

# >Merry Hell<

....NEWS....JULY, 2011



## “Sell Out!”

A massive thanks to everyone who joined us at the Citadel to launch the band in style and help us to sell out our debut gig!



It was great to see so many old friends and meet a few new ones and thanks to all those who joined in with the red & black theme of the evening. We did hope to have the album out beforehand but it wasn't possible. We still felt confident that the new songs would work well on stage and were thrilled to see such a great response to the new material! Of course the old Tansads standards got the crowd fired up - Fear of Falling, G-Man, English Rover, Iron Man & Up The Revolution - but it was great to see new songs like This Time, Gentle Man, Blink, War Between Ourselves, Lean On Me and One More Day get the audience moving and we are sure that once the album is out many of these songs will themselves become crowd pleasers.

## “Album Deal”

We are delighted to announce that >Merry Hell< have been offered a contract with renowned folk label 'Mrs Casey Music' to release the band's debut album "BLINK...and you miss it" later in the year. Ever since their very positive response to the band's demo CD's we have felt all along that Mrs Casey were people we wanted to work with and their knowledge of the folk scene will be invaluable to us. We look forward to a happy and fruitful relationship with our new label!

## “Moorlands Radio”

The day after the Citadel gig John, Bob, Virginia and Andrew paid a visit to our old friend Simon Jones at Moorlands Radio to appear on Simon's "Moorlands Roots" programme. The show was streaming live on the internet and featured a more than ample portion of >Merry Hell<, opening with 'One More Day' from the band's 'Introducing..' promo CD. 'The War Between Ourselves' was played just before an interview with the band and Virginia's "Bury Me Naked", from the free "Red & Black Extra" CD, was also aired.

The stripped down combo then played a live acoustic session but not before a hasty rewrite in order to take the word "bastard" out of the song "Satisfied". After many suggestions "somebody" was the chosen replacement.

OK so it wasn't Rage Against The Machine at the BBC but on this occasion we were, as always, so grateful to Simon for his help and support that we didn't want to abuse either his faith in us or his listeners' sensibilities.

The live session also featured "This Time" and "Drunken Serenade". Sadly the appearance was arranged too late for the last newsletter, so we were unable to let everyone know but we hope some of you caught it and we have been promised a copy of the recording which we can put on the web. The band were also invited back when the album is released so that's something else to look forward to. As ever, thanks to Simon for inviting us along and for his continued support of the band.

## "St Helens Citadel Review"

The much anticipated unveiling of **>Merry Hell<** finally came to pass at a sold out Citadel in St. Helens on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April, and it's true to say no-one left disappointed. As the venue for the final gig for The Tansads, this metamorphosis featured the new material which will shape the identity and hopefully broad appeal of the new band, whilst still holding on tightly to the soul and integrity that gave the Tansads such a strong diehard fan base.

The splendidly good time opener 'Drunken Serenade' gave a notable nod to what can be expected from the new album. Andrew Kettle's raucously rasping vocal pulls along a song that greets you like an old friend, something startling true of each new song unwrapped before its willing audience.

'Crooked Man', a melodically hypnotic attack on the bankers that led many to financial ruin, introduced itself as an instant crowd favourite. 'Rosanna's Song', highlights the bands ability to seamlessly dip into the more sparse arrangement when required, whilst paradoxically 'Over The Border' led by Bob Kettle's magical mandolin has a gloriously expansive canvas. 'War Between Ourselves', with John Kettle's searing guitar and social observation, shows Merry Hell can stride along a rocky edge if needed. And they kept coming, from Virginia Kettle's wonderfully ironic 'Butcher And The Vegan' to 'The Gentle Man', keyboard player Lee Gouldings ebullient tribute to his grandfather. 'Lean On Me' and 'This Time' bounced along effortlessly, whilst Andrew and Virginia traded lead vocals on the debut albums wittily fatalistic title track 'Blink And You Miss It'.

Interspersed with the new material came glorious Tansads staples, 'Fear Of Falling', 'G Man', 'Satisfied' and the punk roots inspired 'Iron Man', all greeted with near manic enthusiasm by everyone present. The set was completed by the new near-as-we-dare pop feel of 'One More Day', before John Kettle took the stage alone with 'Horses'. 'Up The Revolution' anthemically completed the encore and a memorable night.

With bassist Andrew Dawson, drummer Phil Knight and rhythm guitarist Tim Howard providing Merry Hell's solid foundation the rest are free to replicate the good time feel so fundamental to the Tansads reputation. Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April at The Citadel had all the feel of an 'I was there' night, and the anticipation that something significant lies on Merry Hells coming horizon.

**Review by Paul Arris** - Thanks Paul, an honour to be reviewed by a scriptwriter for "Shameless" no less!

# HAIGH FEST

With the Wigan Legion gig already announced the band were delighted to secure a spot on the bill at this year's Haigh Fest at Haigh Hall, Wigan on Sunday 3rd July. It was something of a goal the band had set themselves and they are thrilled to realise that ambition in their first year. This is now your next chance to catch the **>Merry Hell<** live experience and we hope to see as many of you as possible. **>Merry Hell<** will be the final band on the day with the projected stage time being shortly after seven, depending on previous acts running to schedule.



