

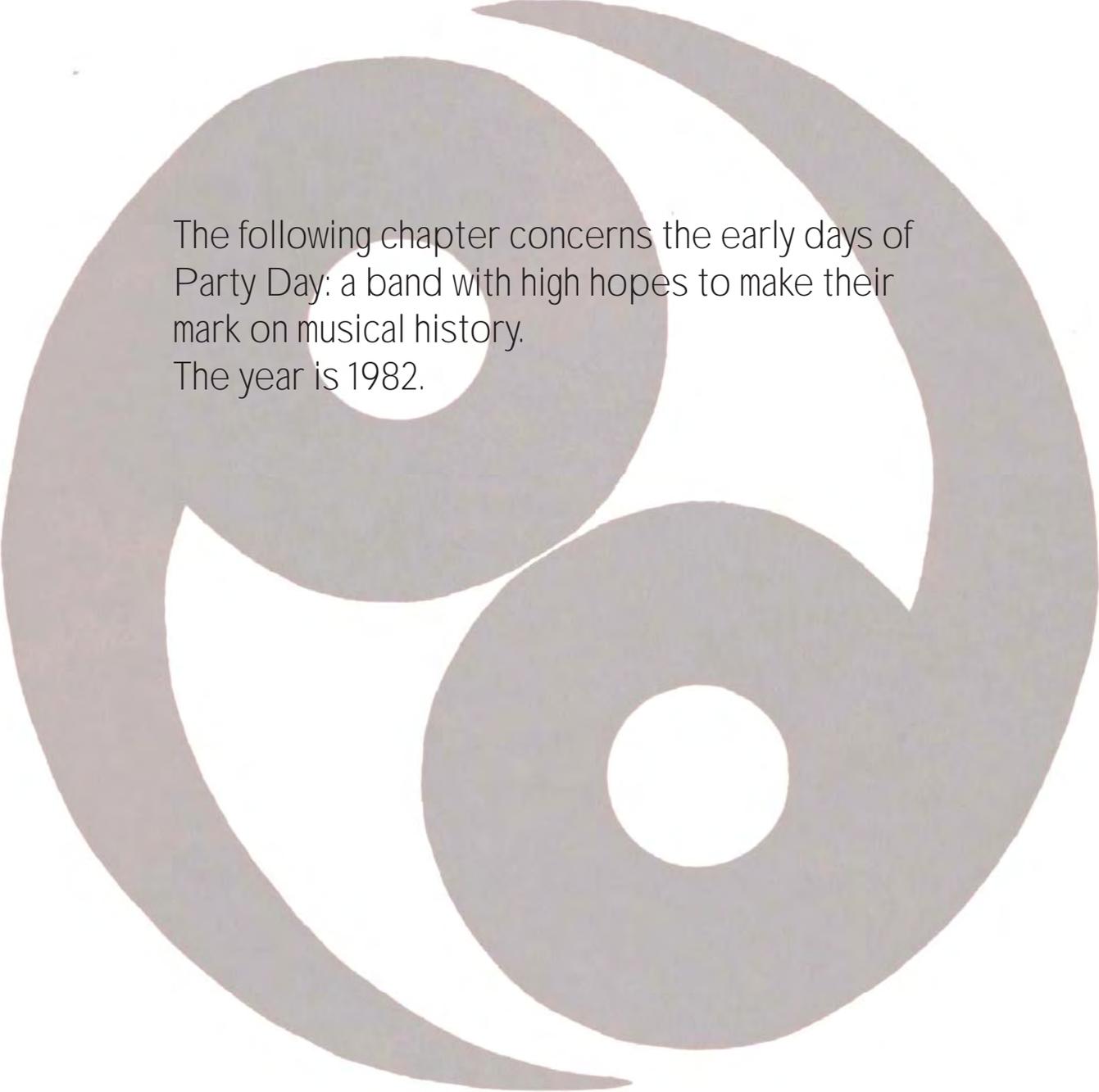
# PARTY DAY

## Not Enough Monkeys

the early days of a struggling band



Words and Photos by Steve Drury



The following chapter concerns the early days of Party Day: a band with high hopes to make their mark on musical history. The year is 1982.

## And so it began

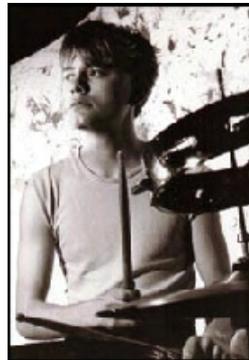
Some of the best ideas either start with a glass of lager in your hand or that early morning inspiration (which has even more alcohol in the body), fortunately, this had both. I was at Martin's place getting an earful about his band and his ideas for its eventual fame and glory. At the time I was not aware that I was being fed a carrot. Firstly, I'd helped him before with one of his earlier band efforts - **'Further Experiments...'**. And now several months later, and with a few more musical styles and chords under their collective belt, the band had a new name and a much sharper outlook.



