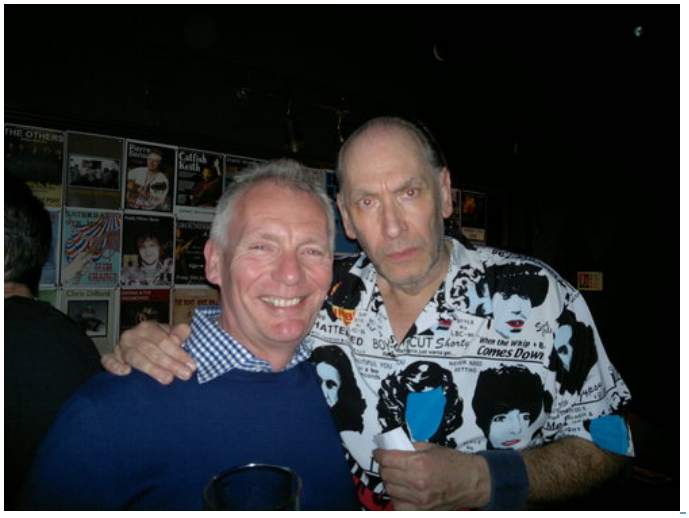
Gig Reviews 2012



The Hamsters Half Moon, Putney 30th March 2012

The end of an era has come as we went to the Half Moon to see the Hamsters playing there last weekend of gigs after 25 years and 4500 shows. Putney is a long way to go, especially on the District line but the train connections were nothing but marvellous, as I don't think we had to wait a minute for each train to come from start to finish. I have never been to the Half Moon before and was looking forward to the trip. I enjoy all of it, the pre drinks and meal in the Plough, we have now found out that the 18.21 to London has a buffet car, so more beer on the train. Anyway the Half Moon is how I would expect it to be, a large pub with a hall at the back of it. The only difference between there and somewhere like the Standard or Riga is the cleanliness of the place. It really is a nice place to go to, clean toilets and your feet don't stick to the floor. The sound is excellent as well. I am not saying that the Standard and Riga are bad because I love going there but the Half Moon is just that little bit smarter. The beer on tap is also very good, as with a lot of the pubs around that way they serve Youngs, There was also Sharpes Bitter which was ever so palatable.

The Hamsters played another 2 blistering sets and they do not often disappoint. This was a ZZ Top & Hendrix gig, don't asked we what was played as we had been drinking since 5, but I definitely heard "Jesus came to Chicago" "Sharp Dressed man" "Tush" "LA Grange" and "Legs" from the ZZ Top part of the set. There were a lot more but I am not up on the bearded trio music. The Hendrix stuff was all the usual suspects, "Hey Joe" "Wind cries Mary" "Midnight Lamp" "Voodoo Chile" "All along the watchtower" "Purple Haze" and finishing with my favourite Jimi track of all time, the wonderful "Angel". They played a lot more but my mind was a bit fuddled by then. It's a shame the Hamsters are finally calling it a day as they are a great rock band who always deliver and they play the best Hendrix covers that I have heard. I suppose if you have been doing it for 25 years, it must get a bit boring, but I would like to say thank you for all of the enjoyment I have had watching them, from the early days at Snifters, when they were first starting, to last night. Good luck to all that you do in the future.

Duncan, March 2012.

P45 - The Golden Fleece - 04/02/2012



I was looking forward to this gig as I have not seen P45 play before; I had seen the previous version, the Coverup several times though. The band didn't disappoint and played 2 excellent sets of Reggae, Ska (two tone) and mod numbers. They started with a record that I am not really keen on, Dexy's Geno but after this it was all good. I am hopeless at remembering set lists but the tracks they played that I can remember were mod classics such as "Whatcha gonna do about it" and "my generation" plenty of Specials, Madness and Bad Manners. A lot of Jam, including a great version of "To be someone," probably one of the best Jam tracks ever. "My Boy Lollypop" or the version they do because we are all real men, My Girl Lollypop. A Toots and the Maytails medley of Monkey man, 5446 that's my number and pressure drop, UB40 and James Brown.

