

Big Muff 3 1/2

50p

Hole

AC Temple

Ween

The Primitives

Whipped Cream



If you've got this far you obviously weren't scared off by the cover, not that you should have been of course.

"Why issue 34?" you are probably asking yourself. It's quite simple really - because there is no flexi, tape, pocket calculator, or anything else with it. Also because it's a limited edition (ie, I've got no money so I'm only doing half as many as normal). If I sell then all in two weeks then I'll probably do some more.

Oh, and I've moved up to the big smoke at last. Here's my new address.

Neil Boyd
PO Box 858
London
SW12 8TR

So, what else has changed? You've got big quotes, so you can see what The Primitives have got to say for themselves without reading the interview, although perhaps you will read it anyway.

There are also a lot more reviews. I've reviewed pretty much everything I was sent to review, and a few more things besides. After getting facetious comments about the reviews in issue 3 like "so did you like it?", I decided to put *s on these reviews. Marks from one to five.

Finally, a message for the guy with the video camera:
GET OFF THE FUCKING STAGE.

Flood - Jealousy Comes To The Rescue EP (Quarry) ***

The 4AD-style sleeve hides a very full sound, something like Blur with guitars and lyrics, or Stone Roses without the crapness. They're in danger of following all those useless indie dance bands, when they would be better off doing their own thing and being a good indie-dance band.

Tonyall - New Girl, Old Story LP (Cruz) **

I suppose you want to know that Tonyall is Tony from All, and previously The Descendants, and they're his songs.

There are three different singers on this album which vary from a wimpy voice on the ballads on side one to a slightly stronger voice for the storming numbers, but not much. I don't suppose Tony would be too chuffed if I said he had a Pastels-type jangly indie voice. As Pastels comparisons go, they're nearer Boy Hairdressers than Beat Happening, with a Shelley's Children/Playaway bass line throughout. I particularly like the comment on the lyric sheet for 'Guitar Case': "repeat song".

Phobia - 5'11" EP (Bluefire) ****

All they need is a few wild stage antics and a major Megatomic Things type tour and they could soon be the biggest fragglers in Farnborough. Certainly all four tracks on this 7inch are well up to the mark.

Ozric Tentacles - Sploosh single (Dovetail) **

Am I really expected to like a band whose lead singer is a flautist more than a singer? Ozrix are legendary on the gig flyer front, so I guess they are probably better off without media publicity, which is just as well really. 'Sploosh' is a slightly mainstream crusty house record. 'Live Throbbe' is described as "obscure", and has a very unwelcome police siren in it.

Ozric Tentacles - Strangeitude LP (Dovetail) *

The album has more Jazz, Folk, Country and the like than the single, and all kinds of other shit that I can't stand.

Some Have Pins - Hopper EP (Eve) ***

Following on from the strengths of last year's debut LP, they are now much more into the generic Camden don't-mention-lurch music on this record. Having signed to Roger of The Falcon's Eve label, home of Milk and Spitfire, some of the family resemblance seems to have rubbed off onto them, although there's a bit more of an emphasis on singing than others of the genre.

Thin White Rope - The Ruby Sea LP (Frontier) ***

I think the drummer deserves some credit here, or is it the producer? Anyway, this has a drum sound to remember, and with the folky guitar and mellow, laid-back vocals it all adds up to a perfect album to while away those long nights over a whiskey bottle. 'Tina And Glen' sounds like a square-dancing version of the James Bond theme. 'Puppet Dog' and 'Bartender's Rag' sound like a Julian Bream album. Now that's bad, and is that a steel guitar I heard then? They leave the rocky song that would wake any slumber to the end, apart from the final minuet.

Our American Cousins - One Wish Too Many single (Parasol) ***

This band don't sound half as mean as they look, in fact they sound more like Our Norfolk Cousins with their Anglicized American jangly indie pop. Of the three tracks, I prefer the last one, 'Breakfast Club', although the title song is more overtly mini-commercial.

Jello Biafra - I Blow Minds For A Living (Spoken Word Album Number 3) double LP (Alternative Tentacles) ***

Very anti-America fanaticism, anti-censorship, anti-war, anti-government media control. Try listening to this without thinking of Ben Elton. I can't say I would want to buy an album of anti-propaganda propaganda, but it does make some interesting and thought-provoking listening, humourously pointing out the way public opinion was manipulated during the Gulf War, among a few other things. Although technically out of date, and very specifically American, all the observations could be made more general and applied to any government system. If it was a book by someone who might be perceived as talking truth instead of opinion, it would almost certainly be banned and become a massive seller. As it is, Jello is probably a funny wacko with some outrageous views. Not true.

Spitfire - Superbaby single (Eve) ***

The bass and drums work well together, but the singing and guitar have too much wah-wah. I think they could do with another guitar to just make a horrendous noise in the background. I've got this on a tape just before Belltower, and they blend quite nicely into them, so that gets them a bonus point.

Dead Allison - Second Coming LP (Gaga Goodies) *

Now that I've moved house I get the chance to listen to a CD twice a day on my way to and from work, ie two albums twice, and having listened to this twice I can honestly say it's got nothing going for it apart from maybe the loud guitars, and even they are often too fuzzy or tinny. And I hate the way the songs just fade out as if they haven't quite finished yet but

Trotsky Icepick - The Ultra-Violet Catastrophe LP (SST) *

Kind of pop rock, in the Bruce Hornsby sense, but it's not really much of either. They do a nice range in strange instruments, like accordion and xylophone. Apparently this is a dig into the corpse of current music. I took that to mean they are trying to make brain-dead MTV pop. Maybe MTV is this bad.

Poopshovel - I Came, I Saw, I Had A Hotdog LP (Community 3) **

More of the same. The trouble with this shit is that you go and see serious metal bands with too much hair at The Marquee and start to think they're okay.

Burns From The Valley Of The Sun compilation LP (Frontier) ****

According to the sleeve notes, Frontier Records never made any money. I find that hard to believe considering the quality of this stuff. Inevitably, as with all labels, there is a lot of common ground between all the bands, and this could just as easily be an album by one band as a compilation. Another common link is that all the bands have got silly names with no 'The' in front of them.

Side 1 kicks off with Flyboys' brief guitar-led instrumental 'Theme Song'. Circle Jerks slag off the clones in 'Beverley Hills', followed by a quick blast of 1978-style punk from The Adolescents.

A distraut Christian Death change the pace slightly with 'Mysterium Iniquitatis'. Three O'Clock is another crap name for a band, but 'Marjorie Tells Me' is a straightforward enough lost love song. Long Ryders are pretty much just a country band. Okay, not real country, but as close as I'm likely to get. Pontiac Brothers keep the mood up with another another lively tale of woe.

Thin White Rope are Frontier's big name band, but despite the heavy vocals and power chords on 'It's Ok', I still don't think they are anywhere near one of the best bands on the album, and therefore the label.

Worst band name ever surely has to go to E*I*E*I*O, but 'This Time' is a bright two minute happy sad pop love song.

Side 2 begins with Redd Kross, who are not really a Frontier band, as 'Notes And Chords Mean Nothing To Me' was acquired from Smoke 7 records after its demise. As the title implies, it's about wanting to turn up the guitar really loud and smash it around, which I guess they have done plenty.

Personally I think Young Fresh Fellows are the best band on Frontier, and they've got two songs on this album. I don't particularly agree with the sentiments of 'Don't Blame It On Yoko' though. It ~~was~~ Yoko's fault.

Flying Color lower the tone with an almost sullen 'Wise To Her Ways'. American Music Club's beautiful haunting ballad, 'Nightwatchman', is a bit too Radio Two for my liking, but it is perfect for dozing off happily to late at night. Presumably that was the idea, so I would like to hear more of their songs, preferably the less dopey stuff, especially if it is done as well as this.

Mallet-Head are the remnants of Gang Green with a new singer, and 'We've Been Had' is a ranting, raving metal moan. Dharma Bums are newly signed to Frontier, hence they only had one album's worth of stuff to choose from, but they've chosen the best track, which also happens to be the title track. Weirdos would need to live up to their name to get away with frantic nonsense like 'Cyclops Helicopter'. They do, so they must be. I don't know what Hubert Humphrey ever did to make SPOT 1019 remember his unsuccessfully campaign against Dick Nixon in 1972, but that's exactly what 'HHH' is.

Young Fresh Fellows' second song on the album is a celebration of Frontier Records. 'I'm An Artiste (On Frontier)' tells the story of 'a great big showbiz party' which all the big stars of the label showed up to. With all the bands on Frontier in your living room, you're sure to have a swell time.

SKAW - Nobody Better single (Vinyl Japan) *

I was in two minds about whether to bother playing this record at all, but when I took it out, it was in two pieces, so that saved me some thought.

Skin Yard - 1000 Smiling Knuckles single (Cruz) ****

Two questions come to mind about the single 'why is this a 10' single?' and 'why isn't it on Sub-Pop?'. It is only 3 minutes per side, and Jack Endino is their guitarist. The A-side is a powerful threat to listen up and calm down, with megaphone throated vocal tones. Their version of The Beatles' 'Hey Bulldog' is a skip-jumping guitar-hero slaughter of the original that runs around your head and spits out your brain without mercy. Oh dear, I've been reading too many press releases! And remember, Skin Yard is two fuckin' words.

Skin Yard - 1000 Smiling Knuckles LP (Cruz) **

Well, the title track's good, but that's on the single, and 'Hey Bulldog' isn't on the album, so basically, buy the single, not the album. That was easy, wasn't it?

Big Drill Car - Batch LP (Cruz) **

After a while you run out of things to say about this stuff. To me it's just generic American rock, in the widest generalisation. Maybe it's more to you, in which case it might be quite good. Some of it's better than others, but in the end I couldn't tell this from lots of other stuff. Some of it has more variety than others. This merrily plods along at the same pace. 'Freedom Of Choice' starts off like Dan's 'If You're Happy And You Know It'. That's good. And it makes you wonder what's the point of having a BMW if you're going to leave it parked at the station all the time. Oh, I got distracted.

No Man - How The West Was Won LP (SST) **

On first listening this is just more of that American rock stuff. I listened to it again and I couldn't remember if this was that one that I said 'maybe MTV is this bad' about. It wasn't, but it is kind of MTV pop rock.

The Cranberries - a tape (Island) ***

And after No Man is an Island, or at least, a tape from Island. I'm not quite sure what this is. According to the accompanying piece of paper, The Cranberries are unsigned, so why did Island send me this? Is it a demo? Is it a single? Is it any good? Well, yes, in an A&R kind of way. It sounds a bit too much like the kind of band that record companies and DLT like, like Zoe or the other one, Mariah Carey is it?. Apart from that, it's a good bit of Irish folk type stuff. More real than The Would Be's, less real than 10,000 Maniacs. They will go far, but probably not in this circle.