Martin talked the good talk. So at some point I began to see the band in a different light, and before I knew it, I was hooked - game, set and match. There's no point just talking about the future, it gets you nowhere. "Don't dream it - Be it," sound advice at this hour.

I've always had an interest in the behind the scene part of pop music, and was an avid reader of the business, besides the usual weeklies, I'd read Simon Napier-Bell's 'You don't have to say you love me', admired Malcolm McLaren's antics and knew of the decade earlier clown Prince of Fakery, Justin de Villeneuve. I'd even clung onto the words and wisdom from the Rock Follies TV series. So I realised that there was either no hope for me or it was only natural that at some point I'd manage a band, and this seemed like the right moment.

However, I still hadn't forgotten the last time I'd helped Martin - we were caught and fined for Bill posting! Who the hell gets caught for that! . . . and he still hadn't paid me back the £10 I'd lent him for his fine. So the only record I have so far is criminal one. Nevertheless, and ignoring caution, I agreed to be the band's manager. This also meant in the long run, I'd be their (in no particular order) roadie, driver, publicist, photographer and sound engineer. I did draw the line at making the tea.



I had now created a whole new challenge for myself, as well as the commitments to go with it. Still, dreams can be worth any price. I knew that it would be a tough job and I couldn't delude myself on the size of the mountain we were about to climb. Though I knew Party Day had the potential to be a landmark band, namely one of the best.

The following Monday I went along to their next rehearsal. Every Monday and Thursday they practised in an upstairs room in a nearby pub, The Ship Inn. Party Day had been together for a few short months and had gone through various musical styles. First they thought they were The Jam, then Joy Division, then Public Image and when I last saw them play, they were all three.

The band consisted of four likeable likely lads. First there was Mick, an excellent drummer, whose kit was the envy of any self-respecting heavy metal thunder god. He was still in his teens and had probably been playing and irritating his parents for a good few years. A lean man; short hair, stubble and maybe too damn confident for his own good - if he didn't know what was cool or happening, he would bluff it out. Sometimes not always that successful, like the time he got 'high' drinking some Poppers!



Carl the bassist, at 17 was the youngster of the band and definitely the eye candy for the girls. His idea of rebellion was to combat his asthma by smoking. Carl's bass playing was 'to die for'; inspirational and divine. Carl's shy and unassuming brother Greg, was a doppelganger for Paul Weller, in looks and guitar play, and could turn a few girls heads too if need be. Finally Martin, the joker in this pack, whose a genius with a guitar. He had the look of a Jim Morrison on heat.

Together, Party Day was a vibrant band with visions of greatness with an air of confidence to match, but could still worship banality. Most of their pranks had me as the fall guy.

Party Day had plenty of ability, but they were short on money. Martin was a park gardener for the local council. Greg was an engineer in one of the local steelworks. Mick was at the Polytechnic and Carl had plenty of free time on his hands. What equipment the band couldn't buy they built between themselves. Fortunately Mick was a technical genius and he had recently built a massive bass bin for Carl's bass, which produced a lovely full-bodied sound that was the perfect counterbalance to Martin's earthy Vox combo.



At the rehearsal they began with a general warming up/messing around session, where they tinkered with their troublesome songs and hammered together new ones. Then it was the band's therapy break with a pint or two. Afterwards it was back to working on their latest set list for the next eventual gig. The therapy break was the least productive, what with the range of chatter from gossip to even more gossip. Then sometimes they would annoy each other: Martin would begin by bashing about on the drum kit and then Mick would retaliate by thrashing it out on Martin's guitar. This was 'Youthful exuberance', so long as they didn't smash the gear to bits. Here I could use the break to get my say across to them and hopefully I'll have some ideas for the way forward. We were all learning together, and it was exciting.

"So what are we gonna do?" they asked me. And I was ready for them.

First they needed more gigs to build up their stage confidence. The last time I had seen them onstage, they had been visually disappointing, although the music had crackled like Chinese firecrackers on New Year's Day. My initial target was to get them a gig-a-month with which to start the ball rolling. I thought that this would be easy enough to aim for and it should help to keep the band's momentum and enthusiasm going. Obviously we would be running up losses for a short time, but that wouldn't be too hard on our combined incomes.

