

# Another Roger's Ruin, Thanks



Lesley Paris & Mike Woolf, Flying Nun USA office.

## NUNFEST ON THE ROAD, BY BOB SCOTT

It's Friday, so it must be Dunedin. Everyone gathers at the university and does the soundcheck thing. King Loser are on first. All goes well until suddenly the lights and power go down, the stage is bathed in darkness. O'Reilly lurches around, cigarette in mouth, Heazelwood is busy with the cymbal, then 'whoosh', a burst of flame lights up the union — good old lighter fluid. The power and lights come back, and the set is finished with the soon-to-be-familiar shadow kung fu dance by Celia.

The crowd of over 850 are getting excited by now, and local favourites the 3Ds don't disappoint by showcasing the yet-to-be-released album. The curly-headed guitarist almost manages to push his amp over right into Mr Phillipps' stack. Whew, rock 'n' roll.

The Clean stroll on next (how can I review myself?) — a patchy mixed set of nearly all old songs, including 'Tally Ho' for the last time (we promise).

A big cheer goes up for Mr P and the Chills. I only saw two songs, and they were both tight and slick. The crowd sure went off.

Upstairs in the band room the Roger's Ruin (Mac's Gold with a David Mitchell label) was going down a treat. Somehow they kicked us all out eventually.

It's Saturday, so it must be the Empire, the much belated reappearance of the afternoon gig. The Puddle are first, with Ms Nun herself, L Paris, on the skins. The hot combo race through a set of gems, including some old unrecorded classics.

Jay Clarkson was on next, and by all accounts delivered a fine set. I was outside on the footpath having a whitebait fritter. It was part of a coal raffle. Two friends of ours from the West Coast came over and raffled off two bags of coal, and the whitebait fritter was part of the ticket. Even better, they cooked them on the barbecue right before your eyes.

Upstairs it was Magick Heads time. Another fine set, but I didn't see it. Sounded good, according to friends, but they always say that. The Renderers finished off the afternoon in great style. Brian didn't even break many strings.

After a brief recovery time everyone assembled at The Provincial — a very difficult place to see a band. Snapper were awesome, with new cook on the block, Roddy on guitar. I had to escape the pub's confines, so only saw the first Verlaines song — sounded fine too. Made it back for the

last of Dimmer, Heazelwood on bass, Robbie Yeats (for the second time that day) and new boy Cameron combining well with Mr C. It helps being at the side of the stage — a storming end to the night. Ah, not quite, there's another gig to go to at the Empire, Crude are in full swig — swing, I mean — as we arrive.

Alas, I hit the wall and roll home. I missed a wonderful Dead C set, and HDU as well. So, that is a world record for Mr Yeats — three gigs with three different bands in one day.

Sunday, a day off? No way. It's the *Radio One Nunfest Record Fair* at the Settlers Museum, many wondrous bargains to be had. Gee, I didn't know the 'Getting Older' seven-inch was worth \$30.

Sunday evening: it's back to the Empire for a party. Entertainment is provided by Graeme Humphreys in his Robert De Niro haircut (with tomato sauce). He plays Flying Nun songs on an Ace Tone organ for an incredible six hours non-stop, fuelled only by sheep dip and cigarettes. He then promptly falls asleep under the organ.

Wow, a whole two days off. The drive to Christchurch is enlivened by frequent stops at op shops. There are too many highlights to include, but the French journalists were most impressed with the *Macrocarpa* hedge cut in the shape of a chicken at Wainakarua.

Wednesday, The Edge, Christchurch — the Terminals are first and play a rollicking set of seldom heard gems. The Tall Dwarfs liven the crowd up a bit with a fine set ending, with a huge version of 'Dog' helped out by the Bats. Alec Bathgate stays onstage for 'Crow Song'. The Bats answer the crowd's calls for an old classic and roll through 'Clawdive'. Loves Ugly Children end the evening in a loud, uncompromising fashion — energy plus.

Thursday morning: everyone makes it to the airport, an unlikely looking mob indeed. We reassemble in the baggage claim,



Roger Shepherd & Martin Phillipps.

photos by Natasha Griffiths

Wellington Airport.

"Would Mr Heazelwood please report to the information counter." Guffaws echo round the airport. We never did find out what he was wanted for.

Thursday night, James Caberet, Wellington — a big crowd in, Chug open up with their elegant loping riffs. King Loser are next, and looking spiffing in suits — a ripper of a set, complete with Cella's kick boxing intimidating the front row.

Reunion time, it's the Sneakys. Matthew's head doesn't roll around as much as it used to, but otherwise it could be 1987. They get a response for 'Husband House' too.

The Clean play a much better set than in Dunedin (if I say so myself), with David doing some wonderful keyboard pirouettes — ie, dancing on one foot whilst tickling the organ. Some head off to the Bodega, but they have a naff jazz band, so we retire to accom' to unwind.

A slap-up breakfast, throw ourselves into the vans, and a nice flight — almost long enough to have a wee nap, but not quite. Auckland is its usual warm self, and we all peel off to our various haunts.

Friday night is packed at the all ages Powerstation gig. First up, Superette get the youngsters moshing, and even a bit of stage diving — a big impressive sound from this three piece. Loves Ugly Children follow and carry on the volume and energy. The kids are lapping it up. The Roger's Ruin is flowing (upstairs anyway). Garageland are huge in these parts — 'Comeback Special' and 'Fingerpops' set the place ablaze. It's a hard act to follow, and King Loser try hard even destroying an amp in the process. It's tricky playing last sometimes.

Saturday afternoon: I didn't go, but by all accounts it was great. Chris Knox was highly entertaining and even played some songs. Breast

Secreting Cake and the Dribbling Darts followed.

Soon it was evening, and all roads lead to the Powerstation. I missed the Tall Dwarfs (sorry Chris). The Able Tasmanians were great from the side of the stage (I was guitar roadie and even got to change a string). De Niro was in fine form. Dimmer played an up and down set, sometimes connecting — "Gee, these festival crowds are hard work." It's time for those Southern caterwaulers again, the 4Ds. The crowd is lacking in energy, and suddenly it's 2AM.

Sunday arvo: it's the *bFM Nunfest Record Fair*, very brisk trade, they tell me.

Sunday evening: the final gig at last. It's Squid, and even Mr Mushroom is there. Bike glide through their set, melody is in the air. Chug play their best set yet and win lot's of new fans. 'Detuned' is almost monumental. Last but not least are Solid Gold Hell. I haven't seen them for at least a year, but they were just as great. The highlight was probably Garry Sullivan playing the trumpet while drumming — stupendous. Matthew's guitar sound was great, as was Glen Campbell's laconic vocal delivery.

Finally it's all over. But wait, there's more — it's golf. Monday afternoon: the rain clears on a suburban golf course. Four teams struggle around nine holes, Roger nearly decapitates the Mushroom Man. Messrs Houston, Hoffman, Broadley and Co. manage some stylish shots, Scott loses four balls and Stuart Pages gets the lowest score (41 over nine holes). Some teams tackle the thirteenth because it has a water hazard, and most try the eighteenth because it's there.

So, that's it in a nutshell: 150 hangovers, no missed flights or luggage, 15 broken strings, and many fine photos and memories. Here's to the twentieth birthday in 2001 (it's going to be in space, they tell me).

Yours in haste, Bob Scott.

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