Star City
The Future Under Communism
13 February - 18 April

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Lace Market Tram Stop

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www.nottinghamcontemporary.org
Welcome to our first issue of 2010. I’ve noticed a few comments floating about recently about how now we’ve in a new decade we are supposed to be “triumphant in the future”. Obviously that statement is a paradox in itself, but I think it means the rug is let down is that you still can’t buy Back To The Future hoverboards and James Bond jetpacks in Argos. There’s a simple solution to cure this disillusionment: watch 2010 (the sequel to 2001: A Space Odyssey) as I did this week. It’s highly disappointing and after it’s finished you’ll be glad to get back to your humdrum life again.

Anyway, as usual we’ve got a tangara packet of Nottingham Culture for you within these pages. On the literature front we have interviews with actor-turned-author Rebecca Dakin, who charmed us all with her reading at our Circus Extravaganza last year. We have words with comedian, author and all-round hoffa Mark Steel about why we still get called ‘soaks’; twenty-five years after the miners’ strike. Local theatre director Matt Anton pops up to tell us about working with Billy Iovy and Stephen Lowe. And Internet terrorists Cassetteboy are in the house to inform us why they enjoy playing with the noises Alan Sugar and Nick Griffin make.

For those of you with an interest in local sport, see our crossbred on mixed martial artists. At first this comes across as very brutal and disturbing viewing (and frankly most of what you see on TV isn’t), but the competitors I met surprised me with their wit, openness and general friendly nature. It’ll retain an interest in those fighters from now on – though I won’t be stepping into a cage with them anytime soon.

We’ve had a lot of feedback about our music coverage recently too - mostly positive - but the negative tributes are usually the most interesting. For the record we are not just a music magazine; we’re trying to cover a wide range of cultural things going on in Notts, including our bleeding brilliant local music scene! So while the likes of Red Rack’em and The Swines are interviewed in here (as well as Hot Chip) you’ll have to go to our website to read the other 550-plus interviews, reviews and features we’ve done on local musicians over the years. While you’re there have a listen to their tunes on our podcasts (leftlion.co.uk/podcasts) and come see some of them at one of our live events (more info about our next one on page 23). And if you want us to listen to your band, visit leftlion.co.uk/sendusmusic and follow the simple instructions.

So no more moaning about us not giving your band a triple page spread every issue, okay? If we did that, we’d have to bump other cool stuff and members of the local arts, theatre or literary scene might start picketing outside our houses too! Hang on a minute - that could be quite fun...
December 2009 - January 2010

5 December

The EDL demo in town gets moved next to the Castle, presumably because they couldn’t concentrate on defending England next to a German market, with a massive seaside head singing Christmas songs at them. Wetherspoons get a second bar taking that day, you know.

8 December

Su Pollard, Mother Nottingham herself, kicks off on a disabled driver after a car accident in Borrowash and nearly gets collapsed by Babylon after a swearing binge that would have shamed the people in the smoking area of the Thurland on a Friday night. “She was quite a spectacle in her pink and black striped leggings, a short black skirt and bright pink pillow box hat,” said the victim. Coo. I know people who would quite happily pay to be sworn at by Su Pollard dressed up like that.

9 December

Alright, alright; I would quite happily pay for that experience.

10 December

Forest supporters across the city find their heads on the verge of exploding, such is the urge to scream “I told you so, you mongs”, as Munto Finance are revealed as – well, we still don’t really know, but they sell Notts County on for a quid to the ludicrously oily Peter Trembling. Hey. County fans – give me your council house in Beeston and in five years time, I guarantee that it’s to be in the Park.

16 December

The FA announces that Nottingham has breezed into the next stage of the World Cup city selection process, while Leicester and Derby are told to pick their knickers up off the floor and jog on. If there has to be a new stadium in Nottingham, May Contain Notts suggests only this; that a tinkler large enough to cast a shadow over our neighbouring hamlets be attached to the roof, with the words “SUCK THIS, YOU VERMIN. GO ON - SUCK IT AS IF IT BELONGED TO YOUR FATHER-BROTHER” spelled out in 260-foot neon lights.

