

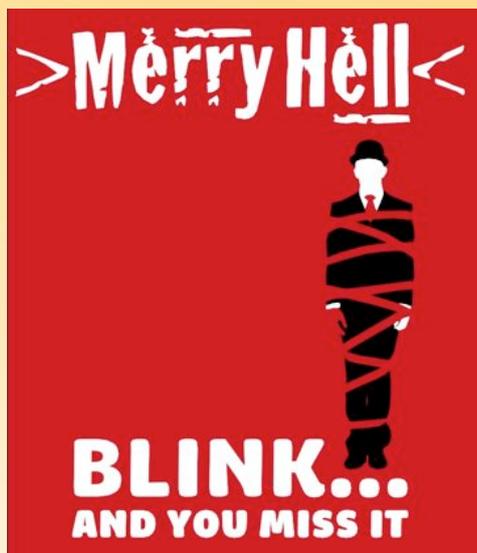


>Merry Hell<

...NEWS...
JUNE 2012

“Summer Is A-rising”

With the Summer finally threatening to materialise after a pretty miserable May the band are gearing up for a busy few months as we take the Blink album out to the masses on the festival circuit. We will be out and about at various folk festivals throughout June, July and August and we are all very excited by the prospect. We dipped a toe into the festival waters with 2 appearances at Cromer over the weekend of 12th May, read more about this below. We are travelling far and wide so hopefully those of you who aren't local will be able to catch the band somewhere. Look out for >Merry Hell< at The Stockport Beer Festival, Darwen Live, The Big Session festival at Walton-on-Trent, Middlewich Folk & Boat Festival, The Willowman Festival in Northallerton, Yorkshire, the Tolpudde Martyrs festival in the town of the same name, Abbeyfest in Bury St Edmunds and the Whickham Festival in Hampshire. Check the web site for dates and the individual festival sites for more details of stage times and when exactly >Merry Hell< will be appearing. We have a new T-Shirt (below) available for the Summer festivals. Our bass player, the one and only, Andrew Dawson and soon to be Mrs Dawson, Claire, collaborated with web maestro, Julian Watts, on the design. Who was it that said “We don't do fashion..”? Well we do now! We hope to see many you wearing these on our travels as we celebrate the album one more time!



One Festival we are particularly looking forward to is **The Big Session**. We are playing both Friday and Saturday but there are other 'fringe events' taking place. Andrew Dawson, has decided to have his stag night at the festival, which could be quite interesting! Also celebrating is one of our >Merry Hell< regulars, Janie Rushin. Many of you will know Janie and Raven from the gigs and may even have worn one of their glamorous red hats at some point. Janie won't mind us telling you that she celebrates a major birthday and has invited Merry Hell fans at the festival to join her. She might even have a drink or two if she isn't driving!

“Band Back On A Run”

Thanks to those of you who sent get well messages to the band's manager, Damian, who as you can see below, is back in business after being laid low for weeks by a particularly nasty viral chest infection. The timing couldn't have been worse with Damian masterminding the “Band On A Run” Project and overseeing the organisation we had no other option but to postpone it. The song was ready, the runners were ready, the band was ready but no one was ready for the virus! The Hebden Bridge gig that was to mark the start of the event did go ahead as planned and we had a great night.



The Leeds-Liverpool Canal run is now back on track and likely to be scheduled for a weekend in late October. We hope that all of you who signed up originally are still able to join us. The new date will be announced as soon as we can confirm it.

Speaking of runs. Congratulations to Andrew who completed the Great Manchester Run on Sunday 19th May in a very respectable hour and six minutes. As you may know Andrew is raising money for the Stroke Association and wanted to say how grateful he is to everyone who has donated online. He also raised £200 in cash on the day. The fundraising is still ongoing so anyone wishing to donate can still do so at www.justgiving.com/BandOnaRun

“A Word From Damian...”

Whilst our recent trip to Cromer rekindled memories of long trips in the Tansads tour buses, as we reclined in the comfortable seats in the lounge area of the van, working together as a band to complete The Telegraph prize crossword before moving on to The Times cryptic version, one couldn't help but think that something was not quite right. Travelling that mighty long way down folk and roll gave a little time for reflection and the insight gradually dawned. Not only was nobody sliding open the side door to relieve themselves whilst held securely by the belt but when we did stop at the services and opened the doors, no rolling cloud of smoke preceded our emergence from the van. You may have your opinion as to whether this is a good or a bad thing but it does tell us that the times are indeed a changin'.