Chemical People - Angels'n'Devils mini-LP (Cruz) ***

Six track 10 inch green mini-LP. Side one is your standard metal tunes, but side two is somewhat more interesting. 'The Rap', is an attempt to reproduce 'Walk This Way' without the famed hippy rockers or homeboy rappers. 'Blo Me Fatti' is like Tad meets Carter, in more ways than one. '1490' is another perpendicular move into acoustic rock.

Flower - Hologram Sky LP (Semaphore) *

I read a review of this somewhere which said it was crap, so I listened to it to try and find a reason why it isn't, but couldn't. I suppose the title track is almost reasonable.

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The Primitives

There was no way I was going to not see The Primitives again, although I was a little apprehensive about how good they were actually going to be. Having witnessed the demise of The Darling Buds, which was somehow inevitable after signing to CBS, and The Pastels, which came as rather a shock, I was concerned for the well-being of The Primitives after nearly two years away. I needn't have worried.

The first question was which gig shall I go to. The second question was how do I get a ticket. Oxford Jericho Tavern is not a huge place, and was sure to sell out quick, so a trip to Oxford was required to get a ticket. The first bit of excitement was standing outside The Jericho clutching a Primitives ticket. That soon passed.

As ever, the band came on to no response whatsoever, followed by a loud cheer as Tracey wanders on and announces "my, there's some beautiful people here tonight". As they blast through 'Sick Of It' the crowd immediately erupts into a frenzy of mass hysteria. They get a chance to calm down slightly as they play a couple of new songs, 'Give This World To You' and 'Through The Dark'. We can then appreciate the enduring talent for writing consistently good danceably pop songs. The former containing a bit of the 'ooh ooh-Temptation's! It's then time for another old favourite, 'Stop Killing Me', to whip up the excitement again. Things go a bit quiet for the "let's keep the record company happy" single, 'You Are The Way'. The things you have to do.

The massive keyboards on the tiny stage provide the intro to 'Hello Jesus', a tongue-in-cheek reverie. "I think we just about got away with that" Paul says at the end. Maybe.

As they turn up the echo for 'Outside', people stand and drip quietly. There are then another couple of newies which require gentle bopping and ears twitching. 'I Almost Touched You' warms up for the main event: "here you go way too fast, don't slow down you're gonna crash, na na na na na na na na you're gonna crash". There's more. 'Black Egg' sounds like one of those 1950s American automobile songs.

'Really Stupid' just brings back all those memories of thrashing around in my yooof. The perfect manic dance indie-pop song. With an opening like that, what else can you do? 'All The Way Down' is Paul's frantic singing snippet and 'Way Behind Me' is the icing on the cake. I'd forgotten about that one, but it was another single once upon a time. These Primitives know a good song when they write one.

I came out thinking "wow! that was such a brilliant gig". They are better than ever.

This now left the problem of getting to as many gigs as possible. The next night I phoned up Southampton Joiners to see if I could get a ticket for the following night, and was told it sold out three weeks ago. Southampton Joiners is not a huge place. What the Hell. I'll go anyway. Something'll turn up.

Knowing what to expect made it all the more enjoyable, and they dished up the same healthy platter with a little extra mustard. Another new one this time. 'Empathise' is without a doubt the best of the new bunch. The line "I want to you be like me" begs the question "what is that like?".

Reading After Dark was hotter than an Arab's armpit, and about as cosy.

So why the small places?

Paul: "It's basically just to get on our feet again playing live really. To test the water a bit and see if we're still liked."

Tracey: "The reaction's been really good. I think we were all a bit apprehensive about how it was going to be."

Do you have any regrets about doing this tour?

Tracey: "I don't think it should have been so long really. I think we'd have been quite happy just doing a two week tour, but it just seems to be growing and growing. We're even doing a few dates on The Shetland Islands, which is so stupid really. It'll probably be good fun, but..."

Paul: "It's a bit too much to comprehend, so I don't think about it too much. It's a bit like a prison sentence really I find."

What's the best bit of touring?

Paul: "The on-stage bit. You're always really knackered, but somehow you always muster up the energy to do the gig. It's almost like taking speed or something. However knackered you are there's always something there that brings you awake again for the gig I always find. We don't go to bed until about five in the morning either."

Tracey: "That's a bit hard going sometimes, if you haven't done it for a long while."

Paul: "But it's rock'n'roll, innit?"



Do you see much of the places you play?

Paul: "No. We saw a bit of The Isle Of Wight, but it was crap there, so it doesn't count. There's nothing there. We drove out in a car and had a cup of tea in a shed in the middle of a field, and that seems to be the highlight really. I'm sure there's a lot more to it than that, but we didn't check it out too intensely."

"Bournemouth was just a shit gig in a shit town as far as I was concerned"



Talking of strange places... Salisbury Arts Centre. It's a fucking church! Everyone is sat in the sun in the churchyard, sprawled across the graves. A good mixture of people: goths, disco kids, art students, the lot. We're in Wiltshire, so they're all drinking cans of cider.

The location provides extra significance for 'Hello Jesus', as Tracey looks up to see if He's looking, with her hands clasped together on the microphone as if praying.

"This one's called 'Lead Me Astray', and you can if you want". Tracey is quite happy to play the part, going along with the drunken pranks down the front. This boisterousness quickly turns cherubic as the opening bars of 'Way Behind Me' drift out, and she clicks her fingers and sings "ba ba ba ba ba". She is then transformed into a foot-stomping spoilt brat as she sings "the sun's not shining on me" for 'Stop Killing Me'. This was the start of the bizarre locations.

Bournemouth is a town where people go to retire gracefully, or dance to Wonderstuff records, depending on how old they are, or maybe not. They have yet to discover recent innovations such as roadsigns, and Bournemouth Shit House has got those illuminated floor tiles that they probably had in 'Grease'. They've also got as much smoke as a Curve gig, and the same music as Camden Palace. But that's before The Primitives come on and interrupt the disco.

Paul: "That was the second worst night. Last night was the worst gig so far. Bristol. That was non-stop technical problems. I might as well not have been on the stage. But Bournemouth was just a shit gig in a shit town as far as I was concerned."

Tracey: "Last night was totally out of our control. I was just singing along and there was totally no guitar. It was very odd."

How much help have RCA been? Have they payed for the tour?

Tracey: "They have actually, this tour, yeah. They've given us a budget and I think we're keeping in line with that. So they're being quite helpfull really."

Do you see this as your last chance to play small venues if the single is a hit?

Paul: "We'll always do small gigs even if we're mega famous because we hate doing large places. We like playing 500 capacity type places. Not tiny places, but medium sized. We hate to play stadiums or anything like that. That's horrible."





"Secrets is a pile of shit. I think it was the epitome of a pop song basically, in the bad sense"



How have your fans changed over the years?

Paul: "They've got smaller."

You mean there are less people now?

Paul: "As human beings, they've shrunk."

Tracey: "But we're rather a small band anyway, so we quite like that."

Ah! Humour. This brings to mind their Michaela Strachan interview where the first question was "what's your favourite food?" and Tracey said "hamsters", which completely threw "her".

I remember way back when... I was living in Manchester when 'Crash' suddenly became a big hit, and The Primitives were still on a tour of smallish places at the time. I went to see them at The International, and was so wildly impressed that I had to go to Warrington to see them again. It was delayed a couple of days because they had to do Top Of The Pops on the day it was originally scheduled for. Anyway, I had this knackered old bike that you have when you're a student, and I thought "where's Warrington? I can't be that far". So off I went.

All those 60s pastiches like 'Dreamwalk Baby', 'Across My Shoulder' and 'Ticket To Ride'(!) that they'd probably rather forget now. It was just fantastic at the time, not least because it was the first time I'd actually *seen* Tracey, but I'm sitting here now listening to the tape of it after just listening to a tape of Oxford, and they have definitely got better of late. For some reason they decided to sink 'Crash' in the middle somewhere, and play 'Stop Killing Me' as the big encore song. It worked, anyway.

The next tour was much bigger places, and I had to fight my way through the T-shirt touts at the 2000 capacity International 2.

Paul: "They weren't that big though. They were colleges more or less. A couple of theatres, nightclubs, whatever, but mainly colleges."

Would you look forward to doing it again?

Tracey: "As Paul was saying, stadium stuff, I'm not thrilled by the thought of that, whether that happens or not, but I suppose gigs that are no bigger than 1500 or 2000 isn't too bad."

Paul: "It's a lot easier doing those tours because boring stuff like having the same PA every night, and more people to look after you."

Tracey: "Things tend not to go wrong. You feel pretty safe and secure in those sort of situations."

Does that make you complacent?

Paul: "No. I'm always dead nervous about gigs, now more than ever for some reason, but that's the way I am. It'd be horrible to just go on feeling bored or 'oh, another gig'."

Tracey: "I think the day I stop being nervous on stage, I think that's probably the time to pack it in."

I know you've had stage lessons. Do you still consciously use what you've learnt?

Tracey: "How do you know we've had stage lessons?"

I heard it on an interview Tracey did with Janice Long just before their tour of stadium type places supporting Echo & The Bunnymen at the end of 1987, when The Primitives were flavour of the month, and Morrissey wore the 'Stop Killing Me' T-shirt on the chart rundown picture for Top Of The Pops. I didn't say all this during the interview, but I assume we are talking about the same time.

Tracey: "We did that for a couple of weeks, but we couldn't handle it."

Paul: "That was rubbish. It was basically like aerobics and shouting."

Tracey: "That was a sad period as far as The Primitives are concerned."

Paul: "It was when we used to do what people told us to do without asking questions. None of that now."

Tracey: "We were little naive and stuff, but y'know. We don't do any of that any more."

Sensing the lack of an answer to the actual question asked above, I try again to find out how much of the stage show is just acting. *Is all the dancing you do on stage now a reaction to the earlier criticism of you standing still?*

Tracey: "It's not an effort. I do what comes naturally now. I enjoy the songs a lot more. When we first did it I didn't know what to do, I knew I enjoyed being on stage, but the whole thing was really quite daunting and frightening, but now I just enjoy it so much more, and I don't think about what I'm doing. To a certain extent obviously."

You describe the older songs as "golden oldies". Are they songs that will go down in pop history?

Tracey: "Yeah, I think songs like 'Really Stupid' and 'Stop Killing Me'..."

