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AYUP ONLINE MAGAZINE - MARCH 2000

Pic - Danse Society / Steve Rawlings

We're So Happy - When Barnsley Played Pop



Wednesday, Ma

DOGS OF WA

Saxon V

*Legendary early eighties roadie and lounge lizard **Sid** on the brief period Barnsley shook the world. Well, at least the M1. In a second-hand Transit Van.*

There was us thinkin Saxon was all about Byford. But Grahame begs to differ. A leg raging between Sax and Saxon.

Ask anyone about the musical history of Barnsley and the only names that would probably be bandied about in polite conversation would be Saxon and

... called about in polite conversation would be **Saxon** and **Danse Society** . . . after that, it would most likely go silent . . . broken only by the request for an After-Eight mint.

However, during the eighties there was a plethora of Barnsley bands vying for success, from the nondescripts that filled the Working Men's Clubs, to the prodigious talents that tried to create something new. Firstly, one needs to realise that it was a collection of bands rather than a collective scene with a uniform sound - whether a band leaned towards the experimentalism of Sheffield or the Gothic roots of Leeds. This gave Barnsley a rich mixture of styles.

For an area to thrive musically, it must have a back bone - and this was supplied by

Graham Walker - the music editor at the Barnsley Chronicle, who was forever keen to promote local bands.

Dennis McGinley - instrumental in setting up Streetlife Recording Studios at Heelis Street, a record label and later, a gig agency with a view to finding new venues.

Richard Rouska - although based in Wakefield, Rouska 'zine and Rouska Records were to become a vital life line and inspiration for Barnsley.

At the beginning of the eighties, there was only the local WMC scene with bands playing cover versions every Friday and Saturday night, as they had done since Bill Hailey's time. One hard rock band, **Son Of A Bitch /S.O.B.** got caught up in the 'New Wave of British Heavy Metal'. They changed their name to **Saxon** and although they were much older than the new rock brigade, were able to set the world alight by singing about '*Bombers*'! Another regular band was Doncaster's **The News**, with their quirky sound reminiscent of Bill Nelson, but they failed to make the crossover even though they had touted their wares quite promisingly.

New technology presented whimsical synthesiser and easy to use drum-machines, which brought more bands out of the bedroom of dreams. One such band **Y?** from Barnsley, performed at John Keenan's **Futurama Festival 2** in 1980. At that point, they had one track on a recently released compilation 'Bouquet of Steel' from Sheffield. **Y?** later changed to **Danse Crazy**, but the emergence of the Ska scene was causing confusion in the name, so it was changed again, this time to **Danse Society**. This heralded Barnsley's finest and hippest era.

From their first single '*Clock*' to chart success with Arista Records, **Danse Society** and their singer, **Steve Rawlings**,

Well you young 'uns m that the likes of the Lor the first word in rock m even the resurrection of Army doesn't mean a th when it comes to the H the way yer grandad us Biff Byford and his Sax still doing it the hard w

In purist circles their al Of Steel is considered a Metal classic. Such HM as Lars Ulrich of Metal Mötley Crüe sing it's pr Biff's still out there as t pic from the **Saxon We** shows.

Some might remember to the '78 EMI deal fru the Workingmen's Club name Son Of A Bitch, the Concert Secretaries change from SOB came

But that's become a lon problem as one of the c Saxon crew has reform Of A Bitch line-up and around with old Saxon one point - in '95 the 'n more of the original Sa (Graham Oliver/Steve I Gill) than Biff's outfit d flyposter advertising Sc Bitch apparently made the Saxon connection, tended to feature promi touring. Promoters, eh?

Well now it's gotten ser Biff and Graham Olive slug it out in court over name. Which is a sham together they WERE S sixteen years. Doesn't l they're about to bury th now they are both read different kind of platfo

were the toast of the town. Unfortunately Arista were also instrumental in their downfall due to ineptitude in nurturing talent. Steve Rawlings exit-ed to create [The Society](#), a rock/funk group, which disappeared without trace. Last heard, I believe he was holed up somewhere in America hanging out with Billy Idol on a Harley Davidson. The did have the coveted hit single though with 'Heaven Is Waiting.'

Then there was [Party Day](#), a rock/pop band from Wombwell and one of the area's major hopefuls. They had recently demo'd at Streetlife Studio and were a band which enjoyed a challenge. As in September 1982 they were playing two venues in one day: firstly the grand re-opening at the Sheffield Leadmill in the afternoon, and for the evening, the Barnsley Civic Hall. When asked about the double date, their singer [Martin Steele](#) replied "What can I say . . . our manager needs a new diary!"

Pic - Party Day 1982

By October 1982, Dennis McGinley announced that Streetlife would release a compilation LP to

showcase the talents of Barnsley. Already on the project was [In Vogue](#), [Life Style](#), [Urban Reality](#), [Monroe](#), [Page One](#), [Orpheus](#), [SAS Index](#) and [Blackout](#). That month, Barnsley got a new Record shop 'Bradleys', which was interested in stocking local independents.