>Merry Hell< LIVE



Cromer marked the start of a busy festival season for >Merry Hell< and with the band playing on both Saturday and Sunday it called for an overnight stay and a tour bus! We loaded up the equipment and supplies and set off for the long drive to Norfolk.

It was nice to see the Sun out as we arrived at North Lodge Park, the site hosting the Marquee where Saturday's event was to be held. With festival goers wandering the grounds or stood outside enjoying the beers from the real ale bar it felt as if Summer was finally here.

After setting up and soundchecking it was off to find our digs for the night which we managed to do eventually. No sooner had we checked in than Andrew and Lee were off out! The expansive promenade along the sea front proving too tempting for such seasoned runners so they decided to get a stint in before the show. Andrew returned alone as Lee carried on which is the reason he was running late and is missing from the band photo above.

After a welcome stop en route for fish and chips we assembled at the Marquee. By the time >Merry Hell< hit the stage the temperature had plummeted and it was cold enough to see off a few festival goers. You could even see Andrew's breath as he sang the opening lines to the Decree. Those that stayed certainly enjoyed themselves and when we arrived at set closer, 'One More Day' we hoped the dancers were compelled to hit the floor by our music and not by the need to keep warm! Some of the band stayed on to sample the beer and the Ceilidh band who ended the night but the cold drove them back early!

>Merry Hell<

On The Road - June

Stockport Beer Festival - Edgeley Park
Saturday 2nd June from 11.30 am - Entry £2

Darwen Live - Main Stage
Market Square - Monday 4th June

The Big Session Festival
Friday & Saturday 15th/16th June

Middlewich Folk & Boat Festival
Saturday 17th June from 1.00pm

Conwy Civic Hall
Friday 22nd June

Willowman Festival - Northallerton
Sunday 24th June



Folk on The Pier - Cromer 12th & 13th May, 2012

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijAJnypbL4A>

The Sun was still shining on Sunday and after a hearty breakfast - courtesy of our hosts, Pam & Terry at the Fernleigh - and a stroll on the prom, the band drove to the pier to unload their gear for the soundcheck. We were met by two rickety looking wooden carts and the festival road crew. Despite such seemingly basic equipment the crew were a well oiled machine and had all the equipment out of the van, down the pier and into the theatre in no time. Most impressive!

The 500 seat Pavilion theatre was splendid, all red seating and drapes and with fabulous acoustics as revealed at the soundcheck. We were most impressed to discover that we had TWO dressing rooms! Also backstage was Richard Digance, spotted just before his excellent set had the crowd in stitches!

As on many other occasions this was a new audience for the band and though a well behaved, fully seated audience is not what we are used to we got a great response. The opening salvo of 'This Time' and 'Drunken Serenade' drew loud applause from the sell out crowd. 'Crooked Man' was next up followed by 'Rosanna's Song', a joy to witness before such an attentive audience. 'Lean On Me', 'War' and 'Over the Border' were among the other highlights. Sadly the tight schedule didn't allow for an encore but we received a warm ovation and healthy CD sales afterwards were evidence of the band's ability to impress the uninitiated!

We really must applaud the festival organisation. Everyone from the road crew, the sound engineers, the security and hospitality backstage and the merchandise outlet! Everything ran smoothly and it certainly showed that the close knit team behind the scenes have been running the event for some years. Thanks to everyone involved for looking after us we really enjoyed the weekend!