What is more important is that they play quite a bit of their own music including the excellent "Top Floor" I think that it used to be called living on the Gascoigne, about living on one of Barkings finest estates. I am sure that they wish the first set never ended as there was probably one of the biggest crowds I have seen on the small dance floor in front of the band skanking away. I am not sure if they brought there own fans with them but there was a lot of young people dressed up as though they should have been at the Corn Exchange in the late 60's, there were a fair few crombies and the new style parkas on show. Anyway the crowd seemed to disappear for the second set and took quite a time to return.

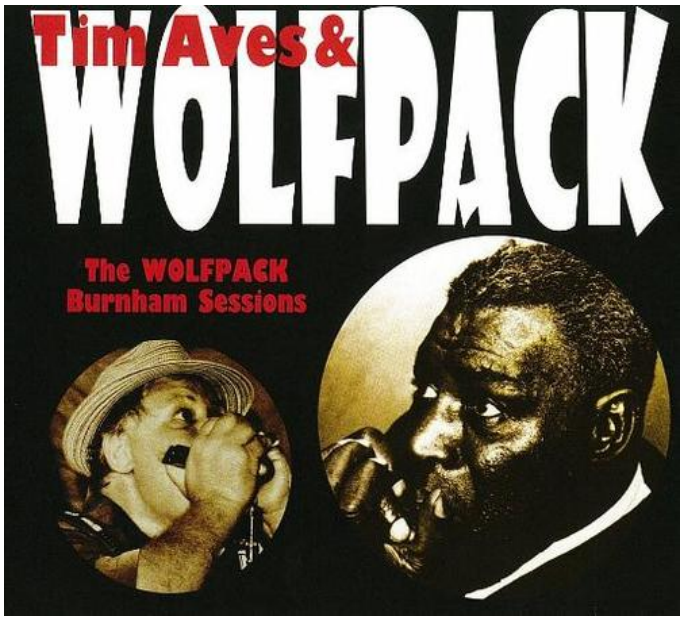
They finished with the Toots medley and Tequila and Woolly Bully which they credit Bad Manners on their website but I will always associate with Feelgood. I know they are not Feelgood originals but

Lee Brilleaux always made them his. They finished with an encore of Sweet Soul Music and the night came to an all too early end. Summing up if you want a good time I thoroughly recommend this group. They are a five piece which boast a saxophone, they are getting better and have just landed a well deserved recording contract (so perhaps the last time to see them in a pub for nothing). The main regret of the night was that they do a great version of Can you see the real me, but not tonight. As we left the Fleece we were treated to a winter wonderland of snow and Maurice fell of his bike. He blamed the snow and not the Brains SA gold which tasted so nice.

If you get a chance, go and see P45, I reckon next time I see them they will play even more original stuff.

http://www.p45band.co.uk/fr_gigdates.cfm

Duncan, Feb 2012



The Amazing FSP The Golden Fleece 07/01/12

The first gig of the year saw Colin and myself at the Fleece for a night of Blues with the Amazing FSP. Colin's mate Rocky is the lead singer and harmonica player for this band so we went down there to support him as it was his first gig with them. A very strange night indeed, when you arrived it wasn't a blues audience in the pub, loads of young ladies in fancy dress. It was Dukes last night and a lot of people were stopping off at the Fleece before. The band came on and played a good set Including "Boom out go the lights," "Gangster of Love," "I wish you would," my favourite "All your love". They play good Rocky Blues, with a little bit of rhythm and blues and a slice of rock and roll thrown in. The songs come from Billy Boy Arnold, Johnny Guitar Watson, Gary Moore, Otis Rush and a host of others. As you would expect from a group that hail from the roots of the Thames Delta they are all great musicians and well schooled in the blues. The first set ended and my bro and me were eagerly awaiting the second set, when the pub manager done a Alex Harvey from there live album and declared "this concert is concert is cancelled" and pulled the plug on the band. Apparently he wanted to keep the Dukes crowd in at the expense of the blues crowd. I don't blame him really as there were only 6 of us. So off came the band and on came the sound system where we got Dexy's Midnight Runners.

