

The latest news on Folk Rock band, >Merry Hell<

>Merry Hell<

News - April 2013



It's New and It's Beautiful!

We are moving ever closer to the release of the new >Merry Hell< album, "Head Full of Magic, Shoes Full Of Rain". As we mentioned last time, album reviews for the influential folk magazines are written months in advance of publication so review copies are already in circulation and feedback so far has been very positive. As you can see we now have the cover, the album has been mastered and everyone is thrilled with the results.

We ask you to be patient for a little longer as the album will only be officially released in May but you can now pre-order at the web site and if at all possible we will get the pre-orders out to you as soon as the album arrives at >Merry Hell< HQ, even if that turns out to be slightly earlier than May! We can also exclusively reveal the track listing!

Loving The Skin You're In
Dreaming of The Time
Let's Not Have A Morning After (Until We've Had A Night Before)
Bury Me Naked
My Finest Hour
Emerald Green
Hope You Don't Mind
Waiting For The River
I Never Loved Anybody (Like I Love You)
Let The Music Speak
Build A Mansion
Roseanna (Let Me In)
Lay Your Head Down
Iron Man

Those of you who have been to see the band on a regular basis will already be familiar with several of the new songs. Lee's "Lay Your Head Down" has often been played at shows in 2012 and at early dates on the Crazy Angels tour with Virginia's "Morning After" (for short) also featuring regularly in the set at recent shows. The studio version can boast the splendid fiddle playing of Dave Swarbrick which definitely adds another dimension to an already infectious song. Many of you will be pleased to see the evergreen "Iron Man" on the album, which, to quote Hovis, is "as good today as it's always been". The new version reflects the more acoustic driven >Merry Hell< arrangement of the song which, as you would expect, still packs a punch and provides an upbeat close to the album. John has also raided his post-Tansads song catalogue resulting in the fabulous "Roseanna, (Let Me In)". With a foot tapping tempo and a killer chorus hook it is sure to be a favourite.

As well as providing the album title, Bob's "I've Never Loved Anybody (Like I Love You)" is unlike anything else on the album. Building from a refreshingly sparse arrangement based around strummed acoustic guitar and some subtle bass playing from Andrew Dawson it lays the foundations for a great vocal from Andrew. Virginia's contributions are many and varied but two to watch out for which haven't been aired as yet deal with couples being separated. The poignant folk ballad, "Emerald Green" is the story of a husband and wife separated by war, Virginia and Andrew sharing the lead vocals on this one. On a lighter note, "My Finest Hour" sees a courting couple kept apart by the girl's domineering mother. Another lively folk-rock hybrid which will need no introduction when performed live starting as it does with Andy pounding out the drum intro over Lee's pulsing keyboard. As we said last time, every song has earned its place and there were a few strong submissions that didn't quite make it but they may still surface in the future?

We should also explain a little about the late change of album title and the new cover. Initially the album was going to be called "Bury Me Naked", as we revealed quite some time ago. However, it was felt that the song might steer listeners too directly towards the folkier side of the band. Pleased though we were with Brian Cannon's original cover, it didn't feature everyone, just Bob, which wasn't really representative of the band as a whole. After discussions with our record company we arrived at the new cover you see here and a new title. Brian's efforts were very much appreciated and his work will still feature in the form of the band photo in the CD booklet which many of you will be pleased to hear will feature all the lyrics this time. See, we do listen!

While you wait for the album why not sample the free download of "Dreaming of The Time" which is currently available from the web site.

The Crazy Angels Tour, 2013...Continues

FRIDAY 5TH APRIL - RAWTENSTALL - THE CROWN (with Panjenix)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Crown/216026161745950>

