

sarah newsletter

So, Easter again; and we've been ringing round the bands to find out all the juicy news and gossip. Sadly, most of them were out - on egg-hunts and such - so we're going to have to improvise a bit, sorry.

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Actually, **HEAVENLY** were in, or Amelia and Pete were, and the news from them is that they hope you all had a nice Easter. Oh. And they've just bought **HARVEY**'s new LP, and think it's fab; and **THE WAKE**'s, but they've not had a chance to listen to that yet. Right. Fine. And they're recording us a new mini-LP, in May, for August release - 6 songs, maybe 7, and mostly the usual sort of stuff, I'd imagine. Actually, this is quite exciting, I'd best adjust my tone. Weeee, new Heavenly LP, hunker hunker!!! That's better. And on April 29th they play the New Cross Venue, supported by Prolapse, Useda and Spacemaid. Incidentally, I don't think we've ever mentioned before that one of **HEAVENLY**'s deepest-held ambitions is to play a gig in Uttoxeter - I forget why, but if anybody out there lives in Uttoxeter, or maybe has friends or relatives out that way, please do get in touch - you should always keep in touch with your friends and relatives. And remember: nobody's ever too proud for a chocolate bunny.

Elsewhere, you've probably just missed **THE ORCHIDS** at King Tut's (as part of Radio 1's Glasgow Sound City thing) AND a new Peel session, which was a just reward, I think, for a fine LP ("Striving For The Lazy Perfection" - SARAH 617) and two excellent on-air match reports earlier in the year from Chris and Hackett (Partick 0 Motherwell 0, Celtic 0 Dundee 0). The LP seemed to go down especially well in the The States, and in my wilder moments I dream of them becoming Hugely Influential over there and so putting an end to all this abysmal middle-class college-kid indie-AOR stuff that currently gets chucked across the Atlantic at us (Lemonheads, Buffalo Tom, Juliana Bloody Hatfield Poly, Sugar, Madder Rose, Breeders, lots of people who turn out not to be The Breeders...) - sorry, not meant to be anti-American, it's just that I hate the word "cool" and I hate the word "neat" and I hate all these U.K. low-fi pop-underground snobs who won't even listen to **BLUEBOY**, say, just because **BLUEBOY** would rather be The Pet Shop Boys (whose last LP was something akin to being kissed on the toes by angels bearing snowdrops...) than bloody Pavement (whose wasn't), and aren't ashamed to be living in Reading, just mildly put out. Oh, Pavement are OK in places, rather like real pavements, I'd just rather have Credit To The Nation - we have more in common; the M5, for instance. Incidentally, if you're wondering how **THE ORCHIDS** are after the Indy Band In Death Crash Horror (© The Dumfries & Galloway Chronicle) incident we reported last time - well, there were no long-term effects, thankfully - except the fluffy dice are a bit squashed, and the whole band vomits spontaneously if you creep up behind them and go vroom vroom.

Having mentioned Harvey, I think I'll go into him in a bit more depth, so - this is **HARVEY WILLIAMS** (ex-FIELD MOUSE/ANOTHER SUNNY DAY, **BLUEBOY** guitarist, former astronaut etc.) whose "Rebellion" (SARAH 406; sponsored by Embassy) came out in March and was a 15 minute 7 song guitarless 10"/CD - and to those of you grumbling that 15 minutes isn't an LP we yell "PUNK ROCK!" with pop-eyed amphetamine-fuelled glee - much as we did when Melody Maker told us they wouldn't review it because it was "too short" to be an album (or Harvey was "too short" to be a popstar, or Life was "too short" and we were all going to die and aren't men bastards and was popmusic really that important, huh? - honest, the excuses they come up with...) - and remind you that once upon a time people used to have their heads shaved and their bodies smeared with goose-fat for writing songs over 2 minutes long. Actually, I'm thinking of Cross-Channel swimmers. No matter - it was still A GOOD THING. **HARVEY** also did a solo spot at the Garage supporting **THE ORCHIDS** - just a man and his keyboard, naked onstage, with friend Jane adding a dab of violin and flute where appropriate, which I suppose actually made it a duo, thinking about it, which I know a lot of you do, but only because you are lonely. And he's muttering about a summer EP - something we can all wave our arms in the air to as we conga along the prom, I'd imagine.