17 December

It moves dead hard and Nottingham looks like a Christmas card. For a day. Then it all melts, and it looks like a massive bird shit all over the city and we all have to walk around like penguins with a diarrhoea problem for weeks.

30 December

Documents released by the Government under the 30-year freedom of information act show that a British Quidditch league is now known as ‘boared house’. That actress who was in Ministry Report.

31 December

Halo, which used to be Mode, which used to be McClashy’s, which used to be Madisons, is now known as ‘boarded house’. Where will our youths who hassle for crap coins and people desperate to get their hands up the skirt of some scanty madam, who thought it was a good idea to get the names of their children tattooed upon their jubblies, go now? Oh yeah, everywhere else on Upper Parliament Street.

6 January

May Contain Notts, whilst taking in the sweet, sweet air on its midnight paranormal walk Mansfield Road, is taken aback by the sight of a man brandishing a live peregrine falcon on his arm at midnight. Surrounded by a gang of youths starting at him in awe, and taking pictures with their mobiles. Here’s a suggestion for the Council – install a potentially violent animal getting in the way at weekends, so that the youth can feed a polar bear or stroke a panther instead of trying to shove a pint glass into each other’s brand new stomach. I’d quite happily pay for that experience.

13 January

Some good news for Notts County, as they are announced as the 23rd most popular team to play on Fifa 10. But then again, everybody wanted to be Gin on Tekken 3, because you could be a two-foot orange dinosaur and absolutely shame your mates by farting in their faces.
Check out the winners of our abstract photo competition...

Send us yer Notts...
photography@leftlion.co.uk

LeftLion readers chipped in over 130 photos for our LOMO themed abstract photo competition, with the chance to win their own retro Russian LOMO camera. We were well chuffed with what you sent in - see the weirdness in full at leftlion.co.uk/abstract

The judges' top four are pictured, having racked up a stack of points for abstract interpretation and on-the-fly camera skills - top, then left to right:

**Tower Explosion (winner)** - The Woodlands Flats in Radford, multiple exposures, lens zooming and cool composition, all done in-camera and on the fly. It’s all going on.
(Stephen Wright / Flickr: -SW-)

**Sky Mirrored (runner up)** - a different in-camera take on a well photographed abstract landmark, clouds confined to the mirror and not the sky.
(Peter Zabulis / Flickr: PeteZab)

**Aspire and Glowing (runner up)** - a slanty perspective of the 60m high Aspire sculpture on the Nottingham University Jubilee campus.
(Christopher Frost / Flickr: gails_man)

**Sperm Sun (runner up)** - an everyday object snapped on the fly with an old camera, this intriguing piece of rusty metal spotted lying in a skip could easily make it to a gallery.
(Daddio)
Friday 12 February
Light Night
Nottingham City Centre
From 6pm ‘til late

Saturday 13 February
After Dark
From 5pm ‘til late

www.mynottingham.gov.uk/lightnight
Hello Owen, how are you?

I’m good, thank you. I’ve been at the record label this afternoon. I had rehearsals this morning at 10:30am, the band have been going through stuff we haven’t done in a while. Last week we rehearsed the new stuff for the tour.

Your new album has just come out. How would you say the band has evolved since your debut Coming On Strong?

I was struck recently by the first record. I was in a pub, and the song Playboy from that album came on the jukebox, and it took me by surprise when I heard it and how good it still sounded. We’ve spent such a long time working on the latest record, so I’ve had these new songs in my head for ages. To hear the older song and put it along the new stuff made me feel proud to hear them together as it still held up. The first record seemed so exciting in comparison though. I feel that the evolution of the band has been a natural one, we have never exploded or made a giant leap ahead. It’s been a gradual process.

How does the songwriting work in the band?