Secondly their image was currently non-existent. I wasn't suggesting 'suited and booted', just something that made them look like they knew what they were doing, and that they might even be in the same band.

Finally the band needed a new demo tape, as the last one which was made two months ago, was already out of date. This demo tape represented some other band, certainly not the vibrant Party Day. It was too bleak and depressive. Everyone agreed on this and I was to arrange a November date for a new recording. This gave them 3 months to sort out which songs they wanted to record, and maybe, even write for it.

Almost as a postscript to the evening was the forthcoming Sheffield Star's Talent Contest, which I thought would be a good idea for the band to enter. I sold them the idea and they were all keen to have a go. The Contest consisted of six individual heats held over the summer at the Top Rank Club. The winners would take part in a Grand Final and the overall winner would receive studio time and . . . recognition. So at best there would be fame and fortune, and at worst, some decent exposure. As I didn't know what the judging criteria was then just being accepted would be an achievement. I just hope that the newspaper likes the current 'sterile and less-atmospheric' tape. Also for this contest the the band agreed to do some new photos on the following Saturday. This would give me enough time to think of something to photograph. I'd been photographing bands for a while, so this should present no problem.

The first meeting had been very productive and it felt, to me, that this whole project was the start of something major and that I should keep a record of it from the beginning. No doubt that if I left the recording of the facts until much later, I'd probably wouldn't remember who, what, where or how anything happened, never mind - why! Anyway as I was already using my diary, well sort of, but really only just carrying it around whilst I waited to add something worthwhile. So it would become a day-to-day diary of Party Day, of the hopes and eventual successes (I hope).

There are times in your life when confidence can overcome any obstacle that crosses your path and here we also had a quality band (whether delusional or not). I know that for every thousand that are trying to make their mark, only a hundred of them will be of any good. From each hundred, ten of them will have a moderate level of success, but only one will become a pure major league star. I believe Party Day can do it.

### 17 July

Today's photo session went well today. They enjoyed being the centre of attention (what musician wouldn't?) and we settled on a very 'men-in-black' look. It might come across as a little bleak. Is it wrong to smile in a group shot? The trend in today's music press seems to be 'dark and gloomy'. This is still better than hollow smiles hiding a lack of personality.



### 20 July

Photos now printed, so I sent off our package to the Star. I hadn't realised how much these dark images of the band might reinforce the atmosphere of the demo tape. I really don't hold out much hope for our entry.

However as I tell myself this wouldn't really be a set back, let's face it, a talent show can be the kiss of death and fortunately I know the band agrees with me on this one. A note for the future: I really must do something about their image. Well, it's still early days and it will be better with that much needed punchier new demo tape.

### **01 Aug**

When I arrived home tonight from work, there was a letter for me from the Star. It's the moment we had been waiting for.... and.... we've been accepted, we're in the competition. Bloody hell! They've given us the date of our heat and they want to interview Party Day beforehand for the paper. Tonight is rehearsal night, so it's gonna be good news for them. Or so I thought, I hadn't noticed that Carl had been very quiet on hearing the news. Finally he told us that he couldn't do on the gig.

"What holiday?" He then tells me that he's off to a caravan park in Norfolk for that week. We spent ages talking ourselves in circles, until the answer finally presented itself: Carl could do both. Carl was to go to Sheffield for the day by train, play the gig, then after we had unloaded the hire van, I'd drive him back to Norfolk and still return in time to get the van back within its 24 hours. This was not exactly simple but Carl didn't want to lose another day's holiday by traveling, whereas I'd only lose my beauty sleep... and I guess it's too late for me to worry about that.

Everything's fine again.

### **02 Aug**

I rang the Star's reporter, who sounded most agreeable. She wanted to interview them at their next rehearsal for the accompanying feature. I thought this was an excellent idea as I'd half expected that we would have to go into Sheffield to her office. She sounds very enthusiastic, so I have high hopes for this competition.

### **05 Aug**

The interview: The plan was for the band to arrive at The Ship at 7pm as usual and to begin their rehearsal as normal. Meanwhile I would meet her at the train station and drive her to the pub. We would probably arrive there at 8pm, so that she could catch the band playing and then they could break for the interview. This went like clockwork.

Even though hardly anyone got off the train, it became obvious that we were both waiting for someone. So I approached her and introduced myself. After a brief chit chat we moved swiftly on to the pub.



At the pub I led her into the rehearsal room, got the drinks order in and then left them all to it. I went downstairs to get out of everyone's way. Although I would like to be in on the interview, I don't think it's really the place for a manager. I certainly don't want them to appear as puppets and could I keep quiet if I disagreed with them. I'm secure in the knowledge that we are a 'group of five', and why should I interfere with their moment. Anyway I trusted them not to cock it up, they're not that stupid.