Back briefly to amphetamine-filled jellies, I guess the big news of the past quarter has been the second-coming of **ACTION PAINTING!**, now up there surfing the crest of THE NEW WAVE OF NEW WAVE, with "Mustard Gas" (aka SARAH 87) even turning up on the Fierce Panda (aka the NME) "Shagging In The Streets" (lads, lads...) double-7" - and I shall long treasure memories of Andy stunning an audience of 500 at the Powerhaus launch into silence with a feedback-drenched five minute tirade against Mike Edwards from Jesus Jones, who'd seemingly dared to deny there was any such thing in popmusic as authentic working-class anger... (Everett True's **A.P!** piece in Melody Maker caught the flavour - Everett even rang up after it was printed to ask if he could hear some of their records - I know you'll disagree, but this is music journalism as it should be - crass, stupid, excitable...). Last week they headlined Subterranea, more follows...

Meanwhile **BLUEBOY**, the other pie in which Harvey keeps a finger, have a new single called "River" out on April 11th, a big swollen thundering torrent of a metaphor, cut down from 7 minutes to 5 by the modern miracle of digital editing (rather than the old miracle of speeding the tape up, which always made Keith sound a mite pained, or cutting the tape, which we've tried to avoid ever since BRIGHTER's second single, when we accidentally excised Keris's introductory yelp of "Well it's Saturday Night and I feel all right" - without which, I'm afraid, the maudlin irony of the rest was somewhat lost). And, because it's A SINGLE, it isn't included on the 12 song LP "Unisex", which is out on May 16th (SARAH 620). Incidentally, following Keith's confessional introduction to the mighty "Impramine" onstage at Highbury Garage, we've discovered it to be a hugely popular drug with a good number of our audience... almost a badge of allegiance, like anoraks, bowl-cuts and, er, badges used to be. These Animal Men might gobble speed, but here at SARAH anti-depressants are the hip-thing. I'm sure it used to be lollipops, or maybe all that was symbolic and I didn't realise.

Anyway, there's an LP launch at Rough Trade Covent Garden on Saturday May 14th (lunchtime), and a gig at the Sausage Machine (Russell Arms, Camden) on May 13th. "River" used to be "River Phoenix", by the way - if you're puzzled by the "if I had lips like River" lyric - it was changed after his untimely demise, and after Keith had abandoned plans to re-write the song around his other screen-hero on the grounds that "if I had legs like Trigger" sounded silly. In this week's Melody Maker Keith's actually quoted as saying how he wants to be "the Dirk Bogarde of Pop"; odd, because I always think of him as the Humphrey Bogart of Pop, but maybe that's just because of the way he keeps looking at me. Kid.

One bit of sad news from the **BLUEBOY** camp (if I may use the term) is that drummer Lloyd, having been with them right from the word "Don't", has decided to vacate the **BLUEBOY** drumstool because it had stopped being fun, though how much fun a drumstool can be, except for other drumstools, I can really only swallow hard and imagine. And while we're on line-ups, one of the Deans has left **SECRET SHINE** on the grounds he didn't know which one he was - I hate all this stuff; we said Dean, why not think it over for 24 hours and see if you still want to call it a day? And he looked at us like we were making some lame joke and said sorry, did you mean me? Also, **BOYRACER** have re-jigged themselves - I know we promised you they'd split-up, but that was really just to make lots of people in Sheffield extremely happy, and we did add tantalisingly that they would no doubt continue in some form - the only moot point really being whether it would be the form of a classic clean-cut punk-pop trio or that of a fat unshaven git and a few of his mates and - well, it's the latter, with Stewart joined by Nicola on bass/vocals and Kev and Matt on drums + guitar. Record-wise, we're playing hard to get, but there's an CD/LP of new stuff out on Slumberland/A Turntable Friend. **SECRET SHINE**, meanwhile, have a stupendous new 5 track 10"/CD out on May 3rd called "Greater Than God" (SARAH 89), and I think it's fair to say that they've finally got where they were going - if I may be meaninglessly glib for a few vital seconds. Probably won't get reviewed as a single because it's too long.