The band started with Alexis (Taylor) and Joe (Glockard) and they started to grow and move in a more electronic direction. Due to this they needed people to play the growing number of instruments, so the band fell in to place because of that. Those two are the main songwriters in the band. It was really on our second album, The Warning, where the songwriting started to evolve a little bit more. Alexis and Joe still brought in the songs, but the rest of the band were incorporated more into it. On Made In The Dark the band did do some songs together, but that approach didn’t work this time around. On One Life Stand Alexis and Joe brought in their demos, which were in various stages, either cohesive songs or just ideas. Then the production brought things together.

When the band is in the studio, how are the songs recorded and put together then?

It depends. Some songs are already fully formed by the time we get to the studio and other times the band will work on the arrangements. We set up banks of keyboards and stations and fed in rhythms and some songs end up playing themselves. Other times, certain songs have to go through various versions. For instance on the new album there is a track called Shaw. It ended up being a very simple and elemental song, quite stripped back. But getting there was very difficult. We did about thirty versions of that song before we got to the point where we were happy with it. It’s a bit like a farming process, you develop strands and work on them until you get one you are happy with and cultivate that.

How do you go about recreating your music live?

This time around I think that we have produced a very succinct pop record. Things are very stripped back this time as opposed to having lots of things going on, which we have had in the past. This means that we have to play less on stage, which is turning in to a bit of a challenge. For the last record we toured for two years and by the end of it, it was so full on and full of energy due to the momentum that we had built up. We don’t have that this time around. Due to the new album we are much more dynamic and elemental, so we need to find that energy straight away.

The venues you play are getting bigger. Does this affect the way you approach playing live?

Well, the first gig that the band ever did was a strange one. It was at the Union Chapel supporting SMOG and it was rubbish. We had all these strange organs, various Casio keyboards, drum machines, and guitars and the venue made us sound bad. It was an old church so it was full of rew, like when you walk in to a church the sound bounces around - it was just like that. When you play in larger venues sometimes that sound can still suffer. But because the room is full of people there is a joining of energy. I know that sounds hippyish. You are providing something for people who want it and want a good time, so the room is full of energy and that makes a big difference. I guess it is like a modern-day church, but with everyone dancing.

Do you have any fond memories of playing Nottingham previously?

I know that people always say this, but I mean it. I always like visiting Nottingham. I got a good feeling when I am there. Who is the curly haired one from Squeeze? Chris Difford maybe? Anyway, he was playing a gig every day or something travelling around in a caravan. He had been playing earlier in the day, so we got to meet him; that was cool. I also remember once when we were unloading this massive electric piano to take in to the Rescue Rooms, it was super heavy. We were all struggling to carry it. Then this massive guy with a ginger ponytail came out of the Rescue Rooms. I swear that he was about seven feet. He said “I’ve got this one” and carried it in all on his own. The Rescue Rooms giant!

“It’s a bit like a farming process, you develop strands and work on them until you get one you are happy with and cultivate that”

There was a misunderstanding that Ready For The Floor had been written for Kylie Minogue, but she rejected it. If you had the opportunity to write a song for one act, who would it be and why?

This is a tough one. It’s hard to think of one person. It would have to be someone who has songs written for them. I know he writes his own songs, but to write with David Byrne would be fun. I saw this video on YouTube where he performed Whitney Houston’s I Wanna Dance With Somebody, and to see someone like him do that song was great. Alternatively, writing a pop song for Tom Waitz would be interesting.

Do you have any final words for the LeftLion readers?

I’m not fond of final words. I would like to say that the band really do enjoy Nottingham - the crowds always seem so excitable. It seems to be a city where people love to go out and have a great time. Our next Nottingham gig is the day after Valentines Day. Maybe you could take a date along and break up during the show. Then make up afterwards... that’s always the fun part.