Paul: "That's more on a smaller scale, but 'Crash' definitely because it got in the chart, it was so popular and stuff. It seems to get played on the radio every weekend. It's just one of those..."

Tracey: "Classic all time hits."

Paul: "One guy said that the new single's the best one we've ever done, which can't be bad."

Do you think it is?

Paul: "I did at the time, but I'm sick of hearing it now because it was recorded almost a year ago. It was recorded in October (1990), and I really liked it at first, but now I like other stuff."

How do you feel about being an archetypal group? People compare other bands to The Primitives.

Paul: "That's got to be good I suppose. Makes you feel a bit old I guess, but it's good."

Tracey: "It's quite a compliment I suppose, in a way."

The Primitives have always been one of those bands that other bands get compared to, and many other bands in that situation tend to lose it to their imitators. The Charlottes piss on anything My Bloody Valentine have ever done, although MBV were sheer bliss at the time they released 'You Made Me Realise'. This is why I was so relieved that The Primitives still knock spots off anyone else in the same league.

During the interview a happy punter comes along bearing Portsmouth flyers for Paul and Tracey to sign. An opportunity to "meet the fans"?

Tracey: "How do you think the new single rates against the other singles?"

HP: "It's not my favourite one out of the new stuff. My favourite one is 'Empathise'."

Tracey: "It's a lovely song that one."

Paul: "It should be a single. But it's a bit too strange."

HP: "It's not commercial enough."



Paul: "Well, it is, but not how our record company sees commercialism. Siouxsie & The Banshees would get away with it." Happy punter then goes off even happier.

Portsmouth South Parade Pier was another strange venue. It's a fucking pier! If it was the same happy punter who asked for 'Secrets', he was probably rather surprised to be told by Tracey that they're not playing it because it's "a pile of shit". Why's that then?

Tracey: "I just hated that song. When we first recorded it it sounded ok, but we went in the studio and re-recorded it and it was remixed and I just grew to hate the song really, and I think it was the epitome of a pop song basically, in the bad sense."

Do you like all your other songs?

Paul: "There's loads off the albums that we just never want to hear again. I like all the stuff off the new album."

Tracey: "And most of 'Pure'."

Paul: "Side One of 'Pure', I like all that, but it doesn't really fit into the set at the minute, so we're just doing the main ones everyone knows, ie the singles."

Is "Black Egg" a cover version?

Tracey: "Yes. Paul discovered that one. It's by an American band called The Nightcrawlers, and apparently it was a top 20 hit in America in '67 or something like that."

Paul: "The original's crap, but we liked it so we did it. Funny enough, the original was produced by a guy we work with called Craig Leon, so he told us. So what comes round goes round and all that sort of thing."

Is your version better?

Paul: "Oh yeah. The live one's better than the record. I wish we could record it again in a way. It's a lot more ballsy, but the one on the record's well good anyway."

Go on then, tell me about the new album.

Paul: "The next album's called 'Galore' and it's the best one we've ever done. It's quite well produced, but it's got more of a live, natural feel about it. Ian Brodie produced about half of it, or two thirds if you count the tracks he mixed that we recorded on our own. And we did produce some of it as well."

I had to miss Windsor because Babes In Toyland were playing ULU, but I went along to the soundcheck, and to do the interview that you've just finished reading. Soundchecks are interesting things, unless you're doing them. The drummer goes "thump thump thump" for about 15 minutes, then the rest of the band come along and act up a bit and play a few songs. The sound is shit but everyone says it's okay, and then at the actual gig it sounds okay but everyone complains that it's shit. But it's rock'n'roll, innit?

The last few nights of the tour were in London. Maybe they'd been putting off London to last deliberately just to be different, and the rest of the tour certainly was different! The less said about Thursday the better. Paul's guitar broke down, culminating in him throwing it at the amp and storming off. I missed Saturday because I went to see Moonshake, Sun Carriage and Silverfish at The Underworld, but apparently it was a huge improvement on Thursday, probably because they spent all day Friday fixing the guitar. Or maybe it was because they transferred all their problems to Sun Carriage who managed to break everything except the drums. But that's another story.

Sunday. New hairdo. New flat. That was Tracey's new hairdo and my new flat. I was supposed to have been at home interviewing David Gedge on the phone on Sunday, but hey! these popstars can

Whipped Cream

Whipped Cream's album, 'Other Delights', sounds like Slowdive doing Danielle Dax's version of 'Tomorrow Never Knows' with the power of The Charlottes. Or Belltower doing 'Strawberry Fields Forever' with the frivolity of Lush. Or The Beatles.

Being from Sweden, they are isolated from all the hypothetical 'scenes' that exist over here, so although they might sound like Ride et al, they are uniquely individual, including a disgusting taste in flared trouserwear.

They also do a cover of The Bay City Rollers' 'Come Together' which sounded nothing like the original, but the way it should be done. All these 70s cover versions, 70s trousers, 70s they're from Sweden so they must know Abba makes me think that maybe they are pre-My Bloody Valentine in a post-My Bloody Valentine world.

Whipped Cream are:

Jorgen: shaven-headed singer, song-writer, guitarist, flares wearer and all-round entertainer

Elizabeth: singer and guitarist

Lars-Erik: drummer

Jonas: bass, not at the interview.

Being so potentially acclaimed here, they must surely be massive in Sweden?

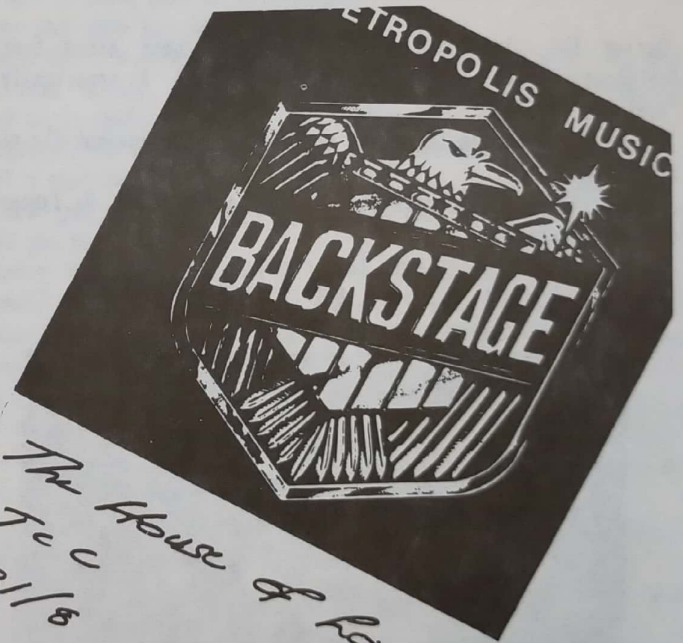
Jorgen: "I don't really know if one could talk about greatness in this branch in Sweden. Among a few active listeners we are quite known. When you tour round in Sweden, and you're playing at these festival, almost everyone that is interested in this music, they see you once or twice. It's very nice touring in Sweden because we will probably meet everyone who has bought the record in Sweden when we are touring there in September/October."

Elisabeth: "In Sweden people aren't curious in new bands, like here. A place like The White Horse couldn't exist in Sweden because people don't go out. Of course it's expensive, but even if it's not expensive, people don't go out, not like here."

Jorgen: "We have a different social culture in Sweden, and that social culture is Friday, Saturday evening you bring some friends to your home and you watch the telly and you feed the belly and then go to bed."

Lars-Erik: "Sportshows. That's one word for the whole social life."

Did someone mention The White Horse? I had planned to do this interview there, but there didn't appear to be time because they were soundchecking when I arrived and they had another interview to do after that, and I wanted to go and see Sun Carriage at The Falcon after they'd played. So I just hung around instead. Whilst so doing, I noticed someone with a House Of Love T+C backstage pass, so I asked if she knew where the secret gig was. In case you don't know what I'm talking about, House Of Love played ULU and T+C and a secret gig all in one night. Anyway, it turns out that she is Stereolab's singer, and she was only going to see Moose (supporting at T+C) and then go to Sun Carriage, so I could have the pass when she'd finished with it, and the secret gig was at The Dome. So we arranged to meet either at T+C at 9.15 or at The Falcon. Since the support band at The White Horse didn't come on until 9, there wasn't much chance of meeting at 9.15, so I stayed at The White Horse to try and see Whipped Cream. As it turned out, I only managed to see the first song and then had to leave so as to get to The Falcon soon after 10. Sun Carriage were on top form, and a vast improvement on the ill-fated Underworld gig where I last saw them. I then got my secondhand T+C backstage pass, which also served as entrance to the secret gig.



For some reason I've managed to narrowly avoid ever seeing House Of Love up to now, and was pleasantly surprised at how good they are. There was some problem with Guy's amp, and they only played about 20 minutes, but during that time they proved to be truly wonderful, and they played all the oldies like 'Destroy The Heart' and 'I Wanna Be Your Dog'.

Such events make you want to heed people's advice about how good Stereolab are, and get hold of the single. There's really no way of describing Stereolab except as being like the best bits of Lush.





"One could say that we have stolen our goods very good"

So anyway, I missed Whipped Cream at The White Horse, but I'd already seen them twice before that week.

At The Marquee they supported a crap metal band who I didn't stay for because the drumkit was too big. I don't think the Donington crowd appreciated the beauty of Whipped Cream.

At The Underworld they supported Urge Overkill, probably a quite good American rock metal band, but I didn't stay because I'd been reviewing American rock metal bands' records all week, and a person can only take so much.

"Normally we don't play with heavy metal bands", Jorgen assures me. "In Sweden it would be totally disastrous. In Sweden we don't have the system of three acts a night. Never ever. It's hardly ever any support acts at all. Just a headline act. People sit in their homes drinking, then they go and watch the headliner, and then they go home again and have quite a few nightcaps before

they go to bed. But it's the system in Sweden that everyone who plays should be paid. I figured out it's not the same here."

Elisabeth: "When we played at Camden Underworld, the band playing before us told me they had *paid* to play, and I laughed because I thought they were joking, and then I realised it was true."

Jorgen: "It's a strange phenomenon, but if someone is really ambitious they will pay to play. People pay to record their albums, so why shouldn't they pay a bit of money to play?"

Do you put a lot of effort into your performances? Because you seem to.

Jorgen: "Yeah, we seem to do that. I can feel it after every gig because I'm so sweaty. We're not making an effort to run round stage like King Kurt or anything like that, but it's in another way. It's a matter of handling the balance between impression and expression."

Elisabeth: "When we made our first gigs I was very stiff. I couldn't move at all. I just stood there and sang and played because I didn't feel secure, but now I feel I have to move. I play better if I move myself. Move with the music"

Jorgen: "One puts oneself into the mood of the music."