The interview seemed to go OK as she was very enthusiastic about them. I asked her about the other bands she'd interviewed for the contest and she was very dismissive of a few. Apparently some of the groups had ego's the size of Old Trafford. At least we weren't suffering from this virus (it's early days though). However I did wonder what she really thought of us. I drove her back to the station and the train was on time. Tonight had all gone very smoothly for us.



Afterwards I went back to The Ship and found that the band had already packed up early for the night. Tonight had been a very positive session and now we were all second guessing the write up. Later, Martin finished off the night with his annoying habit of cleaning out the one-arm bandit with the aid of a single coin. Some people!

### 19 Aug

Martin had decided that Party Day needed a warm up gig for the contest, so he'd persuaded the Ship's landlord to let them play in the main room. Although there really wasn't the space for it, they had managed to shoe-horn themselves into a corner. In fact there was more room for the pool table, but then again, it did earn more money than the band.

I didn't have to do much for this gig, it being a local one for friends. But we still had a poor turn out. I daresay in years to come many more people will claim to have been there than actually were.

For the gig Martin had started his preparations far too early and so by the time Party Day were due 'onstage', he was well pissed and more of a shambles. Also he had with him a new toy, a strobe light, which he immediately began shining in everyone's face; the band's, mine, the audience, the passers by! It was no small understatement to say that they could've been better. I just hope Martin's state tonight was only a temporary aberration. At least it was very easy to pack up the gear.

### 25 Aug - Top Rank, Sheffield



The Battle of the Bands heat today. I collected the van from a cheap hire place I'd found in Barnsley. Cheap and not cheerful. The van's back doors wouldn't lock properly and the smell within it was fresh from the farm. By the time I'd arrived at the pub, I was already high on methane. Loading up the gear turned out to be one massive jigsaw puzzle. "Turn it this way, that way, and do we really need it this time". "Try it again" . . . With more practice we should be able to load it blindfolded.

As we arrived at the venue, I saw Carl waiting for us on the doorstep. He was looking fresh from his 3-day holiday and was as keen as the rest of us.

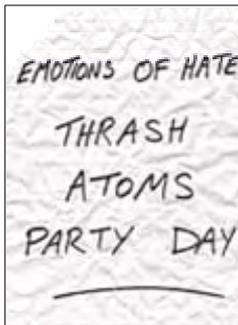
Once inside the venue, it soon became apparent that Mr. Chaos was in charge. All the bands had arrived and everything seemed in disarray. At the epicentre of it was the PA Company, who were slowly sorting out each of the six bands. The PA crew should've been a blur of decisive action, after having staged several of the heats so far, but this was not to be. Then the organiser told me that the band could only play a short set of four songs and not the

original six as requested (due to the lack of time). It hadn't even started yet! Then a little later, the organiser said that there wasn't anytime for the band to do a sound check, but that the sound guy would sort it out during our first song. I began to think that this contest was now in the hands of Mr. Cock-up!

At least it couldn't get worse. Well I was wrong. The next blow came from the Star's two page feature on tonight's contestants, in which they had described us as the ' Fascists from Hell!' Where did that come from? What had the band said to her?

Party Day was fourth on the bill. And with minutes to go before they were due onstage, I'm running around as if my arse is on fire. I want everything to be ready and perfect for them, as I hate to see a band wander on and proceed to sort itself out as if they had never seen a guitar lead before. I wanted them get onstage, relaxed and raring to start the first song, eg: professional. So I make sure both mikes are set at the right height, Martin is a little taller than Carl. Also I tell them where I've put their individual Set lists for ease of view and a drink of whatever they fancy. We can't pay ourselves yet so it's the least I can do. Finally I re-check the amplifier settings, which I'd noted earlier, and I left them switched on in standby mode. Simple, but effective. On this occasion, our amplifier settings had been tampered with, but I was able to rectify this in time.

As they waited backstage Carl was the only one to have made any effort with his stage clothes. He's wearing a white waiter's jacket that contrasted with everyone else's work-a-day attire of black T-shirts. Greg was ignoring his nerves by re-tuning all the guitars, and Martin and Mick just made prats of themselves.