Hot Chip play at Rock City on Monday 15 February. One Life Stand is out Monday 1 February.

hotchip.co.uk

Read more interviews like this at lefliton.co.uk/music

Over the course of three albums rammed full of delirious grooves, beats, funk, and electronica, with an unashamed pop side and clever wordplay, Hot Chip have grown to be one of the UK’s most original bands. Their second album The Warning was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize, whilst top ten single Ready For The Floor saw them up for a Grammy. They have just released their new album One Life Stand and are about to embark on a hectic UK tour. However, their keyboard player, guitarist and percussion man Owen Clarke still managed to squeeze in time to have a chat with us...

words: Paul Klotschlow
A Canadian in New Basford

Rob Cuthforth is feeling incredibly positive about Nottingham in the new decade. We'll soon knock all that silliness out of him, eh readers?

It’s a new year, a new decade, and things are looking up in Stab City. Way up.

There’s a shiny new kic-ee-ass art gallery in town, a new Robin Hood movie coming out, and a top Ten list with Nottingham in it that has nothing to do with gun crime and—do my eyes deceive me?—Forest are pushing for promotion into the Premiership. We’ve even been picked as a World Cup city. What the hell is going on?

In my opinion, Nottingham Contemporary is brilliant. Well, as long as you don’t look directly at it for too long. In fact, I find that it looks better if you treat it like an eclipse. Quick, darting looks are the ticket, or through a tinted welder’s helmet. If you look at it using only your peripheral vision, it almost looks like a car dealership in the Wizard of Oz’s Emerald City.

My wife hated the look of it from day one. Like most Brits, she’s a Debbie Downer, so she could look at Nottingham Contemporary when it was a hole and see the bad side. “Hmm...that hole looks bad. Too modern. It doesn’t fit the area. I can’t believe they spent $2 billion pounds on that hole.” When the walls went up, she hated it even more. I was more optimistic: “Look at that! There’s lace patterns etched into the side! Lace! Lace Macher! Even I get it!” As the construction continued, I kept my rose-tinted specs on. “Ern, well, maybe green blocks of concrete aren’t what I would’ve chosen and it does look a teeny bit blocky, but I’m sure it will be... hang on, what is that? Brains?” Once the scaffolding came down, even I had to admit it wasn’t exactly what you’d call ‘classically beautiful’. However, it’s absolutely impossible to ignore—and thank the Haye-Yeys it’s not a Derby building. I’m sure it will grow on me. Like a big green, lacy fungus.

Once you step in, you realise what a special place it is and why it is precisely what Nottingham needed. It’s free, it’s popular, it’s a big city Nottingham didn’t. It’s free, it’s popular, it’s a big city Nottingham simply cannot be cut off from the rest of the world. The Occupy Exhibition has been going for quite a while and now one’s spray-painted “hollocks” across The Big Splash yet; that’s pretty good going if you ask me. I didn’t even hear “Ash kid couldn’t’ve painted that, innit” once while I was in there.

Meanwhile, D tiers.com has named Nottingham one of the “top ten places to visit in 2010”. Not top ten in the UK, in the world. The listing is due, in part, to the opening of the “Picc Centre”, but also due to Ridley Scott’s Robin Hood. D tiers.com is by no means the authority on best places to visit, but it’s obvious they did more than the thimble-full of research that the stupid Channel 4 ‘Bust and Worst places to live in the UK’ show did. How many movies have they done about Epsom and Ewell, Kinslee? None, that’s how many. Stick that up your doughy, dimpled, Tony, irresponsible house-buying ass.

As for said film, I have to say I told you so when it comes to milking Robin Hood for city gains, but I bleeding well told you so. The on-again-off-again rumours about this movie have been floating about for ages, but it is now officially in production; it even has a teaser trailer and everything! And in true Nottingham style, when the film was originally being bandied about with the working title ‘Nottingham’, the complaints were coming in thick and fast. “Oh great, another bloody Robin Hood movie, that’s all we bloody need”, “Russel Crowe?! Two hours of an butchering the accent, brilliant, they should call it Naddlinghayham”. But now that they’ve changed the title from ‘Nottingham’ to ‘Robin Hood’, people are whining that it’s not called ‘Nottingham’ anymore. There is literally no pleasing you people. This movie is going to kick some serious backside knob, and will do wonders for the city. Mark. My. Words.

