like Things Are Gonna Get Worse and the oddly touching I've Fallen In Love With My Wife. Twat, predictably, got the biggest cheer, and a great night closed with Evidently Chickentown.

Shane Baldwin

AC4 The Croft, Bristol

It is an intimate venue, The Croft – that's why Dennis Lyxzen was doing his physical warm up about two feet from me at the back of the band room.

Västerbotten Hardcore said the stage backdrop. AC4 is regional code for Västerbotten – so why did Dennis tell us the name was related to a German haemorrhoid cream? They start with Fuck The Pigs and rarely let up with their punk/hardcore assault. The odd thing is, despite lots of energetic kicks by the singer, heads nod but no one dances. Later a member of staff puts like this: 'no one knows the songs'. I have to admit the Myspace video from Dennis's back garden was not a deal maker. Dennis is pleasantly self deprecating between songs, the only exception being when he asks if anyone has come to hear New Noise (he and Paul Sandstrom were in Refused). One punter cheers and Dennis says 'Well we won't be doing that'. The rest of us are too cool for school, knowing never to query the artist's vision by harking back to previous bands. They finish with This is It, the first album closer.

Later a nice selection of vinyl is available – the album, the 7" Umae Hardcore EP and a split 7" with an Australian band with a vile name which the merch guy keeps diplomatically 'forgetting'. *Dave Patton*

Swinging Utters: The Croft, Bristol

I was a little concerned about reports mentioning folk, blues and country leanings. I need not have worried – down it the active

mosh pit it was all punk rock! It's always a good sign when you see the staff crowd surfing!

There was a good turnout on a Tuesday for a band who last played Bristol in 1996 supporting Rancid at The Fleece. No wonder Johnny said 'Thanks for being a great audience; thanks for remembering'. They opened with Pills, the start of a 60 minute performance. I almost felt sorry for them as they peered at the very long set list probably thinking 'Do we really have to play another 10?' They parried further requests saying 'We haven't played since July' Towards the 20 mark they played Teenage Genocide (Tattoo logo available on T-shirts and hoodies [a very reasonable £20.00] later), Forward to Fun and new 7" single "Taking The Long Way before finishing with Catastrophe. *Dave Patton*

Wino: The Croft, Bristol

I have not been to a solo acoustic gig for decades so how did I end up here? I am looking at the poster - Wino (Saint Vitus, The Hidden Hand, Spirit Caravan, The Obsessed) with a picture of the celebrated doomster, admittedly cropped so he is the only figure, playing what is clearly an electric guitar. Still I get my fix with the support Darasombra - one man, his guitar and a lot of effects pedals producing 'ambient drone'. He is joined towards the end by

Wino and a chap who also joins Wino for part of his set. Wino turned out to be a captivating turn, promoting his album *Adrift* and keeping a good number of heads nodding. When Wino and friend rock out they really sound like they are playing electric guitars. In between he told interesting tales about the songs, eg one he wrote aged 15 and also how he got into Motorhead. Buying an early album because of its cover he enjoyed their music and played a cover of Iron Horse. At the end he stepped off the stage through the door and out – still playing! *Dave Patton*

Answer to the picture quiz

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