There was a short announcement from Mr Chaos, and then the band shuffled on to mild applause. From the start, Party Day was far from partying. Mick began pounding out the beat to the first song which would overlap the rhythms from the drum machine (shades of Joy Division? maybe). Then suddenly there was no drum machine... it had disappeared entirely from the mix for several moments. The band looked at each other, stopped momentarily and then attempted to keep time, so when it re-appeared in the mix - synchronicity had been lost. This tampering, or mixing as it was known to Mr Chaos' sound team, was to continue intermittently throughout all the four songs. The sound guy attempted, valiantly or otherwise to harness (or harm) the four songs - like he'd never encountered a situation like it. Let's not forget that this wasn't even the first or second heat in the same venue with the same PA company. The air from the mixing desk smelt of skulduggery. The band and its sounds descended into a shambles. I was frustrated and unable to stop this potential disaster. The sound man was indifferent (or just deaf) to what was happening. The band lumbered on courageously, and began each song irrespective to the sound offensive they were under. What did the poster say - '*Keep Calm and Carry On!*'

We didn't win any fans tonight. As for the night as a whole, if it wasn't for the fact that the eventual winners, a dead ringer for 'ABC - complete with a full brass section - had an uninterrupted perfect sound, I would have said that we were just unlucky... but as it was! After the judges gave their scores, we finished with 'Nil-point' and came last in this debacle. I see no point being mid-placed and mediocre. Definitely a blow to our morale but also we're riding high on credibility!

Our escapades for the night were not over, as I drove around Sheffield's one way system, I soon realised I was going the wrong way. So I quickly reversed out before I was seen. Unfortunately I scraped down the side of a taxi that had just pulled up alongside me. Tonight I was in no mood for an irate cabbie and certainly didn't need any points on my licence, which would stop me hiring any more vans. So to calm him down I gave him the £20 we'd earned tonight for the merest of scratches to his taxi. He'd got a good deal.

Meanwhile the band were soon having a good old laugh at my expense, until I told them it was actually at their expense. This calmed them down for the rest of the journey back. At home we put the gear away and now all I had to do was to drive Carl back to Norfolk. Martin came along for the ride, which would at least, help me to stay awake. A few hours later I'm on the Norfolk plains ("very flat" as one would say), and we were trying to forget the previous night's debacle. We found the caravan park by 6 am, but the actual caravan took a little longer. Carl's dozing mates greeted us with an air of 'having only just stopped drinking', but they gave us for our troubles, a much needed greasy breakfast.



Later that afternoon I bought a copy of The Star to read last night's review - which we should best forget. Not one of our finer moments. Back to more rehearsals and yet more phone calls.

### 10 Sept

Getting a gig can be a difficult process. The promoters aren't too keen on originality. You can't get anywhere without first having to pigeon-hole yourself, as everyone always asks "So what are you like?" You really want to say that the band is totally original and unlike anything that's gone before and they have to be seen. But finally, you end up telling them that they're a cross between The Jam and Joy Division!

As I'm continually 'phoning promoters, my pockets are overloaded with small change and now my pockets are beginning to fall apart. These calls keep me very busy often either during my lunch breaks or after work, and in some cases, both. Once they've taken the bait of our demo tape, with its brief group bio' and a bit of flattery for me, I'm on the way to getting that essential gig date. Nevertheless at the moment, I don't have any real say on the chosen date, right now it is a 'take it or leave it' situation and I can't be too fussy. Which is why Party Day came to be playing two gigs on the same Friday but in two different places; Sheffield and Barnsley!

The first will be a highly prestigious afternoon gig at the grand re-opening of the Leadmill, as part of the Festival of Unemployment. Then for the evening, it's a self-promoted gig in Barnsley, which I'd arranged previously.

Fortunately, this appealed to the band's sense of humour.



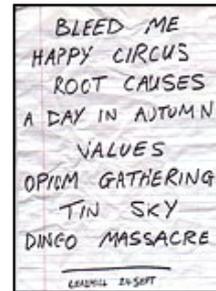
### 24 Sept - Leadmill, Sheffield

The story is beginning to take on a familiar tone in that we arrived on time but the Sound guy was nowhere to be seen. Like lost lemmings, the five bands waited around for their sound checks. Eventually, he arrived and began to put this jigsaw together. Later, I was told that we only had time to try one song as a sound check. Still we were quite optimistic that it would be

sorted out. We had been placed third on the bill, which I thought was a good spot and it would help us with our timing for the day. Unfortunately the turnout was very poor and there seemed to be more musicians than punters present. Hopefully, I could relax and enjoy the event.

However, there are never any laurels to rest on, and to keep me on my toes today, the band had surprised me by becoming a three-piece today. I knew that Greg had been talking about leaving the band for sometime, as he'd fancied going to college. It still took me by surprise. It's all quite amicable but I'm sure they will miss his solid rhythm work. I don't really know if they intend to carry on as a 3 piece or replace him? It's all in the air for now, so I'll just go with the flow. It's not a problem for me but we will need some new photos.

