

sarah newsletter

October 1992 no.1

Hullo, and welcome to the first-ever (tara!) SARAH NEWSLETTER, hopefully jam-packed full of interesting news, gossip and snippets, though at the moment I couldn't say precisely what on account of this being only the first sentence. But I shall now plunge into SENTENCE TWO and hopefully things will begin to hot up and become a little more purposeful. We'll start with some tour-dates...

Well, **BRIGHTER** and **BLUEBOY** go off this month on a joint-top co-headline mutually-supportive our-drummer's-bigger-than-your-drummer-no-he's-not-yes-he-is-BIFF type tour, calling at:

Saturday October 24th: NOTTINGHAM Narrow Boat

Sunday October 25th: HULL Adelphi

Monday October 26th: SOUTHAMPTON Joiner's Arms

Tuesday October 27th: OXFORD Jericho Tavern

Wednesday October 28th: LIVERPOOL Planet X

Thursday October 29th: SHEFFIELD Hallamshire Hotel

Friday October 30th: LEEDS Royal Park

Saturday October 31st: MANCHESTER Swinging Sporrn

(+ support from Boyracer in Leeds/Manchester and Mrs.Kipling in Sheffield)

And **BLUEBOY** do a few without **BRIGHTER**, namely:

EUSTON Rails on 16th October [at the WAAAAH! 2nd Birthday Party (together with The Haywains, Mark Speed, Serious Drinking (?) and Chantelle. "Balloons, cakes, sweets and a special guest celebrity comedian" it threatens. Hmmm.)) **CAMBERWELL UNION TAVERN** (The Chocolate Factory) on November 19th - that's with **SECRET SHINE** and **THE SUGARGLIDERS**.

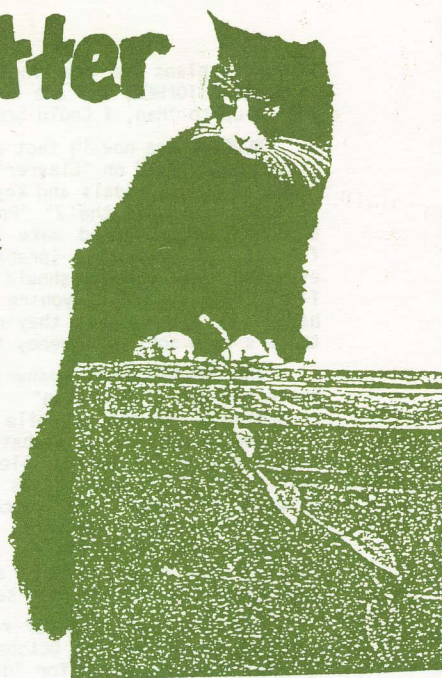
READING Rising Sun Cafe on November 21st, just with **THE SUGARGLIDERS**.

And **BRIGHTER** and **THE SUGARGLIDERS** play The Bull & Gate in Kentish Town hopefully on December 4th - but we've still to confirm this.

And hopefully some other things too - we're especially looking for more gigs for **THE SUGARGLIDERS**, who fly in from Australia in mid-November and go back just before Christmas and we'd really rather not have them twiddling their thumbs in our kitchen the whole time - it's distracting, and upsets the cat. So, if anybody has any bright ideas, or would like their thumbs twiddled briefly instead, please get in touch! They'll do anything - you know what Australians are like. If not, now's your chance to find out.

Meanwhile, if any of you are going to Germany in October, bear in mind that **THE ORCHIDS** are doing a short tour over there, and that everything will be incredibly expensive. There should be a few French dates too, and hopefully a Radio Session for Bernard Lenoir (or "The French John Peel" as he is customarily known), to be broadcast on France Inter which you can pick up in parts of the UK... And **HEAVENLY**, recently returned from supporting Beat Happening in the USA, are off to **JAPAN** in October for gigs in Osaka (22), Nagoya (23) and Tokyo (24/25) plus lots of Virgin Megastore etc. signing sessions because they are finally **MEGAPOPSTARS**, with their own carrier-bags and **BADGES** (still available).