And as if all that isn’t stupendous enough, Nottingham has been picked as a host city for the 2018 World Cup. If England actually get it. And if Forest actually build a new stadium when none of the fans appear to want one. And if the World Cup committee doesn’t change its mind later. But hey ho, even with all those ifs and buts, Laceoiser and Derby got the proverbial shaft. Even ugly, stinking Milton Keynes was picked over Derby, and the beautiful thing about that (besides the Schadenfreude) is the fact that if further cuts to the list are to be made, Nottingham simply cannot be cut because that would leave the whole of the East Midlands without a World Cup venue. Buck on that, Derby.

In fact, as far as football is concerned, Nottingham is the place to be this year if things carry on like they are at the minute. With all the drama at Notts County and the utterly brilliant football being played at the City Ground, you can’t say it hasn’t been exciting. I’m sorry, I don’t mean to be so flippant about County’s plight. I’m sure even well sort things out there. I mean, look at his track record; he’s nothing if not reliable. Is that my coat? Why, thank you.

Even the Post have taken to reporting positive crime statistic stories. I haven’t seen a Granny-set-alight story for ages. In fact, there were two positive stories in December. One on city muggings falling 25% and one on youth crime dropping to a new low. It’s like I woke up in some strange insane Nottingham where nothing makes sense anymore. A place where Yates’s serves Dom Perignon instead of asstakings, where Nottinghamians don’t overreact to a few inches of snow and where David Gest gives tips on how not to be an annoying, gormless jerkoff.

It’s not right I tell ya. Things are just too good...

To read more from Rob visit canuckistani.com
Internet phenomenon Cassetteboy are actually a duo - Michael Bollen and Steve Warlin. Their formula is simple: they find a well known public figure, take everything they have ever said out of context and mash it back together again in video or song format so that they look like an incompetent, egotistical, sexual deviant. Then stick it on albums and YouTube for all to see. We like their style, so we had a chat to Michael...

How did this all start?
Fifteen years ago we made a compilation tape for our friends. Between the music we put funny little snippets of TV and radio shows. As we did more tapes, gradually the funny snippets took over from the music. Weeper certain words or sentences and constructed our own jokes from phrases. This was all done on old ghetto blaster tape decks and we broke quite a few through over-use of the record, play and pause buttons. Eventually we started using computers which allowed us to do much more complicated editing, making words from individual syllables, and to write our own music to go between the jokes. We released three albums and two compilations during the noughties, and have now moved on to video editing.

You’ve recently come out and revealed your identities. Why?
We kept our identities secret for fear of getting sued. Our entire act is based on copyright infringement and slander. All of our source material is stolen from films, TV and radio and we make cohensions say things about set and seminars they would never normally say. Then I wrote a comedy novel, so we decided to reveal the link with Cassetteboy, in case our fans were interested in the book. Of course, there’s no guaranteeing that any of the names we have released are our actual names, so we could still be undercover.

What’s the book about?
Earth Inc is a set of comedy romps, set in the not too distant future, about the power of corporations, loss of privacy and the growing gap between rich and poor. I’m not making it sound very funny, am I? It’s absolutely packed full of jokes though. I’ve read supposedly funny books that just have a host of characters running around for 200 pages, but no actual pages, and I didn’t want to write one of those. I like to think there’s at least one proper joke on every page.

How long did it take to write?
For some reason I thought writing a book would be easy… boy was I wrong! It took bloody ages. But finishing it definitely gave me the confidence to attempt more ambitious things with Cassetteboy. I probably would have been too daunted to start a massive project like The Bloody Apprentice video, had I not finally finished the book.

How long did it take to do that video?
I don’t know how many hours, but I was working on it on and off for two months. I think I watched around 40 episodes and most of those two or three times. After a while I actually started to talk like Sir Alan…

The Bloody Apprentice works really well because of the visual element. Can you see yourself making more visual recordings or is this an editorial nightmare?
We’re pretty much only going to work in video from now on, partly because we’ve run out of ideas for albums. Video is more limiting if you’re worried about the visual element being seamless, but obviously we’re not bothered about that. The success of that video shows that if the jokes are funny, people don’t mind if the picture jumps around all the place. In many ways video is less limiting, because it gives you a whole other way to do jokes – some of the funniest bits in that are the reaction shots.