Elisabeth: "I can't move very much because I sing or otherwise I play the wah-wah pedal, so it's hard to move."

Lars-Erik: "Yesterday we didn't have a PA system large enough to mike the drums either, so you just have to turn your sticks around and smash them with the big end. But it is more fun to play that way."

Jorgen: "I think it sounds better as well. I think the sound was quite good."

Elisabeth: "Many of our best gigs we've made at these small places. One can relax and just play."

Jorgen: "It's not very serious."

Elisabeth: "No. Of course it is serious, but not too serious."

Jorgen: "It's not deadly serious. We have never ever played in such a small club as we did yesterday."

Have you been well received over here?

Jorgen: "Yes. As a matter of fact, yes."

Did you expect that?

Elisabeth & Jorgen: "No."

Jorgen: "We did not expect anything at all when we made the album. I was for certain convinced that our album would be totally bashed down by the critics and we would sell about 500 copies."

Lars-Erik: "It was more likely that it would be appreciated here than in Sweden. I'm a bit more surprised that it turned out to be appreciated in Sweden because it's such a small thing with this indie music."

Jorgen: "Since we are totally out of business in Sweden because we don't really fit in into the indie music there, either because... well, mostly because of our persons. Our private way of life. We are a bit tired of it all. I think really it's a good thing to be like that because Sweden is small and everyone knows each other and you always have to summon up some kind of ideals for getting into the branch, and that's why you can't really see any music from Sweden at all."



"Sportshows. That's one word for the whole social life in Sweden"

I would describe you as a cross between My Bloody Valentine and Dinosaur Jr. Is that about right?

Jorgen: "It could be quite right. I think it's up to each listener to describe it."

Elisabeth: "We have heard very much about our music. Some people say we sound like... we've heard everything from John Lennon to Pretenders, and people say we sound like Cocteau Twins and Pink Floyd and everything. I think each listener can put what they like into our music."

Lars-Erik: "I never even listen to those bands you mentioned. We all have different musical backgrounds and taste, so I don't like to label us or compare us to another group because that's not what we are trying to do. I don't even listen to that type of music, so it's hard for me to see."

Jorgen: "One could say that we have stolen our goods very good, and that we have stolen the goods from so many different parts of the world's music scene that you can't really label us properly. Of course you can label us in a big scale but you can't really put your finger on the specific orchestra we sound like."

Who do you get compared to most? Is it My Bloody Valentine?

Elisabeth: "Yes. I think that's because of me! Another band with a girl singer."

Do you like them?

Elisabeth: "Yes. I have a lot of records. I like them very much."

Jorgen: "I saw them at the Hultsfred Festival '87 and they were really great."

Why do you sing in English?

Jorgen: "We are aiming at Europe because we know that we can't really make it at all in Sweden, and if we would have sung in Swedish we wouldn't have made it *anywhere*. It wouldn't have been here."

Elisabeth: "And English sounds better than Swedish."

Jorgen: "Swedish is not a soft language. It's a very hard language. A lot of consonants, very hard consonants, and they are not long. They are short and sharp. It's very hard phonetically to make our form of music in Swedish."

Lars-Erik: "And of course most music we listen to is sung in English. Perhaps 5% of what I listen to has Swedish lyrics, so it's natural even though it's not our own language."

Jorgen: "And it's also a form of reaction because in the late 70s when the punk flora emerged, and even now, it's sort of forbidden to deal with this non-commercial music, and not singing in Swedish, and not singing about some very abstract political cause. We can't really do either of them because we can't really figure out why a Swedish band, or one single solitary soul Sweden, should be unhappy with our lives, because



everything's so secure in Sweden and everything's so very comfortable, so what should we complain about? We couldn't complain about it in a serious way. They should have something to say. It's easy to see why there are a lot of British bands singing about the not so very good social circumstances which can occur in England and the States, but we haven't got the basis for doing that kind of thing in Sweden."

Do you have to do National Services in Sweden?

Jorgen: "Yes, of course. No-one in the group has done it! Lars-Erik is Norwegian, and he's faked himself out of it for some reason."

Lars-Erik: "Not for any political reason, just because I'm so lazy."

Jorgen: "If you do National Service in Sweden it is quite alright. You are never ever in the zone of danger where you *might* be drafted for some silly war somewhere in the world, and everything's quite comfortable and it's very liberal in the army as well. The officers are not really allowed to shout at anyone and everything should be very nice."

Elisabeth: "I don't think it's *that* nice. My brother did it and he was told to... during a rainy night he had to water some trees, just because the officer felt that he should learn discipline, so I don't think it's that nice."

Jorgen: "We're all so lazy. We could not really get up early in the morning. Totally out of the question."

Do a lot of people get out of it?

Jorgen: "They used to, but, I can't see why, but there's less people now who want to get out of it than there was 10 years ago."

Lars-Erik: "Most people see it as one thing everyone does. You get to meet new friends, and I think that's an important part of many people's education in Sweden. So many people want to do it, and those people that don't want to do it they get out of it one way or another. Not formally, but informally, the doctor, you know. "Sign one of those papers", like that."

continued on page 15



The Charlottes - Liar
The best song in the world

take me away
and I won't let you stay
just keep me away from me
watching you walk
with your heart in a state
and it feels as though I'm not here
just let me say
no I won't let you stay
no I won't let you bring me down
hurting my pride
you will stand by my side
I'm a liar a liar a liar

Hole

"Everett's so full of shit"

I'm going to have to break the rule I started in BM3 about not mentioning the papers just for this page, because Hole probably first came to the attention of most people through Everett True's coverage of them. Single of the week for 'Dicknail' on import, a full page when he went to LA to see them, and a full page when they came over here, etc. I suppose the papers' *raison d'être* is to create interest about bands, but truth should come into it somewhere. Don't believe the hype. Believe the reality.

Everett is under the impression that Hole is just one person, who is some kind of man-eating psychopathic druggie sleazebag that only exists in the worst horror movies. Here on Earth, Hole is four people. Courtney Love: singer, guitarist and part-time man-eater; Jill: bass player, vegetarian and serious metal freak; Caroline: drummer and pretty drummer-like; and Eric: other guitarist who left the room at the start of the interview and returned when I'd finished.

So Courtney, about this 'interesting past' of yours. Has your life really been as colourful as it's been made out to be?

"You mean by Everett? Everett's so full of shit. Don't believe anything he writes. He wrote like I was a prostitute and a stripper yesterday, and I'm like "why did you do that?" and he said "oh! I didn't edit it? Oh! Sorry". I mean, how would you like it if someone said you were a prostitute because you wrote a song, totally allegorical and not autobiographical. Of course I was never anything like that. He wants to make me, personally, into this thing that I'm not. I'm a pretty boring person frankly. I write. I have a typewriter. I sit at home and I write songs. That's what I do."

I'm glad we've got that over with. Whilst wholeheartedly supporting Everett's eagerness to tell the world about Hole, some of the madness in the method is a bit dubious, although I can see how it can be difficult to understand how anyone can sing "when I was a teenage whore" like that without having been one. I appreciate the half page picture that accompanied the offending article though. Courtney really does look like that as she leans over at you in that intimidating way. Oh! Did I say intimidating? It's the hype getting to me again. But people are intimidated.

"Recently we've been compared to such neolistic self-destructive bands, but we're not like that kind of band. We're actually trying to create a certain positivity. It's not without value.

Apparently people get so scared of it that there must be value coming out of it. It isn't just like an average run-of-the-mill rock thing. It's like, people are really scared, and I didn't expect that, because we really live in a vacuum, so we just think we're playing normal pop songs but people, like last night, Birmingham, and they just stood there. It was like, they were scared! It was really weird, it was like "hey, the revolution has ended, the 80s are over, yes I'm a chicken, aren't I cookie, I'm playing a guitar, fuck you!", y'know, so whatever. I like that fear. Because it creates value. It is not without value and that's the only way I can justify being in a rock band."

How important is music in your life?

Jill: "I'm afraid to say it's the most important thing, because when something's really important, someone wants to take it away."

Courtney: "Good quote! I'm with Jill on that one. Verbatim."

Jill: "But I really do think it's important."



As you probably know, Hole supported Mudhoney on their tour, including a Sunday and Monday at The Astoria. Both nights were completely different though. On Sunday the songs didn't seem to work properly...

"That's because Eric's amp blew up and then my amp blew up."

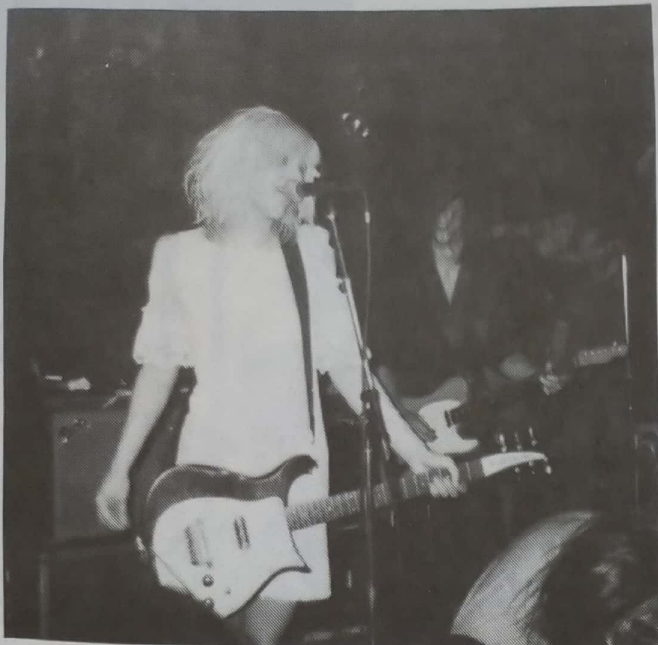
But Monday was brilliant.

"That's cos on Monday we played a normal set."

Grabbing a second's pause, Caroline comments "I'm glad you said that because most people said Sunday was brilliant and Monday was..."

Whoa, here comes Courtney again.