October 5th is the release-date for "London Weekend", the compilation LP by **ANOTHER SUNNY DAY**, featuring all the songs he/they/it ever released on SARAH including the legendary "Anorak City" flexidisc. Sadly no new ASD songs look imminent as - following the demise of **THE FIELD MICE**, who were previously taking up so much of his time and draining his creative juices to a dangerously low-level - Harvey has now joined **BLUEBOY** as Other Guitar AND has just got back from Japan where he's been playing guitar for **THE HIT PARADE** (who are also **MEGAPOPSTARS** over there) - he's a basically very busy person. There are no



immediate plans for anything new on SARAH by **THE HIT PARADE**, incidentally - or by **ST. CHRISTOPHER**, who are now recording a second LP for the VINYL JAPAN label, follow-up to "Man, I Could Scream" which came out earlier this year, honest.

BLUEBOY are now in fact a 6-piece - the original line-up of Keith, Paul and Lloyd that played on "Clearer" having added (as well as Harvey) Mark on bass and Gemma on cello, vocals and keyboard. And their debut LP "If Wishes Were Horses" is out now, as is the 7" "Popkiss" - recorded as pretty much a live take, an approach which should make perfect sense to anyone who's seen them in the flesh... A new single (probably "Prospect Park" which is now called something else and "Air France") should be recorded after the tour, and there's a nice new T-shirt too... And if you're planning a trip to The Land of the Rising Sun or happen to live there, they're over at the end of February. And apparently there's some sort of Blueboy fanzine happening in the New Year - Keith says.

THE SUGARGLIDERS meanwhile fly in from Melbourne on November 17th, and their new EP - "Seventeen" - is out on October 12th. They should hopefully be recording a new single while they're here, and then an LP when they return to The Land of the Rising Wombat. Meanwhile, there are a couple of older songs of theirs out on the Marineville label - and, if Fate smiles kindly upon you, you might even still find copies of the 3 singles they did for Summershine Records ("Sway", "Furlough" and "Butterfly Soup"), though if She just wrinkles her nose at you and waggles her ears, you probably won't. (Though you could try writing to Summershine at PO BOX 13, Prahran, Victoria, Australia 3181). Brothers Josh and Joel have been joined by a new bassist for their UK dates - I wrote his name down somewhere because they seemed to want me to but, um, I forget where, sorry.

Wading deeper into our release-schedule, Worthing power-trio **BRIGHTER** have a new 5 song EP out on October 19th (10" vinyl or 5"CD) called "Disney", which is apparently Scottish for "does not". There's also a fab new Brighter t-shirt which will be on sale on the tour. It's green. And also on October 19th Dublin's **HARVEST MINISTERS** release the follow-up to "You Do My World the World Of Good" - a new 7" called "Six O'Clock Is Rosary", as sneak-previewed on the Mark Goodier Show, though that was a slightly different version (the Large, Crucial and Essentially Wicked Mix) specially tailored for early evening radio - would YOU trust the BBC with your only master-tape? We especially care for the line "I showed to you a copy-book, with all my favourite drawings, you said you liked the one I called 'The Evening of the Fireworks'" - though we are not prepared to say why. They're a strange band, more at home with 1½ hour sets and grand pianos than indie-pop, as anyone who saw their wondrous Mean Fiddler gig this summer will testify... and possibly too anyone who saw the White Horse gig where they had neither and were um, less wondrous.

Final release this year is our latest label compilation, "Fountain Island" (SARAH 583), covering a random selection of songs from SARAH 41 to SARAH 53, and of course it makes an ideal Christmas Present. As would a new Ford Fiesta. And one of those squeaky toy-mice things. Also, we've noticed that other labels encourage people to buy the higher-profit-margined CD format by including little extras you just don't get with the vinyl. We at SARAH think this is a fab idea, and so the inside flap of the "Fountain Island" CD booklet contains a photo of the SARAH CAT, completely unavailable elsewhere. We think of it as a sort of cat-flap. Incidentally, people often ask us why our compilations have such bizarre catalogue numbers.

