

# shinkansen

NEWSLETTER 1  
JULY 1996  
FREE!!!

## RECORDINGS

Well, they said it would never happen, and fortunately it didn't, so we'll talk about something else instead. Because already a lot of people are starting to say *look, Bonzo, it's all very well you giving yourselves a fancy new name and everything but how exactly does SHINKANSEN differ from SARAH?* And, apart from obvious things like the use of italics instead of inverted commas to denote direct speech and the way that I now let you call me Bonzo, I'm really not sure what the answer is. Because to suddenly change the way we do things would imply we'd been doing them wrong as SARAH which, of course, we weren't, despite what people might have told you.

I guess the most obvious difference is that, now we've no longer got a silly girlie name, the-world-at-large (i.e. REAL people, not just people like you) has decided it's OK to take us seriously - as you'll have already realised if you've recently been shaking your heads in disbelief at the steady shower of accolades melting like huge happy snowflakes on the rosy upturned faces of TREMBLING BLUE STARS, who've now had 2 big pieces in *Melody Maker* and a little one in *NME*, lots of radio play from Peel & Radcliffe, were on the Listening Posts in the Oxford Street Megastore, are having their upcoming London show nominated "Gig Of The Week" in next Friday's *Independent* and -

- *Whoa there!!! Hold on, you cry, what's all this about gigs???* I thought this TREMBLING BLUE STARS stuff was supposed to be the tortured, harrowing solo opus of a moody enigmatic recluse, a tormented bedroom-poet of human suffering who, with his emotions ravaged and his heart savaged by the vagaries of womanhood, had vowed never again to set foot on the cold, soulless streets of south London, except maybe to walk the dog? And yet NOW you're telling us all matter-of-fact-like that not only is he quite merrily trotting off to be photographed in brooding chiaroscuro under Waterloo Bridge by some snazzy Belgian snapper from the *NME*, but he's also PLAYING GIGS and autographing bottoms???

## TREMBLING BLUE STARS

debut live performance anywhere in the entire world  
Upstairs at The Garage (Club PIAO!)\*  
London  
Thursday July 4th

## TREMBLING BLUE STARS

debut live performance anywhere in the entire world  
except London  
The Steam Inn\*\*  
Brighton  
Sunday July 28th

## SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY NOTE FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND A WORD OF THIS

It's sadly all too easy for us to forget sometimes that a lot of these newsletters are read not by wise and knowing pop-kids hip to where I'm at, but by members of the general public - people who've been dragged to a gig by a friend, say, or who've contacted us about something else entirely, such as taking out a loan for that holiday of a lifetime, or who've maybe just wandered into Rough Trade to get out of the rain and are now looking for something to do. So - here's a potted introduction for the non-cognoscenti.

Basically, SHINKANSEN is the label that's risen out of some of the ashes of SARAH RECORDS, which was probably the greatest record-label that's ever existed, despite what everybody tells you, and we've so far released records by two bands: TREMBLING BLUE STARS, whose singer Bob used to write the songs and often sing them in THE FIELD MICE and NORTHERN PICTURE LIBRARY, and TOMPOT BLENNY, who are named after a fish and come from Ilkeston, Loughborough or Leicester depending on what point we're trying to make. Plus we also seem to have got BLUEBOY, who recorded lots of singles and albums for SARAH before undergoing partial dismemberment towards the end of last year.

And SHINKANSEN is the Japanese name for the Tokyo-Osaka Bullet Train.

And me? Oh, I am a many-horned love-god. Because it's always useful to have a spare.

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And yup, that's about the size of it... because, you see, instead of letting TREMBLING BLUE STARS be the cathartic kamikaze one-off it was originally intended to be, Bob's decided he'd rather make a career out of it. And thus he's expanded himself into a real live-action three-piece rock'n'roll power-trio by adding Harvey (ex-Blueboy, ex-Field Mice, ex-Another Sunny Day and, er, ex-Harvey) on guitar, vocals & programming, and Gemma (ex-Blueboy) on bass, vocals & cello - and it's this veritable SUPERGROUP that on July 2nd gives its first ever performance LIVE IN FRONT OF THE ENTIRE NATION - when they appear acoustically on the Mark Radcliffe Show. And then, two days after that... this:

And then, just in case you don't believe it really happened to you, THIS:

And after that they're probably off to Spain to play the post-festival party at this year's Benicassim 4-Dayer on the Mediterranean, and I strongly suspect paddling will occur. Hey, it's a good life, you should try it.

\* left out of Highbury & Islington tube, cross over to the right WATCH OUT FOR THAT BUS and it's in front of you - unless you've walked backwards, in which case we don't want you at our gig 'cos you're weird, you are.

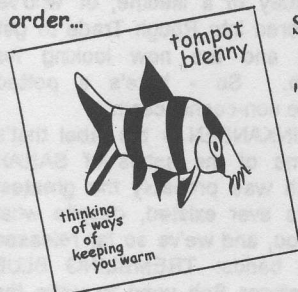
\*\* on Lewes Road towards Moulsecoomb so a bit rough, apparently.

HOW DO I GET A LIST OF WHAT'S LEFT OF THE OLD SARAH STUFF?

If you want a list of what's left of the old SARAH stuff, please write and let us know. A lot's sold out, but there's still a fair bit left.