By the end of the year, the latest news included;- [Crisis](#), a prog-rock group, were looking for a vocalist, [Jade](#) had split due to musical differences, [My Pierrot Dolls](#) had recently found a drummer and 2 keyboard players, and then promptly split up. But it wasn't all bad. [Seventh Son](#) a heavy metal band, were soon to release their first single, and The [Kru-pops](#) single '[Yummy, Yummy](#)' was released on McGinley's Bubblegum Records.

In May 1983, Party Day and [Creatures of Habit](#), a promising Goth band with its sights aimed high, would play the first of many double dates together. This time, it would be at the Leadmill. At the same gig, the Leeds 'zine Whipping and Apologies drooled over COH and its singer [Anton](#), who performed whilst dressed as a north American Indian warrior. Also at this time, [Carl Firth](#) (PD) and [Dean Peckett](#) (COH) began a partnership and opening the Junction 37 printing company. Also in May, Seventh Son released '[Man in the Street](#)', which received numerous Radio One airplays and recorded a session for the Radio Hallam rock



[Biff Bang Wallop What a Picture!](#)
(as [Tommy Steele](#) used to sing)

[Link with Saxon Website](#)

[bristlehound](#)

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show.

The Gents, a Jam-type band, released their first single naturally called '*The Gent*'. By June, main man Brian Simpson was happy to be a one man band and was recording under the name of **European Home**. Several members of Jade had become **Coda-T-Coda**, and were playing progrock to schoolkids in Grimethorpe. Sadly Rotherham's New Wave mainstays of the WMC - **Richard and the Taxmen** called it a day and split up. The main man, Richard Walker, carried on and joined forces with Alan Taylor to become **The Gatecrashers** (no relation to the club, unfortunately!) and released a nondescript album entitled '*Too Short for a Quiff*'.

In the meantime, Karl Gallear left **Kultur Kampf** to become a poet! The rest of Kultur Kampf carried on regardless and were preparing to record their first demo single at Streetlife. In July, Party Day released their first single '*Row the Boat Ashore*' on their own label, in a cloth bag . . . "for cloth bag people". Seventh Son could be seen playing at the Civic Hall. **Scaramouche** rose from the ashes of My Pierrot Dolls, playing hi-tech disco funk. The Chronicle described them as ". . . a visual act to match a magnificent set of modern dance numbers. The vocalist Ian Stewart was a mix of Bowie, Sylvian and Fry". Nice.

During the summer of '83, Barnsley got its own fanzine, '**Chicken Wardance**', which was brought together by Tim Robinson, Chris and Paul Edison. The first issue led with the Creatures of Habit, and issue two would have Party Day gracing the cover. Future Earth Records in Doncaster, had filmed The Gatecrashers playing a gig in Wath for an American cable TV station. 'Creatures of Habit were supporting the Vibrators in London, and later that month were headlining at La Phonographique in Leeds. The band **Lotus Cruise** released '*Billy's got a gun*' single and also reached the semi-final in the Sheffield Star's annual Rock competition.

In September, the Portcullis club on Pitt street opened a Tuesday rock night and within weeks, Lotus Cruise, Coda-T-Coda and **Amsterdam** had already played there. **Radiation** were the best of the bands playing at the Civic Hall as part of a series of concerts organised by the council for the young and unemployed. Whilst Party Day appeared at the closing gig of the Leeds Fringe Festival.

1984 was a year of mixed fortunes for the main contenders: Creatures of Habit firstly changed their name to **Silent Scream** and released a very promising single on their own label. But before they could capitalise on it, the band faltered. Disagreements led to Anton leaving the band and he

set forth to London to seek his fortune. Last heard, he was part of Bad Moon Rising Agency, which handled all the main touring acts. Party Day released an excellent second single '*The Spider*', but all was not well. PD hit the brakes and all went quiet. After several months in the wilderness, they brought in Dean Peckett (formerly COH) to replace Martin Steele, who had left due to ill-health. The band continued long enough to release two LP's and the totally beguiling single '*Glasshouse*'.

Richard Rouska began his 'empire', around 1983 with **Rouska Magazine**, it was a fanzine with plenty of zest and vigour, with the criteria for covering the bands of Barnsley and Leeds. By 1985, he became Rouska Records, and its first release was the aforementioned '*Glasshouse*' single.

Barnsley continued to produce bands of varying degrees of worth but non came close to success, nor formed any kind of tarn scene. As time passed, the venues changed and so did the people. 'Music' soon became something that other people did.

I'd like to think that right now there is some tyke somewhere, maybe in his/her bedroom dreaming of becoming a musical landmark in techno/ambient/whatever. I await with anticipation.

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