The gig began OK and they sounded fine out front. However, it was a different matter onstage. Throughout the gig, Martin constantly wanted more volume from the monitors but the sound guy said that he'd got the lot. Without a decent sound onstage from the monitors, they could only hear their own instrument and Mick's overpowering drums between them. Carl couldn't hear Martin and vice versa. At least this didn't affect their timing, which was very sharp and spot on. After a few songs, Greg rejoined them for one final number (it's a guest appearance already!). They played a favourite of his, 'Values'. Overall as a three-piece, they didn't seem to miss him that much, so maybe, it could work out after all. The band enjoyed themselves and you can't ask for more, well actually I could and will, as they really must become livelier onstage. Pity there was no Star journalist here today to erase their last horrendous memory of us. Hopefully a few people might remember us today.



We got paid £30 and had broke even on our expenses so far today. We all packed up the van as soon as they came off. I thanked the promoter, must keep in touch etc. and then we were off to the next gig.

### **Same day: Centenary Rooms, Barnsley**

As we were unloading the gear outside the venue, it certainly didn't feel like we had already played a gig today, I guess we must have had second wind. Our financial successes in Sheffield would now take a nose dive, and not a cheap one. Hiring the hall and a separate PA had cost a small fortune and I needed it to be jam-packed tonight, but it wasn't to be.

We began with the usual problem, that of the PA arriving late and then taking ages to set up. Are all PA companies run by incompetents? Discuss? So the event was already running late. The next problem wasn't too far away, in the form of an egotistical support group that I'd foolishly agreed to. They began acting like Prima Donnas and when it came to them going onstage, they refused to set foot on it until there was more of a crowd out front. Maybe I should have told them to piss off there and then, but I didn't. Why is it that when you try to help another band, you get all this kind of crap that goes with it, 'arseholes full of egos'. They eventually did their bit, went on too late, stayed too long and went off to be 'would-be' rock stars. (it'll probably be the high point of their sorrowful existence). Party Day came onstage very late and we were going to have a problem with the venue's scheduled closing time, even though the band had cropped their set list. Martin was downright bloody annoyed and understandably so. I should've acted more decisive with the excremental excuse for a support band. It will not happen again. (Even years later, I can't remember the group name of this bunch of tossers).

The band managed to put these problems behind them and still they played a reasonable although short gig in front of a slowly dwindling crowd. Tonight was one very expensive lesson for me. Afterwards Martin disappeared into the night with his girlfriend in tow, leaving everyone else to load the van.

#### 4 Oct

Rehearsal night and their spirits were quite low following the Centenary Room gig, but they soon perked up once I told them that I'd just booked them into a studio for a day's recording next month. So it's now time for everyone to haggle over which songs they wanted to record. What were the songs that truly represented them as of now? Everybody has their faves and naturally we made no final decisions tonight, but it was a good start.

#### 8 Oct

Got another Sheffield date confirmed today. It's a room above a pub that has a decent reputation as a venue. During tonight's rehearsal I tried to persuade the band over to my way of thinking, and to put more 'life' (more of themselves really) into their stage persona, which is non-existent at the moment. People can see wallpaper anytime at home, they don't need to see it onstage as well. One convert at a gig is still much better than none. But I don't think I've convinced them yet. Afterwards, Martin and I continued the drinks session at his place. Later we ended in the nearby fields, Martin strumming his acoustic guitar along to our drunken bleatings. One of us sounded like Bob Dylan and the other one could sing! An enjoyable time, if only slightly remembered.

#### 20 Oct

I've been trying to get both Radio Hallam and Sheffield interested in seeing us at our next gig, at The George, but it's not happening yet. I get the feeling that some people will only become interested if someone else sticks their neck out first. No-one seems to have any confidence in their own judgment. What do you have to do before they acknowledge you? Become a carbon copy of the latest hit or what!

#### 24 Oct - The George, Sheffield



I guess it had to happen, and tonight was the very lowest point. Not one bloody person turned up to our gig. I know it was the middle of the week but where was the thriving Sheffield scene, the curious, the fool hardy... nothing at all. Mind you, we were competing against an England international match on TV! The gear was set up and primed ... and the band drank. Instead, we played what few cassette tapes we had with us over and over to the point of obsession. The evening resembled more of a long

break during rehearsals than an actual gig. I felt really sorry for the band; their enthusiasm was truly blunted tonight, and as for tomorrow's view of it?