It costs a mere £2 to get in so why not make a day of it and get there early to enjoy the other local bands on the bill. As you wander around Haigh Fest enjoying the bands be sure to keep an eye open for our very own promotion girls - our 'Merry Belles' you might say - who will be wandering the festival grounds dispensing good cheer and looking for new recruits to our mailing list. If you have friends with you who aren't signed up then get them to join - its free!

Haigh Fest will also be your first chance to get your hands on the brand new, limited edition "Hometown Extra" CD which you can read more about below. We hope to be selling T-shirts and tickets for the Wigan Legion show.

## “WIGAN LEGION SHOW”

Photo - Al Balmer

>Merry Hell< will play their first full Wigan show at the Wigan Legion on July 15th. **TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE!** Check the web site and facebook pages for ticket details. Unfortunately, the Legion is an 18+ venue and children aren't allowed in so book your babysitters early to avoid disappointment! This will be a full show as opposed to the limited time we are allowed at Haigh Fest and there will be a couple of supports on the night who will be announced shortly on the web site. Speaking of which....

## “NEW WEB SITE”

Look out for the all new, >Merry Hell< web site which has now gone live. Brilliantly designed by Julian Watts at Joolz Design and featuring the superb photography of Alex Taylor and Dave Glossop it is packed full of all the latest Merry Hell news, band info, photos and our very own shop. We think you'll be very impressed! [www.merryhell.co.uk/](http://www.merryhell.co.uk/)

## “HOMETOWN EXTRA”

We are pleased to announce a special CD release to coincide with the band's appearance at Haigh Fest and the Wigan Legion show. “Hometown Extra” will include two more taster tracks from the forthcoming album “Blink...and you miss it” and two brand new tracks which are being specially recorded by the band for this release. Virginia's “Let The Music Speak For Itself” is likely to have audiences everywhere on their feet and will definitely become a live favourite. Bob has penned yet another unforgettable melodic gem with ‘Dreaming of the Time’ which can only be described as a typical Bob song - your guarantee of a great melody and an upbeat mood!



## “Tansads Archive CD”

For those who simply can't get enough Tansads we have started digging through the archives with a view to putting together a 2nd CD in the 'Rough And Ready' series featuring songs recorded by the **Flock** and **Drag Down the Moon** line ups. We hope the majority of the material will be unreleased but this will depend on the quality of the surviving recordings. The band recorded some very interesting material during this period which was every bit as strong as the songs that made it onto the albums. There are some real gems to be found including the likes of “Scottie”, “Marigold”, Bob's “Storm Song”, originally recorded for possible inclusion on Flock, and the French cover version, ‘La Route’. All of these are being considered for the CD.

## “Reunion Concerts DVD”

It might be over a year since the Tansads reunion gigs but we can finally announce the long awaited release of the Reunion Concerts DVD. The band hope to gather in early July for the World Premier at a secret location on the outskirts of Wigan and if all is well the DVD should be on sale at the Legion gig on July 15th. For those who can't be there you can get it via the shop on the new web site

A huge thanks to Steve Edwards who went above and beyond the call of duty to put this together! It should be a great souvenir of the reunion shows and indeed the build up beforehand with rehearsal footage and interviews with all those involved, on stage and behind the scenes. The DVD will also feature the dulcet tones of Mr Damian Liptrot who will draw upon his experience as a local radio presenter to be your narrator throughout the proceedings!



## “Damian's Digest”

It will not be often that we include a link to photographs of naked people in the >Merry Hell</Tansads newsletter - but I will make an exception on this occasion. Reading through the BBC website I saw article about the road rage protest in London where cyclists had ridden past Buckingham Palace on the Queen's birthday wearing nothing but a smile whilst celebrating her day in song. The purpose of all this was to draw attention to the problems of being a cyclist in a major city and is part of a worldwide movement. My eyes were drawn to this, not by the copious amount of flesh on display - surely that's not what the internet is for - but because a number of the Merry Hell/Tansads extended family are keen cyclists and also the fact that when I read the article it mentioned the organiser Jesse Schust and I thought that I recognised the name. Having checked through my emails I found that I had recently sold a copy of the Rough and Ready CD to someone of that name and so, having emailed the Jesse in question, I received a reply that confirmed that the Jesses were one and the same and sent me the following link. So, respect is due to Jesse for his commitment and front - most of which we can see - but really, with hair like that, no one will notice that you are not wearing clothes. LINK:

<http://www.itn.co.uk/home/20978/Naked+bikers+sing+Queen+birthday+song>

## “Roadrunner”

Finally, a big thanks to all of you who have supported my fund raising activities in the recent past. I am now moving on to a 5k run on Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup> in Blackpool and then the biggie (for me) of the 10k in Gateshead on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July. I will be undertaking these to raise cash for The British Heart Foundation. Some of you will know the history behind this but I am happy to receive any donations through my just giving page at <http://www.justgiving.com/Damian-Liptrot0>

**“Order Stuff”** To order the ‘Reason To Be’ and ‘Rough And Ready’ CD's or Tansads T-shirts (see 1st newsletter) please send a cheque or postal order made payable to **Peter Liptrot** to: *Peter Liptrot, 4 Wilson Avenue, Wigan, Lancs WN6 7HD*  
Words - Paul Arris, Damian & Jonah, Design - Jonah, Photos Courtesy of Alex Taylor, Al Balmer & Damian