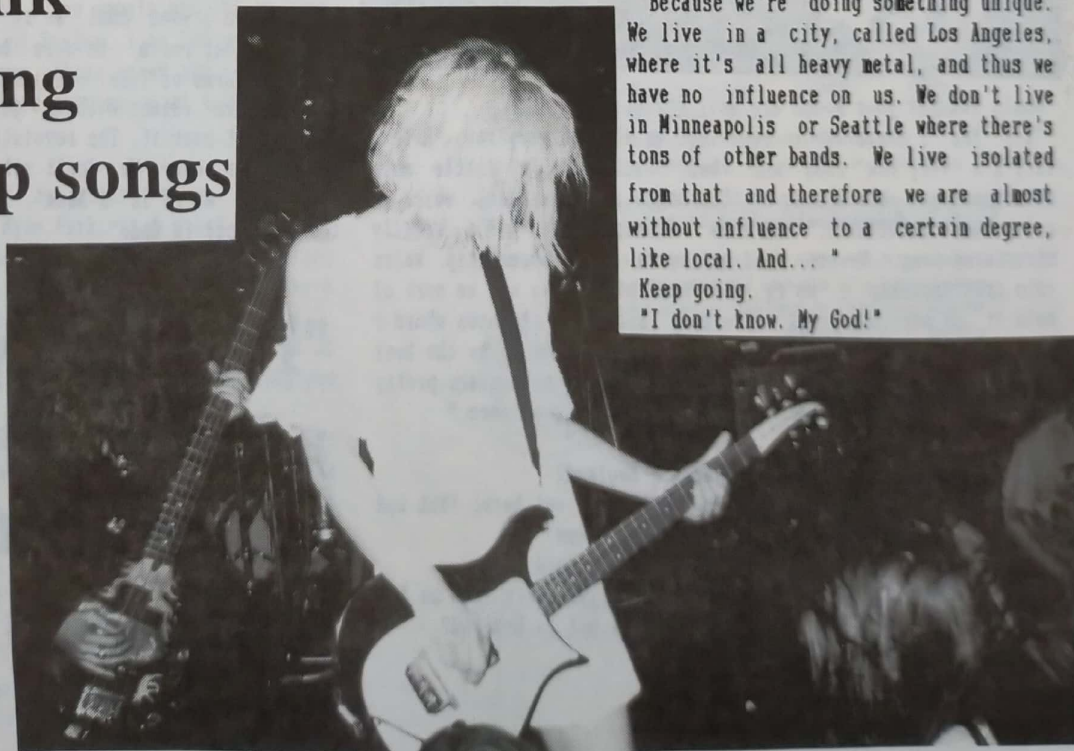
"It was like "that was fucking brilliant?" We felt like we were at the circus."



When you smashed up your guitar at the end of Sunday, was that deliberate, or did it just happen?

"I have one Rickenbacker guitar that was almost \$600 from 1962 and wasn't exactly deliberate. I just was \$600 worth of mad was what I was. It's kind of a tragedy. Now I have to borrow Eric's guitar and he's really anal about his guitar and won't let me even throw it. I didn't put any thought to it. It was a very rock thing to do, but as an afterthought, I have to say I think I'm the first girl in the history of this country to actually have done it."

**"We really live
in a vacuum, so
we just think
we're playing
normal pop songs
but
people
are
really
scared"**



History of which country?

"English?"

I thought maybe you meant your country.

"Well, maybe the whole world."

She laughs excitedly at this undoubtedly untrue revelation.

"I'm the first girl that's smashed her guitar on stage in the history of rock. Oh my God!"

Jill unhelpfully suggests that Wendy O'Williams has done it before.

"Does Wendy O'Williams count?"

"Oh my God, she counts a lot."

"She chainsawed some things", offers Caroline.

"Wendy O'Williams counts?"

Courtney is still amazed at the absurdity.

"She really does count. I promise she does."

"She totally doesn't count. In my history of women in rock, Wendy has no place."

"You know why she counts? Because she really is a strong person beneath all of those..."

Jill's attempts to justify Wendy's existence is cut off by Courtney's exaggerated palpitations caused by this crap.

"The biggest influence on this band is The Plasmatics. Please don't print that. I'll kill you."

Jill: "I'm not saying she's my influence. I did read an interview and she really did have some nice things to say."

Caroline: "And she's a vegetarian."

Jill: "She is. She was on the cover of 'Vegetarian Times'. I swear to God. She grows her own organic... okay, that's interesting!"

Courtney: "I have nothing to do with that."

Why do you think the type of music you do is unique to America?

This question throws Courtney, as she slowly starts

"Because when the revolution ends tonight I don't..."

She suddenly changes tack and starts again more convincingly.

"Because we're doing something unique.

We live in a city, called Los Angeles, where it's all heavy metal, and thus we have no influence on us. We don't live in Minneapolis or Seattle where there's tons of other bands. We live isolated from that and therefore we are almost without influence to a certain degree, like local. And..."

Keep going.

"I don't know. My God!"

'Retard Girl', their first single, was released on the one-man label, Sympathy For The Record Industry. The title track and 'Phonebill Song' are slabs of raw power. 'Johnnie's In The Bathroom' is a strange mixture of Courtney's narrative over a wailing guitar and telephone sex lines.

Where are the sampled bits on 'Johnnie's In The Bathroom' from?

"I have this Panasonic machine, kinda like that", pointing to my Walkman, "and I just rewind it and play it."

So where...

"That's personal. You can't know my personal life", she pleads. Is it about you?

"I forget what happens in it."

Caroline reminds her, "reading these excerpts..."

"Oh, you want to know what that is? There's this magazine in Hollywood called 'Hollywood Rocks' and it's this totally gross metal magazine and there's this girl every month who did a column, her diary. It was like the diary of a groupie. It was like these people are so ridiculously stupid to put out this magazine... and like Hollywood is basically a ridiculous stupid place to live which is why we like it, and every month she did like "I fucked this guy and then I took him home and he looked just like Ian Astbury", and I was just reading it. It was pretty insane."



Would you say your songs are well structured?

"Yes. Yes I would. We're evolving. We started very raw, 'Retard Girl's a very raw song and then 'Dicknail's a little more structured and the B-side of 'Dicknail' is 'Burn Black' which is a lot more structured, and then 'Teenage Whore' is a totally structured song. We are real believers in craftsmanship. We're into craftsmanship... we're into crafts *woman*ship and we sort of hold it on our own level. The best songs are the ones where I come up with the lyric first. Those songs seem to be the best because they have the most conviction. Lyrics second are pretty good, but the lyrics first ones really are the good ones."

Did you see it as important to come to England?

"Well, we really wanted to try the cuisine out here. That was the important part. Sausage, tea, fish and chips."

Jill: "We write a column at home on delicious food."

"From all over the world, but England has five stars from us."

What can you get in America that you can't get in England?

Caroline: "A good cup of coffee."

Courtney: "And someone saying "fuck you" right to your face."

Jill: "Hey, that's true."

Courtney: "And some people that won't give you directions. Like English people are really good at giving directions. "Where's this street" and they'll sit there for an hour and tell you. American people are like "hey! fuck off"."

Caroline: "They won't even approach your car."

Courtney: "Well, they have a good reason not to, because kids like to cut their tits off or something worse."



I then have the scurrility to mention The Lunachicks in relation to Hole.

"Can I ask you a question? How fucking different can you find two bands than my band and The Lunachicks? How different? How insanely different? How dare you?"

I was only going to say that The Lunachicks are a bit of a pantomime, albeit quite a good pantomime.

"They're a different thing. They're like a comedy band. They don't write songs. They're not into writing songs. Fine, I don't care, but don't fucking lump me in with that."

Do you get lumped in with them?

"Well, recently by sexist tabloid journalism, sure, but it's over, it's done. We've fucking defined ourselves in this country now. They're so stupid. The closest you could come on that is Babes In Toyland, that's just because I loan Kat clothes of mine. And she borrows them."

People have forgotten about The Lunachicks now. They were like the original one, but proper bands came along afterwards.

"Kind of thing, yeah. Or like Dickless. Dickless was never a band. That band never wrote their own songs and they were never really a band. It's like funny, "ooh they're chicks". We've transcended beyond that. We're not even dealing... we never did deal in that realm. We were beyond the 80s before the 80s even ended in terms of like... I just think that's really 80s thinking "oh, they're chicks with a guitar". That's so stupid. Just fucking get over it. The revolution is ended. I broke a guitar on stage. It's over. We don't sit there and play and go "oh, we're so cookie, we're in a band". It's not like that. It's so beyond that. I swear to God."

"Dickless was never a band. That band never wrote their own songs"

Are you going to Reading?

"Tomorrow? Yeah, of course, all our friends are playing. I want to see Kat's band, and I want to see Nirvana, and I want to see Kim and Thurston, and Mudhoney and a little Dinosaur. I'd like to see Silverfish. I saw them once. They were okay, but I'd like to check them out again so I can decide, because I didn't know if I liked them or not. I did like her presence and I liked some of the songs."

Where did you see them?

"In LA."

They'll probably be different at a festival.

"I've never really been to a festival, except for Woodstock. I don't remember that."

Jill: "You didn't go to Cowjam?" (or some such name)

Courtney: "No, I never went to that shit."

Caroline: "You don't remember chanting 'no more rain'?"

Courtney: "No, but I can hear it in my head subconsciously, as I'm covered in watermelon juice and someone's painting on my face. I went to a lot of festivals with my parents, Grateful Dead shows and shit like that."

But then you knew that.

Courtney must have liked Silverfish because she spent the next week hanging out with them. Or maybe she was hanging out with Babes In Toyland who were hanging out with Silverfish.

I started with the music papers, so I'll finish with their usual anticlimactic ending.

LP/CD "Pretty On The Inside" and 12"/7"/CDS "Teenage Whore" are available now on City Slang.

Whipped Cream continued from page 10

Jorgen: "There's a lot of ways of getting out of it. It's an obstacle. It's a one year obstacle of doing anything. And it could be very hard because quite a few people are put in some divisions way up in the north of Sweden, like 500 miles from the big cities, and I can tell you, those areas are not really funny. Not at all. It's very hard getting up at 6 O'clock in the morning."

Yes. It's also very hard doing an interview in daylight, especially in the burning sun of Hyde Park. As I start to leave, and watch the guy with the tambourine at The Marquee shouting about religion in Speakers Corner, Elisabeth asks if I have a copy of the fanzine with me. "I really like the name, Big Muff."

Jorgen is one of a few people who knows the true origination of the name, and is probably blissfully unaware of the meaning you philistines attribute to it.

"Yeah, cool name. We used to use them before, but they are so depending on new batteries, so when you have played them for one hour or so they start to sound very bad. The good thing about them is they're really polyphonic. You can hear all the notes you're playing if you play chords, which you can't hear on modern distortion pedals."

Whipped Cream's timelessness will see them through. Just because they're from Sweden doesn't mean you should dismiss them as a European My Bloody Valentine. You deserve Whipped Cream. A great 0.47 of a litre.