Summing up a good band well worth seeing again but perhaps the wrong night for them. I hope they got paid. I don't blame the manager of the Fleece either as he has a business to run and they do give 10% discount on the beer to CAMRA members.

http://amazingfsp.com/index.html

Duncan, January 2012

The Wolfpack - New Crawdaddy Club

A new venue and a new band for us tonight. We have tried to find the New Crawdaddy before but have struggled in the darkness and always ended up at the Chequers in Billericay or down the Fleece. We made it this time and I am very glad we did. The club is a blues only place and it is on every Thursday night, it is a stop off for most blues band and artiste on their tours around the UK. I would think if you didn't like blues you would hate it here, luckily I do, even though I don't know much about it.

http://www.newcrawdaddyclub.co.uk

The band we went to see was The Wolfpack fronted by one of our favourite's Tim Aves. Tim is a great showman and harmonica player, has a big personality and is front man for the fantastic Automatic Slim. The band has the best shuffle drummer in Britain, Paul Lester (or so I was told that night, I'm not quite sure what one is though), A great bass guitarist Rob Barry and Hokie Joints, Joel Fisk on guitar. I wasn't sure what to expect as I wouldn't really fancy a night of authentic 50 to 60's blues. The band are named after Hubert Sumlin's band that formed after Howling Wolf died in 1976 (I looked that up on Wikepedia). I didn't need to worry though, what we got was 2 sets of blues, a fair slice of rhythm and lots of good humour and fun. As I said earlier, a lot of the songs I didn't know, I have heard them before but haven't got a clue what they are. I did recognise, "Back door man" "Killing floor" "Jesus just left Chicago" I think that's a ZZ Top song? A couple of Fabulous Thunderbirds tracks with "Smokestack lightning" as an encore. My favourite was one that I didn't know "Tail dragger." They are a great band who don't play that often so I would recommend that you see them when you get a chance.

http://timwolfpack.moonfruit.com

If I get the time I will definitely get to St Annes to see them on the 18th of February

Duncan, January 2012.





Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings Shepherds Bush Empire 09/03/12

This was a gig I had been looking forward for ages. The first time I ever heard of Sharon Jones was about 4 years ago. With MOJO magazine there is always a free CD, sometimes good, most times bad. Anyway the CD this time was all new soul acts that sounded as though they came from the golden age of soul, the late 60's and 70's. Sharon Jones was on this album playing what sounds like a 60's classic "100 days, 100 nights." Ever since then I have bought all of her CD's as soon as they come out. I have always missed her gigs when she comes to England due it not being the right time. This time I made the effort and was glad I did.

The Empire is a great venue, you can still hear the ghosts of Leslie Crowther and Peter Glaze shouting out Crackerjack, with all of those boy scouts in the audience shouting it back. Sharon Jones was different to the last time we had been there, as we watched the Stranglers last time. As usual I am pretty crap on set lists but she played "what if everybody stopped paying taxes," "100 hundred days," a lot of medleys of other peoples stuff, I recognised "Tighten up" up by Archie Bell and the Drells in there. There was a medley of singers who had passed away recently, so we had Etta James and Whitney Houston. I was quite surprised that Jimmy Castor wasn't mentioned as the Everything man died about a month ago. All in all it was a great gig, the Dap Kings are probably the best soul band about at the moment (I am sure Barry might argue that as he is off to see Tower of Power at the end of the month), Sharon Jones is one of the best singers and entertainers about in soul music at the moment as well. One thing surprised me was the age of the audience, I would have thought that with the kind of music on show it would have been a more mature crowd, surprisingly I was at least 25 years older than most of the people there. The only problem was that the sound in the theatre was awful, even thought it did get better towards the end of the show. We had a good dance, as the music will not let you do anything else and I will definitely make the next London tour.