"Gig Summary"

We must mention other gigs we've enjoyed since the last newsletter, the **Sun Inn** at Llangollen, being a welcome return. A successful visit to **The Flowerpot** in Derby on St Patrick's Day was our first since the final Tansads line up played there in the late 90's and earned us a great review in R2 (Rock n Reel) Magazine! At **Skelmersdale Engine Rooms** we played with Roughneck Riot, a fiery, folk mix of The Clash, The Pogues and Motorhead! They have recorded an album at Jaraf with one John Kettle producing! Our first visit to the **Zoo Bar** in St Helens was a memorable one. Very much a home crowd and an electric atmosphere. A similar story at **Standish Unity Club** as the evening ended with the crowd invading the dance floor, arms aloft to 'Up The Revolution'. Organisers of the Coppull Folk Festival raised a healthy amount on the night! **Hebden Bridge Trades Club** proved to be another good night where we were visited by ex-Tansad, David Atherton (aka Shrub). We even played on the back of a lorry in an unseasonably chilly **Chesterfield** where the band kept their coats on onstage apart from Lee who seemed strangely immune to the biting wind? Thanks to everyone who has been out to see the band, now lets raise >Merry Hell< at the festivals this Summer!

Acoustic >Merry Hell<



A five piece >Merry Hell<, with Andrew Dawson (on acoustic bass) joining the Kettle contingent, returned to **Northwich Folk Club** for a full set following the band's successful support slot back in 2011. A packed room was evidence of the band's growing popularity and they weren't disappointed. The band ran through most of the usual favourites from the 'Blink...' album with the lighter material like 'Rosanna's Song' and 'Lean On Me' sounding especially good. There was also an outing for 'The Butcher & The Vegan' which was perfectly suited to the folk club atmosphere. The tempo did pick up later with a smattering of Tansads favourites. Virginia was so keen to announce 'IRON MAN!' that she did so about three songs before everyone else was due to play it but when it did finally arrive it was just as enthusiastically received! 'Let The Music Speak...' sparked an outbreak of sultry dancing at the back of the room and a glass smashed behind the bar right on cue with the "I learned to Kick It" line! A rousing "Up The Revolution" closed things in fine style before John was hounded back on stage for "Horses" which he described as an old, traditional Tansads song and the one song the band allowed him to sing. The communal singalong provided a perfect end to the proceedings. No late night liggering after the show though as the band were up early the next day for the long journey down to Cromer.

"tansads Downloads"

As reported previously we were hoping the Tansads audience would stick with us when >Merry Hell< began but we hadn't expected a growing interest in the Tansads from people who had happened upon >Merry Hell< first. Just in case anyone didn't know, the first four Tansads albums - Shandyland, Up The Shirkers, Flock and the live album, Drag Down The Moon - have finally been reissued by as digital downloads by Universal and are available on itunes, Amazon and other download sites. The actual albums have sold for crazy prices on the internet or have been difficult to find but now everyone can download and enjoy them. Damian actually received an e-mail from someone saying how pleased he was to be able to download the albums whilst working - in South Korea! For those of you who would rather own the actual CD's we do have a limited number of each album available at £10 each. If you haven't visited our stall at the gigs then can we remind you that we also have the other two Tansads releases "Rough and Ready - The Early Years" and the band's final album "Reason To Be" - to complete your collection! You know it makes sense!

A 6 piece band (minus drums) also manage to squeeze in a special 50th birthday gig at the Railway pub in Leigh, they appeared as a thank you to Russ, roadie and driver for >Merry Hell<. As a fan himself, Russ was somewhat shocked to turn up to a full pub and to see the band set up in his local. Obviously this wasn't an advertised gig but a few >Merry Hell< regulars lucky enough to be invited by the family helped make it a great night. Leigh's own Degsy opened the night with a couple of acoustic numbers and Bob then accompanied 'Fivepenny Piece' member, John Eatock, on mandolin for a rendition of 'The Manchester Rambler'. Poet, Laura Taylor, treated Russ to a specially written comic poem then it was time for >Merry Hell<.



Being a 50th birthday there was certainly no shortage of Drunken Serenading as the audience belted out the songs with the band. The crowd even sang solo on "One More Day" and Russ himself was eventually coaxed up to sing the "I said the sun has always shone" line in a surprise performance of 'Cobbly Back Yard'. The general crowd consensus was that the band should definitely add this to the interchangeable Tansads selection in the set!



>Merry Hell<

On The Road - July

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival
Saturday 15th July

Abbey Fest - Bury St Edmunds
Abbey Gardens - Friday 20th July

Unicorn Summer Beer Festival
Unicorn Inn, Newton Solney,
Burton-upon-Trent
Saturday 28th July

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