Primitives continued from page 7

wait. Moved house on Saturday, which was something of a big event because I moved to London, having had enough of living out in the sticks. This is something of a momentous occasion for two reasons. One: it means I can get the tube to gigs, and therefore get pissed more often. Two: I decided to give up bootlegging at the same time, which means I am no longer the wandering nomad or the perennial bootlegger standing at the back with the Walkman. By the way, if anyone wants any bootlegs, send me an SAE for a list and they'll cost you next to nothing.

Where was I? Oh yes, Sunday at The Borderline. Let's forget Thursday for now and pretend Sunday was their first London date of the tour. It's also the final frontier of an ever-expanding tour.

I had a slight heart flutter as Paul unplugs his guitar halfway through, but the wooshing keyboard confirms that it's only a change for 'Hello Jesus'. You won't find Him in the air conditioning ducts of The Borderline. I don't know how they can be so good and enjoy themselves so much after six weeks with only four days off. Tracey looks straight at me as she announces 'Way Behind Me' as a "golden oldie", and looks round with bewildered excitement as the crowd goes mad for it. People have been known to complain about the "go on, prove it" attitude of London, whereby everyone just stands still watching, but by the time The Primitives get to the last song, they have proved it. The crowd goes absolutely apeshit for the encore.

The last date of the tour was the best for me, partly because it brought back all the excitement of seeing them at the start of the tour, where I went along sceptically expecting them to be okay, and finding out they are better than ever, but mainly just because it was another brilliant gig. The Primitives are here to stay, and don't you forget it.

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AC Temple

You know the way it is. You hear a line in a song and try to work out what it means and then think 'I wonder if that's what the song's about?'. Then you hear another line which seems to be saying the same thing so you think 'yes it must be'. But then you think 'so what are all these other words?'

The meanings attributed to the songs in the review of AC Temple's Kramer-produced LP, 'Belinda Backwards' in Big Muff 3 were based on a few lines picked up here and there, which seemed to reveal a few strands running through the whole album. As I listened to it more, I heard other lines which add new meaning. In an attempt to get to the root of this, I set out to write down the lyrics to the entire album. This turned out not to be as difficult as you might imagine because the words are quite easy to hear. As I start the interview, Chris asks to look at the lyrics because, he says, it's interesting to see the way other people hear them. He then starts to correct the misheard bits, and the one-line explanations of what the songs are about. Jane later takes over this job.

AC Temple are:

Jane: singer and some lyrics

Chris: bass, most lyrics and some vocals

Noel: guitar and some vocals

Tim: guitar

Matt: drummer

Are the lyrics very important, or is everything else just as important?

Chris: "Everything's important, but the lyrics are important in that you can't change the nature of the way people listen to music. Most people listen to music in terms of the song, so they're important. They've gotta be good. Everything's gotta be good. Nothing is unimportant."

Are the lyrics less important on 'Sourpuss' or is it just that the production makes them more difficult to hear?

Jane: "We thought that was a good thing to do at the time, and realised afterwards that it wasn't. But also you become a bit more confident. As I've done more of it and got better at it, I'm more interested in being heard. To start with, if it was rubbish, I just thought sink it right down and then no-one will notice."



Did you originally have the idea of using vocals as another instrument?

Chris: "Yeah, that was our idea, when we were re-inventing the guitar."

Matt: "We had a lot of songs that went 'bid-i-bid-i-beep'"

Jane: "To a certain extent, but that was probably making excuses for not wanting the words to be heard."

Noel: "In the previous life of the band, about three years ago, we thought we will not have the vocals on top of everything, and that was an attitude that existed then, and it seemed to be the right one to have, and we worked with Steve Albini on 'Blowtorch', who..."

Matt: "Who's not a big vocals man!"

Did Kramer change the sound of 'Belinda Backwards' much?

Noel: "I don't think we'd have come out with the same album without him, unquestionably. I don't think we could have made that album sound like that."

Chris: "He was the first person who made us sound like we want to, where you can hear all the parts instead of sounding like a wall of sound, where you can't."

Noel: "It did at the time. It felt totally natural. It felt like the album that we would have made anyway, but next time we went out and played live and then listened to the album I realised how much of a studio thing it was."

Jane: "We've always needed help in the studio because we just don't know what to bloody do when we get in there, and it's taken us three other LPs to realise that. We weren't very good at doing it ourselves, and he just did everything that we wanted to do really, but the arrangement and the material hasn't changed at all. It's just as we made it."

"It's like jumping off a building, you just have to do it"

Is 'Belinda Backwards' a very personal album, or is it just fantasy?

Noel: "A personal fantasy."

Chris: "It's a bit of both. You write something and something personal comes out in it because it's your sub-conscience churning something out of you. You come out with something that is your point of view one way or the other because you have to, but none of the songs you could say 'this is about this', 'this one is about how sad Chris was when his girlfriend left him'. That's far too simplistic."

Is it supposed to be a concept? ie it forms a whole thing, rather than a collection of songs.

Chris: "It was just a collection of songs, but if you look at it you can find a concept, and I was beginning to think concept as we recorded all the stuff, but I don't know what it is. Life, the universe and everything. What else can songs be about?"



There seems to be a lot about not liking being at home with your parents.

Chris: "No, that was one thing you said in the review, and there isn't, as far as I know, any of that in there."

Noel: "Because you love your mum, don't you? 'Jesus make me 8 years old and send me home to mummy'. That's about wanting to be at home, isn't it?"

Jane: "You never go home! We all love our families. Chris needs his for money anyway."

And there's a lot about religion.

Chris: "It's a powerful image. It's more than any Christian concept of God, or any universal religious concept. God is fucking everything, man!"

Jane: "Oh, you're going to have to expand on that!"

Chris: "Some people call it the laws of science. It's just what's there."

Do you believe in God?

Chris: "I don't at all. I believe in God, but not as an entity of any kind. Not as something communicable with."

Noel: "God is a state of mind."

Are you anti-authoritarian?

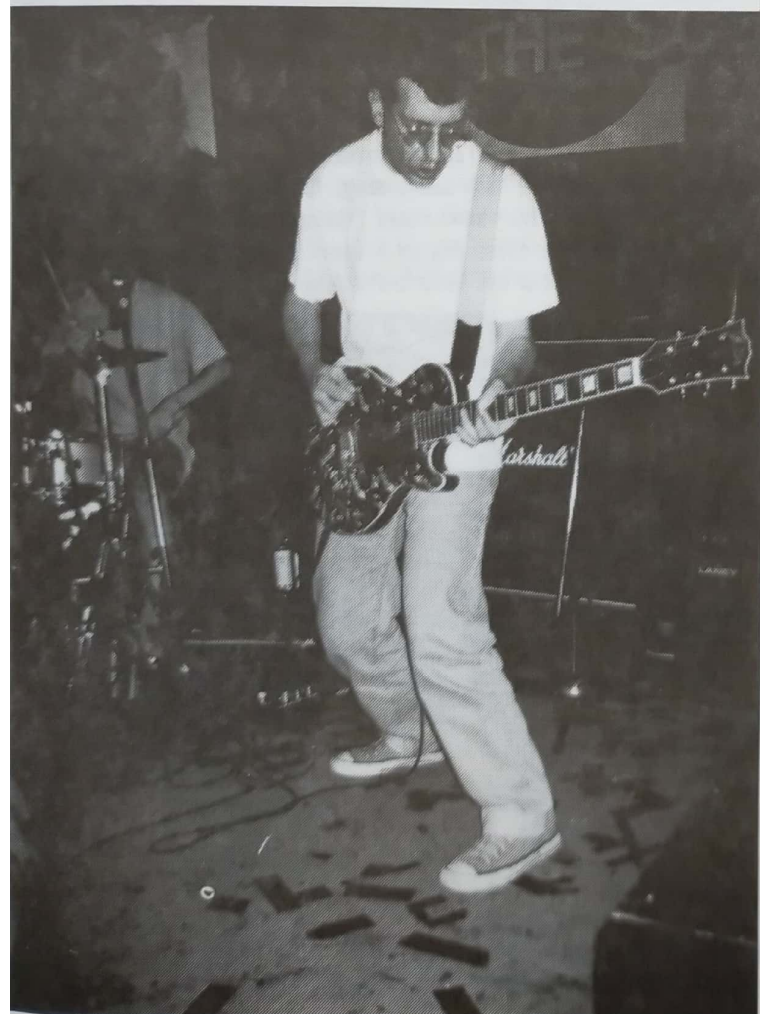
Chris: "Definitely, yes, of course we are, who isn't?"

Tim: "Count the number of times 'I' is repeated."

Chris: "It's a good sound."

Tim: "I find it whiney most of the time."

Chris: "I like it. You can really fold your tonsils round it."





"We're going to do some songs with less time changes, so people can dance to them"

Jane: "What do you find whiney? And how are you getting home?!"

Noel: "The earlier albums when I used to write more of the lyrics, those things were much more like anti-authoritarian, anti-control, Anton Wilson inspired."

Chris: "It was less personal, more slogany."

Noel: "Yeah."

Chris: "When people bashed things properly."

How much effort do you make with the stage performance?

Jane: "Masses."

Chris: "Loads. We fucking sweat, fucking work like dogs."

Jane (in a speechy voice): "I like to put on a show, and get out the different facets of my personality."

Chris: "You like travelling, animals, children..."

Don't you just naturally get carried along?

Jane: "You get into it as well, but I think there's no point standing there looking like a prat. It's really boring. Like Noel does!"

Noel: "I'm just naturally awkward!"

Chris: "People who haven't tried to do it really under-estimate how difficult it is to do something when you're doing nothing but singing, standing on stage. It's like jumping off a building, you just have to do it."

Jane: "It's also really embarrassing as well, because you're standing there doing it, so you want to distract yourself. I like dancing around. In the practices I like to have a dance. Tim does."

Tim: "It got in the way yesterday!"

Suddenly they all break out into a performance of 'D.I.S.C.O.'. Chris: "And live as well, especially me and Noel, we're not very good at playing, so we're really sweating our bollocks off to keep it together. We're really juddery. If you look across to our side of the stage where there's me and Noel, we're like 'nnnggg'. Tim's a bit more graceful."

Jane: "Tim does some good funny walks."

Ahh yes. AC Temple's stage performance. Not only do they have these lyrics that I keep mentioning, but Jane does some bizarre dancing on stage. You know those acting schools you hear about where you have to pretend you're a tree? Imagine pretending to be a tree whilst there's all this compulsive dancing music going on.





Jane: "I like to play big proper places where you can hear yourself. I hate not being able to hear myself."