In addition, last weekend's poster campaign was now a total waste of time for everyone, as we'd stuck up loads of posters all over the centre of Sheffield for this damn gig. And to add further injury, there was the cost of the small PA system that I'd hired for the night. Maybe I should've brought along the portable TV instead, at least we could've watched the match. I wondered if Greg was having any doubts about his 'rash' decision to leave the band, somehow I think not.

#### 2 Nov

Although the George was a total disaster of Titanic proportions, on the plus side it wasn't a public embarrassment. I'm still determined that we'll make our mark in Sheffield. So after yet another 'phoning around session, I've secured a new date with a different venue. My fingers are crossed that it won't be déjà vu' for us, even though it is another venue upstairs at a pub. Any audience response 'good or bad' - would be appreciated just right now.

#### 11 Nov - The Hallamshire Hotel, Sheffield

The room turned out to be not only too small for our equipment, but there weren't even enough wall sockets. So we halved the PA system, left out the drum machine and rearranged the Set list to suit. To my



great relief, the room was quite full of people, but most of them disappeared once the support band, Final Hour, had finished. I was hoping that we might win over a few people tonight but the law of averages was against us. Hope took a further dive in this rapidly emptying venue as it left Party Day bruised and more fed up. They went on to perform a disastrous lumbering set. I've got to get rid of this 'going through the motions' routine of theirs, as it doesn't do us any favours at all. Tonight even the full-blown guitar death rattle of 'Dingo Massacre' wouldn't upset a babe in arms. Fortunately the pop songs - 'Bleed Me' and 'Glasshouse' still managed to shine through.

For the finale, Martin began playing 'Washing Line', a brand new stunner of a song. A very chunky song, like one of the Fall's songs and it sounded like they were sawing in half a washing machine set on spin cycle. But there was hardly anyone there to appreciate it. The promoters though were very enthusiastic and promised us a return gig early next year. So it wasn't all bad.

Also we are getting more proficient at packing up the gear, even with our variety of dodgy vans.. This time the van had a sliding door that was reminiscent of a smooth actioned guillotine. You counted your limbs each time you got close to the door. And the engine sounded like it might not last the night, as it coughed and spluttered in to life. On the way back home, we're all winding down, so I've started using Martin's walkman as I'm driving along. It helps to keep me alert as I listen to; Bowie, Talking Heads etc. So If this van disappears off the road, it won't be because I've fallen asleep.

## 22 Nov - Woodlands Studio, Normanton

Woodlands is a misnomer, not a wood in sight. The studio is part of a terraced house with the recording area in the basement. However, it's very cosy and likable. We're hoping to re-shape our future today. After much discussion and many wasted hours during the last few weeks, the chosen songs were all finally decided upon last night! They had opted to record and mix 3 songs in the allotted 8 hours. There will come a time when we're not so restricted, but for now it'll have to do. Last time they were here to record the four doom and gloom songs (the ones I've been hawking round lately).



I was determined that this recording would not be as sterile as their earlier attempts had been. It's just too easy to get carried away playing 'God', in trying to achieve the perfect sound. The constant buffing away at the rough edges until the song has lost all its vitality. As for me, I feel truly at home behind the mixing desk, it's definitely the best fun that you can have with your clothes on. Also something else that I like here is that it's more of a team effort. I can chip in my two penny's worth straight into the mixing pot and it will be considered, unlike at the rehearsals where they can and often do ignore my musical suggestions. Here they are prepared to try anything out and from all the angles, so as not to miss a thing. Also Neil the engineer points us in the right direction if we start meandering. . Mind you the first two hours we're spent sorting out Mick (the perfectionist)'s drum sound - to the point of annoyance.

The songs chosen for today were: 'Glasshouse' this could be an perfect choice for our first single. It's full of harmonious guitars, soothing vocals and broken love. But possibly the song's a little too sweet, only time will tell. Martin's finally found the notes in his voice. Second song is 'Opium Gathering', which is a bass driven hell song that would



march you to your grave and back. The third and final song is 'Tin Sky', an edgy rock number that involves an intricate St Vitas' dance. On this song Carl's low bass rhythms are on speed in an effort to nail Martin's steely sounds to the flag pole. Truly it's a diverse selection of songs, and this just maybe a little too much. At least you can't pigeon hole them so easily, I hope.

Eight hours later and we had three songs in the bag, recorded and mixed. The day's adrenalin has managed to keep total exhaustion at bay. On our way back home, we played the finished tape repeatedly in the van and no one seemed to tire of it. Will we feel the same tomorrow? For now, it's been a jolly good day for all.