Duncan, March 2012

The Mannequins Shake101 The Blue Beat Rooms, Billericay Football Club 20/04/12

First time to see bands at this venue; I have been here quite a few times before for football though. The venue is quite sizeable and hosts shows about once a month, normally 60's, mod influenced. Walking through the doors after paying £6 (well worth the money) you have the bar at one end. It serves no real ale but I am reliably informed that the Guinness is very palatable. I was at work early the next day so decided to drive, so I was full of cocacola. Opposite the bar is quite a large stage and the music that boomed out while the bands weren't on was late 60's early 70's reggae. I love this music and have quite a bit of it on vinyl and CD but I didn't recognise one song all night. So this is all good.

The first band who came on to celebrate St Georges day were the Mannequins, a three piece from Dagenham. A powerful group who played very fast RnB, lots of power chords and energy. What I liked about them was that they played most of their own music, so I can't tell you what the tracks were apart from "Keep on running" by the Spencer Davis Group and Stax fave, Eddie Floyd's "Big Bird". I don't know why more bands don't do the old soul records as covers, they are always good songs and you can make them yours by rocking them up. I thought they were a great band and will definitely go and see them again, it's just a shame that they had a bit of trouble with the mikes and cables. They are doing an acoustic soul set at the Blue Beat Rooms on the 26th of May which I would have loved to have gone to but I will be in Germany, so can't make it.
http://www.mannequinsuk.moonfruit.com/#

After a bit more reggae, Shake101 hit the stage. Different to the Mannequins as most of their songs were covers, maybe all of them. They started with a great energetic cover of Otis's "Shake" followed by Count Five's "Psychotic reaction". There were lots of other songs "Stepping Stone", A version of Barrett Strong's "Money", songs from the Who, Kinks, Small Faces, unusually the Sonics and ending with the only Beatles song that I like "Helter Skelter". They are a very loud and powerful band who are a 4 piece and create a huge wall of sound. Very smart dressers who look the part and could have come from the Mod era. I will also see this band again as well. They are playing at the Clay Pigeon in Chelmsford on the 28th of April so will try to make this one.

http://www.shake101.co.uk/



Summing up I will deffo go back to the Blue Beat Rooms, even though us people from the big city find it hard to get there and have to drive. The 2 bands are also on my watch list also, to see where they are playing.

The Blue Beat Rooms have a Mods Maydayer on the 26th of May featuring 5 live bands, a Mannequins acoustic set with a few DJ's as well, which I enjoy as they often play stuff that I haven't heard before. For the young at heart it starts at 1pm till 1am. For all of us married people 8pm sounds more reasonable.

Duncan, April 2012.



The 19th Lee Brilleaux Memorial Gig Oysterfleet Hotel, Canvey 04/05/12

It's that time of the year again when we travel to the Thames Delta to commemorate the life of Lee Brilleaux. This is always a good night, a great time with good friends and sometimes decent music. As per usual a nice early start at the pub and a taxi for the 20 mile journey to Oil City. The Oysterfleet is a strange pub, especially on this night, there are the local hoodlums with a sprinkling of assorted Belgium's, Dutch, German Feelgood fans and us. The unusual thing about this day was that it's always glorious sunshine and you can eat your gourmet burgers £3.99 in the garden. It was freezing and we all scrunched up in the bar. We did manage to carry out the traditional feeding of the carp in the massive lake at the back though. I must be getting old when I

Elvis Costello at Caesars Windsor Ontario

Having seen Costello many times over the year's and already seen him in Detroit on the "Spectacular Spinning Songbook" tour already in 2011 I knew what to expect.

As usual he lived up to expectation blasting through his extensive catalog of songs and interacting with his faithful admirers most of whom like me seemed to be of the vintage that have been following him for some considerable time!