Chris: "Where you can move around without banging into drums and guitarists and stuff."

How many people would notice if you split up tomorrow?

Jane: "We're not going to do that. Don't say awful things like that to us. We're going to go on and on and on."

Matt: "We were going to go on as long as Margaret Thatcher."

Jane: "But we beat her."

Noel: "We're getting old so we have to slow down. We can't do these fast songs any more."

Jane: "We're going to do some songs with less time changes in them, so people can dance to them."

I get the marked-up lyric sheet back, with corrections to the lyrics and to the descriptions of the songs. It turns out that the 'Glitterhall' is a shopping centre near Sheffield, and 'Skyhooks' is about Jane's work as a primary school teacher. Oh well, at least I got 'Girlseye' right: I said "about cosmetic surgery", Jane added "reading glossy magazines - my tailored image!". Marks out of ten?

Are any of my descriptions of the songs accurate?

Chris: "Not really because... I just think that a good lyric takes in loads and loads of things. You'd have to write two sides of A4 if you were to go to all the little resonances in the different bits. All that stuff about 'Jesus was an Englishman' in 'Spacebore' is all just bollocks, it just sounds good. Mark Smith wouldn't tell you that."

Jane: "That was that funny story in that colour supplement."

Chris: "It was off that Led Zeppelin album."

Jane: "It was called 'Bloody Ridiculous Space Opera' in it's early days."

So what is 'Belinda Backwards' about? What are AC Temple about? Ask driver for details. Time and space have no relevance, and nothing to do with Sonic Cathedrals.

"Who the fuck thinks we listen to Jefferson Airplane?"

And then suddenly you remember it's your turn to sing, so you grab the microphone and act out the next line. All the peculiar poses are rather photogenic, but I don't know if still pictures do them justice.

The music could be described as somewhere between indie and noise, but neither label fits very well, and both piss them off rather severely. Noise with ability perhaps? Indie with a hard edge? I don't know. Maybe they are beyond categorisation.

What bands do you get compared to?

Chris: "Sonic Youth of course! Don't you know anything about us?"

Noel: "Jefferson Airplane."

Chris: "Yeah, we've had loads of them on the new LP. Who the fuck thinks we listen to Jefferson Airplane?"

Who do you see as being your contemporaries?

Jane: "There's bands that we are friends with and hang out with, like The Stretchheads and Band Of Susans. I like Bongwater."

Chris: "We got one review this time 'AC Temple, aren't they the band who sound like Sonic Youth? No, AC Temple, are the band who sound like Bongwater.'"

Noel: "I like them live. I don't like the records."

Chris: "Them at The Riverside was the best gig of the decade. Last decade as well, apart from Swans at The Garage, Nottingham."

Would you rather play pub type places, or proper venues?

Jane: "No. Proper venues. The bigger the better."

Chris: "A lot of people do say we're better in a small pub."

Jane: "It's only because when we play in a big place there's no-one in it. And that's just really embarrassing."

Chris: "Or they're all there to watch somebody else."

Ween

Sex'n'drugs'n'rock

This interview was supposed to have gone in issue 3, and it was the first one I did for that, way back in January (1991), but it seemed somehow inappropriate at the time. Anyway, I still hear favourable mention of them occasionally, so I thought I ought to print it. I've left it pretty much as it was.

Perhaps one day I'll dig out the Pot Geraniums interview I did for issue 1, but then again...

Ween are from New Hope, Pennsylvania. The press release says that Babes In Toyland are big fans of theirs, which is reason enough to go and see them on the first day of their British tour, at The Borderline. The next night, on the last day of their British tour, at The White Horse in Hampstead, I met them for an interview. Paul arrives, complaining because the machine only gave him 18 cigarettes, while Mick, the other half of Ween, is downstairs, re-stringing his guitar.

I started by asking the usual 'when did the band start?', and Paul told some tall tale about both of them looking out of their sixth grade typing school window and seeing the light. That was in 1983, when they were 13. They were originally called Kween, but there was another band called Kween, so they dropped the K.

It seems to me that their initial press was mainly due to the Babes In Toyland connection, but when asked about this, Paul answers dismissively:

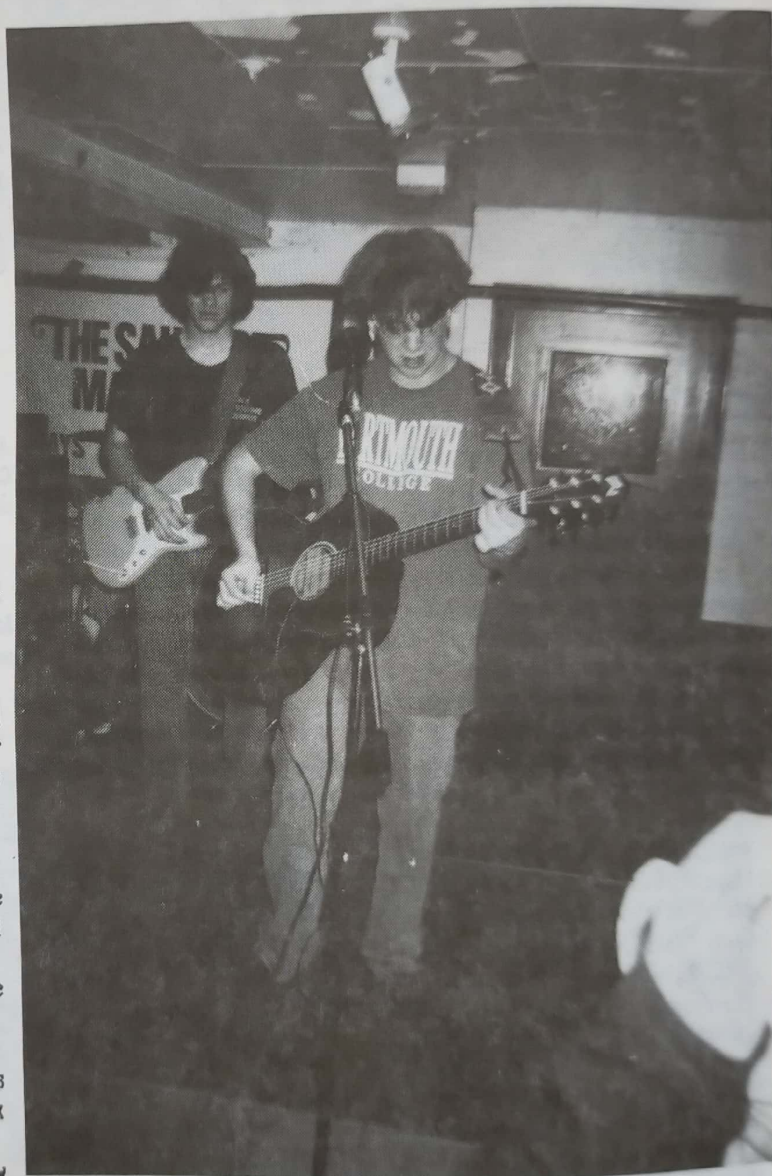
P: We met them a couple of times. They're cool. We might be touring with them when we get back.

That was a bit of a red herring anyway, because their music is more reminiscent of some of the classic sixties groups, like Pink Floyd and The Beatles.

P: We're inspired by things like that, more so than the new alternative music. They're all a part of us. I'm a victim of Pink Floyd, and The Beatles, as a lot of people are, I'm sure. My favourite band of all time is probably Steeleye Span.

On stage, Mick is the axe-wielding guitarist, while Paul sings in an occasionally silly voice, and picks up an acoustic guitar from time to time. I asked Paul who their guitar heroes are.

P: That's more of a question for Mick. He didn't get any sleep last night, because he's such a dude that he picked up a chick, and stayed out all night.



**"I'm a victim
of Pink Floyd"**



"All music comes back to Black Sabbath"

The soundman/roadie/driver then comes to ask if they've setting up for tonight.

M: We got to do an extensive interview with Melody Maker, and then I got to tune up my guitar, pick our songs, shoot up in the toilet.

As Ween go off to speak to Ngage, I am left with the roadie, who tells me how he once tried to rebuild a Big Muff (the fuzzbox), but he couldn't get the original parts, and it didn't sound the same with new transistors.

At this point Mick conveniently arrives, but the only person he could think of was Roy Orbison. Not much of an answer, since I saw them more as more of a would-be heavy metal band.

M: We are in our own way.

P: As soon as we can sell-out, we will.

M: There's always the Black Sabbath factor in everything. All music comes back to Black Sabbath. A band like Cinderella, any of these pop metal bands, they may take themselves seriously, but I can't imagine anyone else does, except the kids that are 14 years old.

As well as Paul and Mick, there is the ubiquitous tape machine, which hisses into life before each song, to provide the bass and drum accompaniment.

P: We tried to get bassists and drummers a lot, but everybody who tries to play with us just says 'fuck it' and leaves. It really sucks. If we could find anybody we would. Mick and I are the only people who can stay together.

M: They take their toys and go home.

I sometimes feel, overweeningly, that England is where it's all at, and foreign bands long to play here. Is there any truth in that?

P: Sure. A lot of shit's gone down in England. One of the places I've been most interested in seeing. Originally I think I'm related to Ozzy Osbourne, so the quest for Ozzy and Syd Barrett became totally relevant to both of us. We had to find Ozzy, and we had to find Syd Barrett, and we realised they both lived in England, so we came to England in search.

He reels off some pie-in-the-sky scheme about using the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and miking up all the instrument and running it all through distortion and flange.

P: At that point we might be the greatest rock band in the world, but nobody wants to work with us, not even drummers or bassists.

Last night Mick put on a ridiculous hat just before coming on stage. Tonight when they come on stage Paul is wearing a pair of ridiculous glasses, which he kept on until the last song. "I can't see a fucking thing, in case you're wondering", he says, halfway through the set.

After they've finished, and people are leaving, Ween are still on stage, singing along to 'Stairway To Heaven', which is playing on the PA.

Ween, geddit?



reviews continued from page 3

The Frames - The Dancer video (Island) ****

Another Irish band, but this time not sounding like one, in fact if it wasn't for being promoted on that basis, you would never know. Of course, being a video, you can see the violin jumping around in the background, and the Deacon Blue backing singing that you can't hear. They will either be big in the Hothouse Flowers Wembley-to-obscure sense, or one of those bands that plays Mean Fiddler venues forevermore. Let's hope they're somewhere in between.

Great Northern Electrics - I Want You single (?) *

I find it hard to like a band that is liked by a fanzine that likes EMF and Basti anyway, and this didn't help. A flapping bass, warbling vocals and baggy guitar that droned on far too long. An attempt to be an original copyist that failed miserably. The needle kept jumping across side two, and I couldn't be bothered to sort it out.