## 24 Nov

Martin gave me the artwork for the demo tape today. He has been in a 'Cure' vein creatively of late, so the artwork was all masks and smudged makeup. It's not at all what I wanted, as this is still a bit doomy (What was that I had said about 'pigeon holes?') Nevertheless, he wouldn't budge from it. I hope it doesn't become a hindrance to the tape.

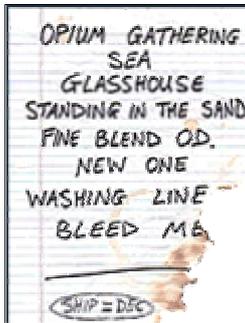


The demo tape still sounds excellent, so I can accept it's a good selection and the mixes sound fine, despite the repetitive brainwashing we all received on the day. With tape copies duly made, and now it's up to me to spread the news and maybe to begin approaching a few record labels. With luck we might even have our first single released next year.

For the time being, I gave it the catalogue number of '**FX101**', I see it as part of a grand scheme of mine; FX Ones will be for demo tapes, FX Three's for "singles etc., I haven't worked it all out yet, but it all sounds very Factory Records and corporate. The FX refers to the group's former name of a few years ago, namely: 'Further Experiments'. I thought it was a nice gesture, mind you, the full name was really '**Further Experiments in a Crowded Laboratory**'. Certainly a memorable name - but for the right reasons! I don't know.

### 15 Dec - The Ship, Wombwell

Martin once again had arranged another impromptu gig here. So they're back into the cramped corner fighting each other for space. For tonight, I thought I would try something new to help with the performance, and borrowed a slide projector. I'd recently shot a load of

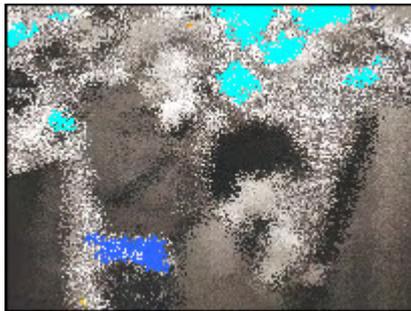


incidental images on slide and had even scratched the band's name on a few. I hoped these slides would counteract the band's dull performances and it would also double as some sort of a backdrop. This just might distract people from the awkwardness on stage. I can see all the ingredients for excitement are there, it's just that at the moment they're only cooking on regular 3.

As before when they played the ship last time Martin was completely drunk, however this time in a more entertaining way and he acted the part of a grand old rock 'n' roller. At worst, he sang incoherently, and at best, not at all. And he completely ignored most of the Set list, much to the annoyance of Carl and Mick. They did their best to follow his guitar meanderings. The final number was a 'name that riff' rock 'n' roll medley that seemed to have no end in sight. It has to be said that Carl and Mick had no problems with the constant changes that Martin had imposed on them. Technically the gig was a complete shambles, but more importantly a very enjoyable and memorable one too (even if later, Martin didn't remember any of it!). All we need to do in the future is to get Martin fired up and sober, at the same time. I realise that this might be a bit of a tall order but we've got to give it a go. Maybe using the slide show has brought it home to him about performing.

### 31 Dec

Another year ends, and hopefully it will be the band's last one in obscurity. There is nothing like a new year, a new leaf, a new diary to fill, to spur one on. The gigs so far may have been very limited in success . . . OK, they were mostly flops, no audience - no gain. It's a learning curve for us all. Still, you can't deny the force of Party Day's determination. They want to succeed and I won't let them down.



We're all out in Barnsley tonight along with the other hopeful bands in town, of which there are quite a few for such a small town.

To describe it as a 'Scene' would probably be a gross deception, as on the surface everyone's trying not to bruise each other, so talk was cheap. This year's model is Danse Society, who are is the main hipster band tonight. The big fish so to speak, after charting with 'We're So Happy' earlier this year. Of course no one mentions Saxon in this neck of the woods, who are a

throw back a throw back to old fashioned rock.

In the corner, I can see Carl has definitely become a hit with the ladies but also his innocence for the moment holds him back. Mick and Martin have excelled themselves on the alcohol front and both were casualties early on. Martin's girlfriend does have a lot to put up with, but she doesn't seem to mind. For my part, I'm fairly pissed as the clock's striking midnight. I'm only vaguely aware of 'Auld Lang Syne' being sung. My mind was already elsewhere - one half dreaming, the other liquefied. Maybe next year this pond will be too small for us. I have a good feeling about this band. Just can't wait for the year to start.



*Party Day with high hopes*

***"Where I could walk naked and laugh at the dark"***