... He started with a medley of "I hope you're happy now" (probably my favorite - although difficult to pick one song), Heart of the City and Mystery Dance (both from the first Album (My aim is true). He then went headlong into "Radio Radio" before pausing to start the audience participation part of the set where people are singled out to come and spin his multi colored wheel like a wheel of fortune - each segment having a song title or a "theme" such as "colors" for instance.

It is difficult to remember all the songs he played together with "The imposters" (Pete Thomas on drums and Steve Nieve on key boards from the original Attractions plus Davy Faragher on bass, but I know he played these:-

Everyday I write the book

Out of time (great cover of the Stones classic)

Man out of time

I want you

Stella hurt

Earthbound

Clubland

I can't stand up for falling down

Alison

Watching the Detectives

Tear off your own head (it's a doll revolution)

After nearly 2 hours of continuous great song after great song he finished with "Purple Rain" (yes that one) and left to great applause.

He came back and announced that he was playing the encore as a tribute to a good friend of his Levon Helm (drummer and founder member of The Band) who had passed away 2 days earlier. What a great encore it was - he played a spine tingling version of The Band's "Tears of Rage" before finishing, inevitably, with "What's so funny about Peace Love and Understanding".

The tour now heads to the UK so I recommend you Chelmsford guys get out and see him if you can get a ticket!

Julian Dench April 2012

look forward to this. In the bar I met the tallest man I have ever seen and managed to get my pic taken with him so the night was a success already. He was over 7 foot and came from Holland.

I missed the first band the Mosquito's, it's a shame because I am sure I have seen them at the Fleece before and they are a very good band. They play a more punkier sort of rock than the normal RnB we get at this event. I did see the next band though, the Peccadilloes (that's a hard one to spell). Last time I saw them, I think was here a couple of years before with ex Feelgood guitarist Gordon Russell. Gordon is still with them and you can see why he was picked to play with the band after Gypie left. They were good then and they were good now. Only Ash and myself bothered to leave the bar to see them and I think the others missed out. A good band, well worth seeing, they play RnB but it has a slighter hadrer edge to it.

Next on were the Kursal Flyers, typical Pub Rock before the Feelgoods came on the scene, plenty of Country and Western influenced music and of course "Little does she Know". The crowd enjoyed them but not my cup of tea. They were here last year and I thought the same then.

The Wilko Johnson Band was next, it's a shame as he was the only original Feelgood to turn up. Apparently Sparko and the Figure were in France, it will be a pity as a lot of us old time Feelgood fans from the 70's like to turn up to see them 3 perform in their pomp. Anyway back to Wilko, sometimes you see him and he is just ok, other times he is electrifying and this was one of the latter. I think he has issues with the new band, when you read interviews with him, but whatever it was he was fantastic. As you know I am shit on set lists so he started with "All through the City" and I know I heard "Back in the night" and he had the fellow on, who I think should be with them all the time, I don't know his name but he plays the Harmonica, he came on for a great rendition of "Roxette," There was all the old Wilko, strutting about on stage with loads of energy. He is quite lucky though with his band though, as Dylan Howe is a super drummer and in my opinion, Sir Norman Watt-Roy is the best and sweatiest Bass guitarist on this planet, also a bloody nice bloke with Paul Eagle coming a close second in Bass stakes.

Next up the main event, The Dr Feelgood cover band. I do try to like these blokes and I do think they are a decent band, and up to about the third track I was enjoying it, who can't dance to "Baby Jane" well I can't, but I try. After this the Rhythm disappeared and they became a blues band with a bit of mindless boogie thrown in. They are not like the old band so should really change their name, I would still go to watch them but I wouldn't be comparing them all the time. Still I shouldn't think they give a damn what I think. I must admit when the 20 minute guitar solo "Down by the Jetty Blues" started , I retired to the bar downstairs , funnily enough most of my chums were there as well. I got the highlight of the night here, my picture with Norman Watt-Roy (spaghetti) and an autographed ticket. I also got a bit embarrassed as I was caught trying to nick a poster off the wall by the Landlady of the pub. Apparently you had to pay a fiver for them and she gave me a telling off. Who pays for posters anyway??