At this point, it strikes me that anyone who's not especially hip, or who's had their fingers in their ears a lot, or who's maybe been in prison/a coma/Taunton for the past couple of months, might not be too clued up on what's been happening, so maybe a quick skim through our releases so far would be in order...



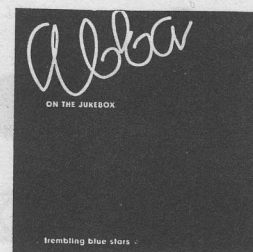
SHINKANSEN 2

### TOMPOT BLENNY

"Thinking Of Ways Of Keeping You Warm"/"Sleepwaiting For Trains"/"Smile Again"

*It's best if I lie on your back  
and whisper lies about the world not turning to snow*

Tompot Blenny have now expanded from a duo to a 4 piece, and have started performing live, mostly in the Leicester area (see map). Indeed, you can see them at The Magazine in Leicester on July 5th.



SHINKANSEN 1

### TREMBLING BLUE STARS

7" ONLY

"Abba On The Jukebox"/"She's Always There"

*Land's End at dusk...  
a day of churches, her getting her hair cut  
- a station frozen in time,  
me taking her picture -  
walking in the ruins of Binham Priory...*

A song about endings.

*"It's perfectly true that eyes can look like stars;  
hers resembled trembling blue stars."*

["Story of O", Pauline Réage]

### SHINKANSEN 3CD TREMBLING BLUE STARS

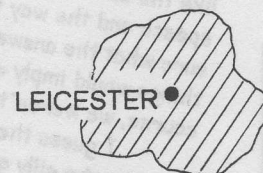
CD ONLY

"Her Handwriting"

*I want the you that used to die at any separation...  
and I feel so left behind,  
and so alone in doing the dying...*

14 track debut album smothered in hearts, clocks and boats, and including both the full 7½ minute extra-dreamy version of "Abba" and "What Can I Say To Change Your Heart?" i.e. the one that Radcliffe keeps playing...

*"That's her handwriting, that's the way she writes"*  
["Part Company", Robert Forster]



Map 1

The Leicester Area

### SHINKANSEN 4 BLUEBOY

7" ONLY  
OUT  
LATE  
SUMMER

*"Melancholia"/"Love Yourself"  
... pills, green and white,  
15 years  
- what a memory -*

*far from his home...  
on the streets of New York find a phone...*

BLUEBOY are now back down to a duo of Keith and Paul - although Keris from BRIGHTER seems to be acting as special guest keyboardist, much to his bemusement as he doesn't really play keyboards, and suspects they actually meant to ask for Alex. BLUEBOY are also supposed to be going to New York later in the year to play with Shoestrings...

### SHINKANSEN 5/SCD TOMPOT BLENNY

*"Green Is The Best Colour"/"Dr.Fitzpiers"/  
"The Short-Haired Girl  
In The Left-Legged Pineapple"*  
(CD also includes all three songs from the first single)

7"/CD  
OUT  
LATE  
SUMMER

*Dr.Fitzpiers has been visiting  
since I heard a voice in my head  
and became afraid...*

### MAIL-ORDER AND SO FORTH

A quick sum using the latest price-lists reveals that it now costs £17.50 more to press 1000 vinyl LPs than it does to press 1000 CDs... yet people still expect to pay two or three quid less for vinyl. Which, together with the fact that far more people actually buy CDs, is why there isn't a vinyl version of the Trembling Blue Stars album. The plan is to carry on doing 7"-only for the singles, and CD-only for the albums - but with the odd CD single thrown in too. Then again, I'm always open to persuasion, on this or other matters, especially the latter.

Um - all that, plus increases in the cost of mailing-envelopes and the impending rise in the price of stamps, means we've decided to restructure our price-table (below) a bit. Basically, vinyl prices have increased, CD prices have fallen, and I'm now using decimal tabs instead of centre-setting.

	U.K.	EUROPE	WORLD
7"	£2.20	£2.60	£3.00
CD single	£3.20	£4.10	£4.80
CD album	£9.00	£10.00	£11.00

Prices include p&p. Please make cheques payable to SHINKANSEN RECORDINGS and make sure all cheques/POs/Eurocheques/Money-Orders/drafts are in POUNDS. We do also accept cash, if you're prepared to risk it and can disguise it (which doesn't mean drawing a moustache on the queen, or giving Abraham Lincoln felt-tip Ray-Bans - please don't be silly) - but if you're sending foreign notes, please add extra to cover bank charges. Large orders to Mediterranean countries can often be exchanged for long weekend breaks. Please write listing your amenities and distance to beach.

Also, it makes all the difference if you say "please".

And I think that's everything for now. Apologies if this has been a bit insubstantial and uninspired - we've had a lot on our plates lately, and this has all been thrown together in something of a rush to beat next week's post-strike and reach you in time for the TBS gigs. Um - to try to update our mailing-list, we asked you last time to write and let us know if you still existed, and a lot of you did, for which we were mostly grateful. And, although in the end we've actually sent this to everybody on the old SARAH list, we shan't do that again unless you've been in touch to let us know you don't mind. So PLEASE write and let us know you're out there - it means we'll keep you up-to-date should anything happen, and it also makes me happy, as I don't have that many human friends. You may now go. QUIETLY.