SARAH 89 leads on numerically to SARAH 90, which is a gorgeous 3 track EP by **THE HIT PARADE** entitled "Sixteen Weeks" and re-introducing ex-Factory-starlet Cath Carroll on shared vocal and writing duties. That's out May 31st, followed

on June 27th by a whole **HIT PARADE** LP - "The Sound Of The Hit Parade". We did Julian's red jumper last time, so I shan't get bogged down again - we're not big fashion people - all I will do is apologise for the presence of a song about us; but we figured that, since we've written several paragraphs about him, it's only fair he should write a few verses about us and besides, it's nicer than **BRIGHTER**'s "So You Said", and less ambiguously fawning than **HEAVENLY**'s "So Little Deserve". All this is licensed from Polystar Records of Tokyo - which is irrelevant, but impressive, and makes you want to sleep with us.

BRIGHTER, of course, no longer sleep with us, having climbed into bed with Vinyl Japan and changed their name to **HAL**; they have an EP called something appropriate out sometime soonish, with drum-loops on, making it easy to hang-up. In the old days songs had hooks - it's confusing, isn't it? And **THE NORTHERN PICTURE LIBRARY** (ex-FIELD MICE) also have a new EP due on Vinyl Japan, called "Blue Dissolve". Notice how we're taking this opportunity to make things up to Vinyl Japan for anything we might have said that might in any way have implied they were crap, by giving lots of publicity to their forthcoming schedule; after all, why change the habit of 6½ years? We'll make the bed, they can plump up the pillows, to continue my bed metaphor. Er - it was a metaphor, honest...

Incidentally, **THE NORTHERN PICTURE LIBRARY**, **THE ORCHIDS** and **BLUEBOY** are all touring France in May. Dates are Nantes (18th), Bordeaux (19th), Toulouse (20th) - that's also when our next MOT's due, so don't let us forget), Vannes (21st) - with hopefully Paris and/or Rennes fitted into the 17th/18th. Dates are also dark, oval, single-stoned fruits. Bear that in mind. The world is ever so confusing. And **HARVEY**'s playing a couple of songs live on Bernard Lenoir's show on France Inter on 19th April, for those of you who have French radios - and a session on his show for **BLUEBOY** is pencilled in too. Excitement. Formidable.

I mentioned ex-Factory tartlets earlier, and that reminds me that **THE WAKE**'s new LP ("Tidal Wave Of Hype", SARAH 618) did finally appear, sporting a nice photo of Inns Court, one of Bristol's lesser known no-go areas. Oddly, its release prompted "Record Collector" magazine to ring us up because they were doing a Primal Scream piece and wanted to know which **WAKE** records Bobby G. played bass on (it's the first three - AND Primal Scream used to SUPPORT them at early gigs [I'm saying this merely to score cheap points] - he was crap in bed too, apparently [some of this I have no evidence for]) - they were surprised to find **THE WAKE** still alive - as indeed are we occasionally. Sometimes we creep up behind them and go vroom vroom, just to check. Anyway, we don't approve of record-collecting, as it's basically just another way of voting Tory, so rather than spill the beans about how Bobby used to beat his grandmother up every day before school, I gave them a piece of my mind. And they said "gor, ta very much squire - if we keep this in an air-tight bag it could be worth fifty knicker in five years" - incidentally, the LP's out in the U.S.A. under the name **WAKE (UK)** as there's an LA goth-metal band or something called **THE WAKE** - I'm telling you this because Bristol HMV has their LP rather than ours, with naked breasts on the cover rather than Inns Court post-office, and I'm worried you'll be puzzled by the band seemingly trading in their love of life's poetic little dog-ends for seedy sexist sleaze, especially since that's why Bobby left in the first place.