Summing up a great night in the company of good friends, fantastic music in parts. The Pro's were the Peccadilloes, the Wilko Johnson Band, Doom Bar at the Plough and a good night out. The cons were the line up was nearly the same as last year without Wilko and Lew Lewis playing instead. No Sparko or Figure and most importantly no Mad Bob the Fluteman, I hope he is ok. I will definitely return next year, it's for a good charity and you never know who is going to turn up. It might be Nick Lowe next year.

Duncan, May2012.

One Step Behind Chelmsford Beer Festival 14/07/12

Yes, you guessed it a Madness tribute. These were at my favourite Chelmsford event of the year, the Summer Beer Festival. Imagine my surprise when my wife Lee suggested Saturday evening that we went to the fest. It didn't take much to persuade me as I had already spent an enjoyable night there on the Friday. Then we saw the excellent covers band Happy Hour. Reviewed last year by my little brother Colin.

Anyway I started off, on an excellent pint of Woodfordes Wherry. I can only ever remember the first one I drink. The outside of the beer tent was a bit of a quagmire and inside where the bands play wasn't a lot better. It's amazing what footwear people wear, I saw people with flipflops and women with high heels on. I also tried chilli chocolate, this has put me off chocs for life, I couldn't



New Town Kings The Golden Fleece 27/07/12

What do you do when you have a chance of watching the opening ceremony of the Olympics or seeing live music at the Fleece. Only one winner and a lot of other people must have thought the same as the Fleece was packed. It was the Bay Days weekend festival with three days of free music. Being an old geezer I can only make one night and I was well chuffed to be there on the Friday night. When I arrived there was a great punk/ska/pop band on the stage, the Jellycats. A good fun band, sound a little bit like Xray Spex goes reggae, real good fun and will be well worth a second watch.

Next on were the band that I have wanted to see for quite a time, the New Town Kings. I missed them last time they played the Fleece getting there as they were packing up, my loss. I have heard lots of good things about this band and they didn't disappoint. I knew that there lead singer had quit recently so was interested in the new chap. Very good, probably more at home with soul but he fit in fantastically well with the rest of the band. I didn't know any of the songs they played so I can't give you a set list, but suffice to say it was all good. Think of an English version of the Skatelites and you wont be far away. The crowd enjoyed the set, as you could see by the mosh pit style dancing. Luckily enough, the stage is set up in the garden so it means a lot of people can enjoy the music. It was absolutely packed and a good time was had by all. I will go and see the New Town Kings again and would thoroughly recommend them to everyone.

Well done to the Fleece for putting this event on, I think it is my favourite Chelmsford Pub, there is normally live music on and they have a good selection of ale on tap.

Duncan, July 2012

breathe and had hiccups for 10 minutes after eating the smallest piece possible.

The band came on and played 2 sets, as usual I'm shit on play lists, but all of the faves were played, my mate Pascal said to me that he only knew 6 Madness songs, by the end of the night he remembered a lot more. All of the hits were played as well as some less well recalled early album tracks and at lease one track from The Liberty of Norton Folgate, the latest album. The band are excellent and too easily danceable. I thought they were a lot more lively than the originals when they played on top of Buckingham Palace. They should have changed the lyrics to "It must be love," to " it must be mud," because by the end the dance floor was as muddy as a Glastonbury Festival. They finished up with "One step Beyond" and "Night boat to Cairo" with the apt words of half past monsoon. While there I thought of a new fitness class, dancing in the mud, I reckon you must burn loads of calories trying to skank in 3 inches of mud.

All in all an enjoyable night with good company, it has me looking forward to watching the real thing at V in August, I also see they are playing the Touchline club at Hullbridge later in the year. A good venue for this band if they don't put in the tables out.

http://www.myspace.com/onestepbehinduk

http://www.touchlinelivemusic.co.uk/gig-guide/

Duncan, July 2012

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