Nine Inch Nails - Head Like A Hole single (Island) **

As well as The Cranberries tape mentioned earlier, I also had a Top tape from Island, and this isn't as far removed from them as you might think. Like the commercial front of Front 242, or the non-commercial side to Erasure. There are three different mixes of 'Head Like A Hole' on the 12inch, but they are sufficiently different to make you feel that you haven't been ripped off. Filed under 'Electronic Noise'.

Upsidedown Cross - Upsidedown Cross LP (Taang!) *

Give me a break. Basing a career on making crap records which attempt to be controversial by shouting about the fact that they're making anti-religious records might be someone's idea of fun, but not mine. How J Mascis got roped into this I don't know. They got confused when they put the sticker on too. They accidentally put on a 'stop the madness' anti-drugs sticker instead of a 'parental advisory' sticker. Absolute shite. And they are far too old to have names like Cheez and Shoehorn.

Young Fresh Fellows - Electric Bird Digest LP (Frontier) *****

They're probably not so young any more, but considering this is their eighth album, they are still remarkably fresh. How do they do it? Good, clean, simple country living seems to be the answer. 'Sittin' On A Pitchfork' and 'Looking Around' are about just that. The solution to all your problems.

I can't quite place them. They're probably in the big league of Bad Religion and Mudhoney, but nobody's heard of them, so how can they be? Maybe they are huge somewhere. They come from the same area as Tad, so they must be relatively small (sizist joke).

They've got a bit less noise than a noise band, but they've got the chugga-chugga guitar. Then they do a song like 'There's A Love' which sounds like a song from Rocky Horror. The album finishes gently, but if you're one of those people who, like me, tape your records, and you put the free single on the end of the tape, it changes the relaxed mood into a frivolous mood. 'Zip-A Dee-Doo-Dah' is another of them farmyard songs, complete with 'cha-cha-cha' end.

Basinger - Something / Scared single (West 1) *****

Hey! This is good. It's British too. 'Something' has rich sounding guitars with a lovely bit of fuzz and nice mellow singing. A remarkably good song that knocks shit out of Chapterhouse etc. 'Scared' is more of a shouting and screeching track, but still two notches above the ilk.

Ramblin' Johnny Stomachpump And The Village Idiots - Marvellous LP (Elwood) **

Nauseating country vocals. It's almost good, but they conjure up images of outwardly happy cider drinkers doing hokey-cokey barn dances.

Something Weird compilation LP (Ugly Music) ***

Grunge. The word seems to fit, if not the label. Napalm Death have got a lot to answer for for inspiring so many bands to make this trash/psychedelic snuff movie soundtrack. What is really frightening is that all the bands are from York (that's Northern England, not East Coast America).

As ever with these things, it's difficult to identify the tracks, or even the sides, but there is one which sounds like a thrash metal version of Cud's 'Hey Wire!', another which claims to be "the biggest thing since Radio Aire", and another which sounds like 1986 Primal Scream. I'm not sure how that last one got on here, schizoid paranoia I guess. I need only list a few names of bands and you'll get the picture: Switchblade Circumcision, Nihilist, Mobgoth, Deep Throat, Suicidal Flowers. I think you'll understand.

Village Idiots LP and Something Weird LP are £6 each or buy both for £12 and get a free Village Idiots EP from Graeme Martin, 106 Vale Royal House, Newport Court, London, WC2H 7QA

Big Sun - Toys And Television / Elizabeth single (Headfull) **

The press release is keen to point out the dissimilarity between this and anything else, but I spotted a minor Nedsism on side one, and a Lloyd Coleish vocal sound on side two. Available for £2 from PO Box 9, Aldeshot, Hants, GU12 4YB.

Pop Am Good - The Latest Thing single (Damaged Goods) ***

I think you have to agree with their name. If they were anything else they would be setting themselves up for all kinds of awful puns about Pap Are Crap and such. As it is they are somehow managing to be a shambling band without the shambles, a fraggle band without the fraggle, and an indie band without the anorak. They could easily get lost in the middle of all that lot, but they stick out like a sore thumb, in a good way.

Beat Happening - Dreamy LP (K/Sub-Pop) *****

This isn't one of the records I was sent, but it could easily have been. More K than Sub-Pop, I've never known an album to have such an appropriate title as this. The slow bashing of the drums, the quiet jangle of the guitar and the deepest laid-back voice you've ever known. It's hard to find anyone to compare the vocals to without mentioning Lee Marvin. They have been called an American version of The Pastels, but Stephen never sounded like this, even at 33rpm, and the occasional girl singer sounds more like Kim Deal than Aggi. Sticking with comparisons to Scottish bands, the start of 'Hot Chocolate Boy' sounds like the opening bars of 'Safety Net', but slowed down of course.

I tried reviewing this on the train one morning, and went all dreamy. I later listened to it in the peace and quiet of my own room, and it makes perfect ambient indie-pop.

Parafornia compilation tape ***

This is a compilation of bands purporting to be from the Guildford area, and is billed as 'The Sound Of The Airport Suburbs'. It has to be said, I expected this to be The Farnborough Groove volume n, and it started off that way with Hate Syndicate, but suddenly Salt Tank leap up and bite your head off. Salt Tank are New Order. Media Therapy sound like they should be a massive dance floor filler. Even The Rileys have a thumping bass beat. In fact, I think this is a conspiracy to infiltrate dance music into innocent bystander's homes. It works. There are a few local faves to attract the punters. I suppose the M25 references should have given away the acid house connection. I want candy.

Bastard! The labels are on the wrong way round. Still, it sounds better that way. I can now listen to side one using the tracklist for side two. I don't know where I am now. The Rileys are a Strawberry Story/Sofas/Nine Steps To Ugly type band, so who are New Order?

Available from 4 Real Recording Co, 14 Artillery Terrace, Guildford, GU1 4NL. I think it's £2, but don't quote me on that.

Waaaaah! compilation CD *****

Call yourself a cutie?! Not if you haven't got this CD you're not. Okay, so you haven't got a CD player, but for the price of a 12" single you have change to buy a blank tape and get a grown up to tape it for you. No real surprises on the jangly indie front, but the real highlight has to be The Bedflowers. They've sometimes been cutie in the past, but the track on here shatters all those relations. You've heard them on BM3, and maybe you've got the three track demo that it came from, and if you thought that was good, you've heard nothing yet. If this is a taste of the forthcoming album, I want to have it's babies. You have to buy the CD, just because it exists, but I would happily have paid the price of a 12" single just for The Bedflowers.



the Bedflowers

Hayfoot Strawfoot - Smoking Is Clever demo ***

They are in danger of disappearing up their own egos. This demo contains more one minute songs which show a trend towards serious pop cliché piss-taking. Forgive me if I'm wrong, but that is not you on the sleeve, or if it is I'm not giving four stars to a band that looks like The Smiths. Oh yes, that'll do - The Smiths were four stars (well, one and a half really), and Hayfoot Strawfoot are definitely three stars.

Blind Justice - Self Injustice demo ***

A very well produced demo, complete with glossy picture sleeve and lyric sheet insert with summaries of each song. I think it's fair to say that if they supported Therapy at ULU they wouldn't get bottled off stage, but if they supported Metallica at Hammersmith Odeon they would. I went to Merthyr Tydfil once, and it wasn't the centre of the universe. I've listened to this a few times now and I'm still not sure if I like it. It's almost like a few bands that I like, but it seems to fall a bit flat. It's also like all those bands from Farnborough who make good demos but then turn out to be a goth metal pub rock band. This might sound like a slating, but it's still worth £1.30 from M. Payne, 60 Lupin Close, Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 9DW. The T-shirt, however, might not be such a shrewd investment, but that's £4.50, should you want one. Both include postage.

Imaginary - Here's One We Prepared Earlier demo *

Imagine the scenario. Young Mark gets a computer for Christmas which has a drum simulator built in to it. "Let's form a band" he says to his friends, Dirk and Frenchy. So they bash out some drum tracks, buy a guitar, bass and effects pedal. They strum away and come up with a few tunes. They can't find a singer, so Mark does that as well, and they have a bunch of songs. "These are good", they all say, so they record a demo and give copies to some friends and the man down the pub. "These are good", people say to them, "let's go and see them play". The gig goes down well with all their friends, so they've hit the big time. "What's next?", they ask. They know someone who knows someone in a band that they've all heard of, so they get their hopes up for a national tour. It never happens. They ponder. They split up.

The last sentence hasn't happened yet, so you can still buy the demo, complete with appalling live tracks, for £2.50 inc p&p from 1 Riverside Drive, Hambleton, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY6 9EH.

Spasmodics - demo **

I think the leather trousers would give them away as the guitar burning rock pseuds they are if they made the move from pubs to real venues. The demo was recorded in Bath Moles' 48-track live recording facility, as used by Birdland and the like, which makes them sound more poppy than they usually are. This is a preview of the album, 'Hookers For Jesus', which promises to be much heavier, and will probably sell about 200 in the Bristol area.

Share The Modern World With Me is a self-confessed 'Brit heavy' fanzine from New Jersey, written by a college radio DJ whose favourite bands are The Fat Tulips and Strawberry Story. It also contains a very articulate Birdland interview, a heart-rendering tale from a vinyl junkie who shall remain nameless, the search for Avo-8, and lots of comments and opinions. The price is \$1 plus postage from Matthew T Kaplan, 70 Surrey Lane, Tenafly, NJ 07670, USA, but I guess you'd be better off buying it from Steve Biscuit.

Food Lust And Guitars 4 has fleeting interviews with The Poggnos, Honey Smugglers, Birdland and more. Phobia's interview trailed off with very black looks when one of them accuses The Primitives of being boring, thus tainting their chances of an interview in this organ in the process. As long as you skip over the Flowered Up and Manic shit it is definitely a good read, and you have to buy it, if only for the line 'Bleach are the only band whose roots aren't showing'. £1 inc p&p from Mark Sutherland, 14 Woodlark Gardens, Petersfield, Hants, GU31 4RQ.

Issue 5 will be out very soon, and has The Primitives, Wedding Present, Five Thirty, Belltower, Buffalo Tom, Top, Spitfire, Thousand Yard Stare and many more. Probably the same price.

Big Muff 3 £1.50 + A5 SAE

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The Butterflies
Daisy Chainsaw

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Heavenly

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Sofahead
The Emotional
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The Popguns
Who Moved The Ground?
Passing Clouds

The Butterflies
Head Of David
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