SATURDAY 6TH APRIL - DERBY - THE FLOWERPOT

<https://sites.google.com/site/theflowerpotpub/>

MONDAY 15TH APRIL - CONWY FOLK CLUB

<http://www.conwyfolkclub.org.uk/index.htm>

SATURDAY 20TH APRIL - LEEK - FOXLOWE ARTS CENTRE

<http://www.foxloweartscentre.org.uk/>

SUNDAY 21ST APRIL - WALLASEY - FOLK & ACOUSTIC CLUB

<https://www.facebook.com/wallaseyfolkacoustic.livemusicclub>

THURSDAY 2ND MAY - WREXHAM - FOLK & ACOUSTIC CLUB

<http://www.myspace.com/wrexhamfolkacoustic>

SUNDAY 5th MAY - BRAMPTON, CUMBRIA

STEPPING STONES FESTIVAL

>Merry Hell< to appear at the evening session from 7pm

<http://www.steppingstonesfestival.co.uk/>

SATURDAY 11TH MAY - CAMP FRACK

MERE BROW, TARLETON, LANCASHIRE

<http://www.campaigncc.org/campfrack2>

SUNDAY 25TH MAY - CHESTER FOLK FESTIVAL

<http://www.chesterfolk.org.uk/>

**SUNDAY 26TH MAY - OFF THE TRACKS - SPRING FESTIVAL
DONNINGTON**

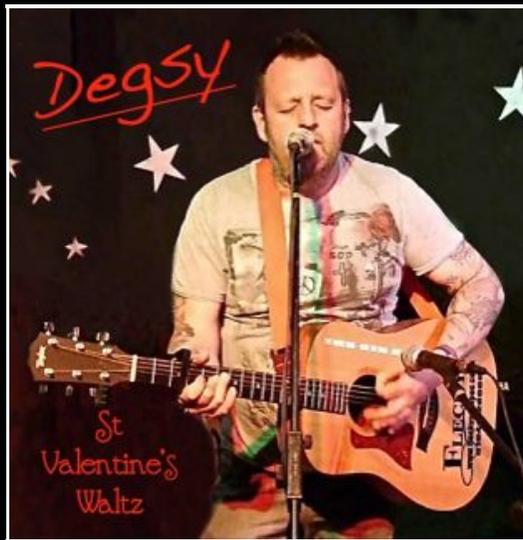
<http://www.offthetracks.co.uk/>

SATURDAY 1ST JUNE - GLASTONWICK, COOMBES, WEST SUSSEX

<http://www.cask-ale.co.uk/beerfestival.html>

**SUNDAY 2ND JUNE - ACOUSTIC FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN
UTTOXETER RACECOURSE**

<http://www.acousticfestival.co.uk/>



We can report that one of the Merry Hell road crew recently made his recording debut. Derek Eccleston, better known to many of you as 'Degsy', spent some time with John at Jaraf House studio where he recorded 3 songs. One of the songs will be of great interest as it was written by Virginia and features John on guitar. "St Valentine's Waltz" was among the songs considered for the new >Merry Hell< album and though it didn't make the final selection, John thought it would be ideally suited to Degsy's dulcet tones. Those of you who have picked up the single at the early shows will agree that Degs has certainly done it justice and has performed the song live at several of the early dates.

>MERRY HELL< LIVE



The first gig of the year was the band's 2nd visit to The Plough in **Oswaldtwistle** on 5th January. The first time we played upstairs the plaster was still drying on the walls, this time a 6 piece incarnation of the band, minus drums, played in the main bar downstairs. As usual at our north Lancashire gigs the crowd were on great form joining in with the band on the likes of "Lean On Me", "Iron Man" and "One More Day" and were suitably rewarded with an extra encore in the shape of "Up The Revolution".

The Crazy Angels tour kicked off in the small but perfectly formed Dog & Partridge in **Bolton**. It was great to see the venue packed to the rafters and after such a long lay off for the album recording it was evident that everyone was more than ready to raise >Merry Hell<! With the front of the audience standing toe to toe with Andrew and Virginia and singing every word with them it made for a great atmosphere. It was of course the first chance to hear some brand new material - the hard rocking "Dreaming of The Time", the quirky "Loving The Skin You're In" and the driving Lee/Bob collaboration "Waiting For The River". All three are very upbeat and saw John back on the electric guitar for a large part of the show.



Our third visit to Number 39 in **Darwen** was as lively as ever with lots of familiar faces

from our other gigs in the area. With the venue crammed full to bursting it was standing room only with the only real space being onstage. Virginia managed not to punch the overhead stage light this time and for those nearest the door there was a rare chance to see the normally hidden territory of the back line where Lee occupied himself between keyboard parts with some impromptu cymbal crashes on the drum kit.



The first gig in March was at **Widnes** for a benefit show in aid of Papyrus, an organisation for the prevention of young suicide. Great to see a full house for this one and seasoned >Merry Hell< watchers agreed that the band were on especially good form for this one. The sound was excellent and the crowd invaded the dance floor at regular intervals. Check out the version of "[Morning After](#)" on the Merry Hell Archive Channel on youtube. We hear that over £1000 was raised for Papyrus which is a tremendous effort. Congratulations to organisers Ste Flynn and Graeme Scragg and thanks for inviting us to play.



Next up was a third visit to the Sun Inn in **Llangollen**. This one marked the debut of the band's newest addition - a brand new Banjitar. For those who weren't there to witness the new songs, notably "Loving The Skin You're in", the banjitar combines a banjo body with the neck of a guitar, in this case the banjo body is also built inside a guitar body. Having a guitar neck the instrument has the same tuning as a guitar but provides a banjo sound to the guitarist. Of course John plays banjo and owned one during the Tansads era - and you will hear plenty on the new album - but as he is tied up with the main

guitar parts on the new songs it has fallen to Virginia to learn the banjo parts on the banjitar.



Then it was on to Leigh's premier music pub, The Avenue. The event marked the launch of Degsy's single "St Valentine's Waltz" and he played a short support set accompanied on fiddle and acoustic guitar by musician, John Brindley. Nice to see some familiar faces in attendance including one or two Tansads veterans witnessing their first >Merry Hell< show and leaving suitably impressed! Thanks to everyone who came out on Sunday night to enjoy the gig despite the risk of a Monday morning hangover!

Another visit to the 'Wagon & Horses' in **Salford** followed our now customary pre-show appearance on Salford City Radio's "Salford Folk" with Dave and Ellie. Virginia, Andrew John and Bob performed acoustic versions of "One More Day", "Rosanna's Song", "Bury Me Naked", "Drunken Serenade" and "This Time" before playing them (and other favourites) again in front of the Wagon crowd later that evening. The radio appearance also featured a world exclusive airing for the new album's opening track "Loving The Skin You're in" and a custom jingle version of the Decree. The show (dated 14th March) may be still available on the Listen Again facility. Search for Salford Folk and use the Listen Again link under the presenter's photo to link to previous folk shows rather than the button bottom left.

We returned to the Zoo Bar in St Helens after an enjoyable first visit in 2011 and it proved to be fun once again. After quite a few floor level gigs recently with the audience on eye level with the band it was good to see them up on a stage again. As ever with our St Helens gigs the audience response was fantastic with marvelous massed singing on "Iron Man" and "One More Day" and a respectable number of Hells Belles shimmying their way through "Let The Music Speak".



The Banjitar at The Zoo Bar

Finally there was a return to Ruthin All Styles Music Club for the four piece acoustic band. As I was unable to be there can I point you to a review by Chris Birchall - aka The Hairy Photographer - who also took photos at the show which you can find here. <http://hairyphotographer.co.uk/merry-hell/>

We hope that by the time the next newsletter is due you will all be enjoying the new album. We promise it will be worth the wait! Just in case you need yet another reminder to order the album.....Jonah



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