Our other Australians **EVEN AS WE SPEAK** have just added a keyboardist called - damn, I'm just no good with these Australian names - nope, can't think, but, whoever they are, they've just finished recording an LP called "Feral Pop Frenzy" which is tentatively set to come out on January 17th 1993, but probably won't because things never do - I personally haven't been out on January 17th since 1985, even tentatively. It actually breaks our rule of no-singles-on-LPs, as 2 of the songs have been out before - but the 7"s were never really available in Australia, which is a bit sad given the band live there so, um... that's why! But there's lots and lots of NEW songs too (including all four from their Peel Session), and it'll still sell cheap, so you can't really argue. Well, you can, but we won't respect you for it. And they're coming over in February to do TOTS

of gigs and become MEGAPOPSTARS. "Julian", that's what he's called...

Also recorded is a new single and LP from Bristol's very own **SECRET SHINE** - now expanded to a **SEVEN** piece last time I looked - a 350% increase on their debut EP, original members Scott and Jamie now having been joined by Dean (guitar), Paul (bass), Dean (guitar), Nick (drums) and Kathryn (backing vocals) and sounding "rather different" as a result - as well as being one the few bands on the label to feature two guitarists called Dean. Recorded at PIJ in Bristol, it's being mixed in Brighton so we haven't heard the finished product yet, but apparently it's **LOUD**. BOO!!! Loud as that.

Also in the midst of recording are **THE WAKE** - so hopefully a new LP and single from them in the new year...

HEAVENLY meanwhile are resting on their laurels (SARAH 404 now available as limited edition beanbag) after the rigours of this year, with "Le Jardin de..." our biggest seller ever - it's also out in the U.S. on K Records (who seem to be suddenly hip), in Japan on Quattro, and in France on Danceteria, though they've just gone bust without paying us for it. The French for you. Pour vous. Channel Tunnel mutter mutter. Hopefully some new songs soon - Amelia swore "on her mother's begonias" in front of several hundred people at the New Cross Venue recently that next time they played live there would be. Still lots of **BADGES** left, incidentally - don't know if you've ever considered what wonderful tree-decorations they make? Carrier-bags too - they make ideal tokens of affection.

Away up north, **THE ORCHIDS** are busy recording something which will probably be a new EP (John has just this minute on the phone promised "3 eight-minute classics" but - well, you can't believe everything The Orchids say, can you? Please...) and revelling in the unfamiliar glory of critical press-acclaim following the release of "Thaumaturgy" - though of course their mothers aren't speaking to them anymore on account of the drugs... and everybody should by now own a copy of their double-LP compilation "Epicurean", though a quick straw-poll in East Street this morning confirmed my suspicion that everybody doesn't - or maybe just that nobody who likes The Orchids also likes fresh vegetables. Another ideal Christmas present. So many, so many. **THE SEA URCHINS** compilation "Stardust" also seems to have crept out without anybody actually noticing - it includes everything they recorded for SARAH, the two flexidiscs they did for us prior to SARAH, a couple of things recorded that never actually got released, and unreadable sleeve-notes. And, for those curious but ignorant, James, Robert and Patrick Urchin now have a new band in Birmingham called **DELTA**, along with a bassist called Matthew, who's a very old school-friend of mine, whoever I am.

Across The Severn now to South Wales where both **THE SWEETEST ACHE** and **THE ROSARIES** have gone eerily quiet... probably digging a tunnel or something... elsewhere, **GENTLE DESPITE** are threatening us with a demo of their version of the theme from "The Man With The Golden Gun" and **TRAMWAY**, most recently seen on Bedminster Parade heading for ASDA, have followed the natural progression of their first two singles and gone country'n'western, yee-haw... there's a 7"EP ("West Country Hospitality") out now on Spanish label Elefant (c/Quevedo No.13 - 4 IZDA, 24300 Bembibre, Leon, Spain), who also seem intent on releasing stuff by the pre-Tramway **PANDA POPS** - 'tis a strange world you live in to be sure.