Moving across the waters, as I occasionally do, largely because it frightens the cats, **EAST RIVER PIPE**'s new LP "Poor Fricky" is now ready, and will be released in June - SARAH 621. It features 10 songs, including one about a dictaphone - and a sleeve-photo of a pony in New Jersey that someone's painted candyfloss pink, because that's how some people are. Some people join the Tory Party and get a weird sexual kick out of strangling themselves with electrical flex or closing down hospitals, others paint ponies candyfloss pink. People are not always, when taken individually, worth keeping. Also, "Goodbye California" is finally getting a US release, on Bar None, and the band have a new 7" out on their own Hell Gate label called "Ah Dictaphone" - that's the same song about dictaphones alluded to earlier, incidentally, not a different one. I used to know an extremely rude joke about dictaphones but, since coming to work for SARAH RECORDS, I've completely forgotten what it was.

And whilst we're elsewhere - you've also missed a new **SUGARGLIDERS** single ("Top 40 Sculpture", SARAH 86) and a compilation LP/CD of their finest moments ("We're All Trying To Get There", SARAH 619), but frankly you don't care, do you? Well, sod you, you'll regret it when they're dead. As I suppose might they - it all depends on the nature of the Afterlife, like whether it's lots of rumbustious sex and sticky cakes or something more like deck quoits. Anyway, singer Josh got married, to a nice Australian girl called Danni (no, not that one) so I guess in that respect it was a good year for them, even if not for those of us who regard marriage as an outdated patriarchal institution, or who rather fancied marrying Josh ourselves, especially if it meant the chance to be an Australian citizen and part of a proud young republic. Incidentally, while we're tip-toeing through the Antipodes, you might like to know that there's a video out on Season Records of Melbourne starring **THE SUGARGLIDERS**, **EAWS**, **HEAVENLY**, **BOYRACER** and lots of similar ilks - I don't know what it's like as we've not got a video-recorder, but I'd imagine it's sort of oblong and rattles a bit when you shake it. Write to Season Records c/o 20 Ralton Ave, Glen Waverley, 3150 Victoria, Australia for more info. Ask too about their exciting range of indie-pop lingerie; because it will scare them.

Now something interesting: a new band. Called **IVY**, and you might have come across them already because a rather wonderful thing called "Wish You Would" was played to death by both Peel and Lamacq/Whiley when it first came out last year on a 4-band compilation EP from Norwich, and the band then went on to record a session for the Evening Show. Their debut "proper" releases will actually be a pair of 7"s (SARAHs 91/92, with a joint CD for the two), featuring a louder "Wish You Would", a new song called "Avenge", and a couple of things they did for Radio 1 re-recorded on an industrial estate in Great Yarmouth. I told someone the other day they sounded a little like Curve meets The Carouse!, and he looked decidedly anxious - so I won't say that to anyone else.

Boring stuff; shops these days don't like stocking back-catalogue releases: sales used to do this: and now they do this:

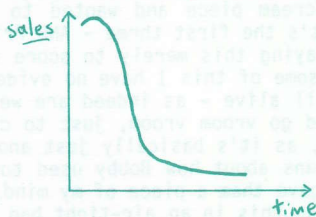
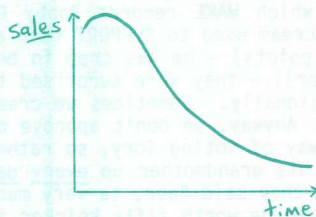


Fig.1

British
Economic
Policy
1979-94

which means we have to be very wary when re-pressing - especially now that total sales are also divided between CD and vinyl, so that we're obviously pressing in smaller (i.e. less economic) batches of each anyway. Also, to re-press the CD when there's still lots of vinyl left (or vice versa), and then end up with loads of stuff on BOTH formats we can't sell, is plain stupid.

What this means in practice is that things will be deleted a lot more quickly than previously, and often on one format before the other - so we've amended our lists to show what's available release-by-release. The only one to note at present is that there are no vinyl copies left of SARAH 79.

Right - that's your lot. Write and tell us if you know anything we don't, or send an SAE for the next one of these (or £1 for the next four). Write too if you want an up-to-date mail-order list. I hope you like the re-introduction of the gaps between paragraphs by the way - we know you like to read between the lines, and feel this gives you more scope.

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