As for **THE SARAH CHRISTMAS PARTY** - well, there isn't one this year, because we haven't yet found anyone who can remember enough about last year's to tell us if it was any good or not, so we can't possibly know if it's worth doing again. And anyhow, we hate Christmas, being neo-Pagan moon-children. **BUT HEAVENLY** are thinking of having a bash in London, maybe



at the Bull & Gate, so keep your crackers at stand-by. Locally, Heaven Up Here have their Christmas Party at The Mauretania (which has a nice ceiling) on 18th December, and are hopefully putting on **SECRET SHINE** and **THE SUGARGLIDERS** sometime before, probably at The Louisiana, which doesn't have a nice ceiling, but is still a pleasant enough place, right by the harbour and not too far to walk if, like us, you live here. On the subject of our last Christmas Party, anyone still sulking because they didn't get given a free Brian 7" can still get one if they're prepared to swear on their mother's begonias that they've bought both the mini-LP "Understand" AND the fab new "Planes" EP, both on Setanta... and this may just sneak out in time to plug the First Ever Brian (named after THE HARVEST MINISTERS' bassist, incidentally...) Gig - 15th October at ULU with A House and The Darling Buds, who apparently have gone raunchy. Or possibly paunchy, I can't quite read what I've written... maybe if you stay over and see Blueboy next day at Rails we can compare notes on Andrea's belly-button, and decide which it was. And what ought to be done about it.

Um, what else? We've given up doing cassettes. Basically because mostly they were imported from France and, since the demise of DANCETERIA, there's been none to import - and the few people here who want them really don't warrant us making them ourselves. I always thought they were nasty little things, anyway. The cassettes, not the people who wanted them - we love all our customers.

We're also, in the new year, making some changes on what we do with singles; we did some sums recently to get an idea of the average loss we've been making on each one of late, and - it's not nice. I think, most likely, it'll be CD singles on everything, or almost everything, and a return to 7"s in wrap-round sleeves for the vinyl version. Possibly "generic" sleeves, but then you have to have nasty great-big die-cut holes in the middle, and proper labels so people can see what the record is. Boring. The point is that, even though we never put extra tracks on CDs, they outsell vinyl by far, and I guess there's no arguing with CONSUMER DEMAND... oh rubbish, of course there is, but if the CD single is the only way to keep the SPIRIT of the single alive - the THRILL of buying A SONG - when it's already disappeared across so much of the world (everyone waits for the LP because the songs are always on that...) then so be it. Anything's better than the sad old ADULT world of ALBUMS. None of this campaign for cheaper CDs stuff though; we need the money to subsidise the 7"s.

DELETIONS will continue, I'm afraid - just because, each time a record sells out, we have to decide whether or not to tie up another £600 or so for the next few years in pressing another thousand, and that kind of adds up over a back-catalogue of 60 or 70 singles... Sales on everything really do plummet after the first few months anyway and, what with the current chancellor, shops are terrified of ordering ANYTHING at all un-current. And if it's a choice between spending money re-pressing old records and spending it on new recordings... well, it's no choice.

And that's the end of our first newsletter. We'll basically be doing something similar every 3 months, with possible things in between to keep you posted - we're toying with some more flexidiscs too, but - no promises. Thanks to everyone who sent an SAE for this one (and some of you will have received one anyway just because we thought you'd like one). We've decided to work things slightly differently in future, though, and set-up an actual mailing-list. So - if you want to be on it, and receive the next four newsletters (and possibly interim things too) automatically, we figured £1 should cover all the costs - does that sound OK?

Other than that - anyone who wants an up-to-date mail-order list please write and ask, and any other words of criticism/affection will be gratefully accepted, absorbed and then fed to the cat, once she gets back from visiting her folks in newly independent Begonia...

**Sarah records, po box 691,
bristol BS99 1FG**