What’s the most difficult part of editing?
To be honest the whole process is a massive pain in the arse. One of the worst parts is when you’ve nearly finished, you just need a word like “because” or “but” to finish one last sentence. So you have to sit and watch an hour-long programme yet again hoping to find that one word. Then you don’t find it, so you have to re-work the final sentence and then watch the whole programme again looking for a different word.

The Nick Griffin vs Question Time video came out really quickly. Did you have any reservations about targeting people like him for fear of retribution?
I didn’t even think about it at the time, but I have had some rather nasty threatening messages since posting it online. I do have another Nick Griffin piece ready that I haven’t released yet, but I don’t think a few threats are going to stop me.

What do you hope to achieve by your work?
With an election coming up I suppose there is a point to be made with the political pieces. Anything that makes people think twice about voting for the BNP has to be a good thing, although I think our videos will probably just be preaching to the converted. That said, I think we’re more likely to release David Cameron videos this year than Gordon Brown ones.
The other pieces are just entertainment really. You could look at something like The Bloody Apprentice and say that it’s stricking a blow for people who are fed up with shallow reality TV but fans of the show enjoy it just as much, if not more. Our aim has always been just to make people laugh. The British public always like a bit of smut and inanities.

Your work seems to be kind of political slapstick. Is humour necessary for making serious points today and, if so, is there a danger that this trivialises serious debate?
If you look at American TV shows like The Daily Show and The Colbert Report, you can see that comedy doesn’t have to trivialise serious debate. Those programmes are very funny, but they also make complex political points. The jokes attract viewers who probably wouldn’t watch a straight political show, so yes I do think humour can be an effective means of communication.

How would you like to be remembered?
I guess it would be nice to be remembered for Cassetteboy, because it’s so silly. It’s just a couple of friends who made some funny tapes once, and the tapes got more and more complicated until the whole thing got way out of hand. Suddenly Charlie Brooker and Jonathan Ross were tweeting about us, we were appearing at the Victoria and Albert Museum dressed as Posh and Becks and were invited on stage at Glastonbury, drunk out of our minds and hitting each other with inflatable hammers.

Any particular favourite moments?
The best times have probably been on stage, when you can actually hear the laughter that you’ve strained and sweated to create. Standing in front of hundreds of people, wearing a monkey mask and a naked suit, whining my fake, luminous penis around while a cut-up of Deal Or No Deal plays. You get a moment of clarity and realise exactly what you’re doing, then burst out laughing, wondering how on earth it ended up like this.

If you could have anyone in the world as your Valentine, who would it be and why?
Hmm, it’s hard to think of an answer that isn’t tragic, seamy, or both. So I’ll settle for someone who’s witty enough to think of a funny answer to that question. And who’s got massive knockers.

Michael’s book Earth Inc is available from Picnic Publishing now. Cassetteboy’s third album Carry On Breathing is available to buy from online record stores.
cassetteboy.wordpress.com

Words: James Walker

Michael's book Earth Inc is available from Picnic Publishing now. Cassetteboy's third album Carry On Breathing is available to buy from online record stores.
After nine years as a globe-trotting escort, Nottingham resident Rebecca Dakin has knocked it on the head and written The Girlfriend Experience, an eye-opening autobiography about her former career. Now she’s on a special date with LeftLion and sets the record straight about her old job, while we sit there and wonder if it was a good idea to show up in that old Notts County shirt...

What made you want to become an escort? I didn’t really know what I wanted to do when I left college, and I needed to earn some money fast as I was in quite a lot of debt and still living at my Mum and Dad’s. There aren’t many businesses that you can set up and run on your own with no outlay; I only spent £7 setting an advert up online. My first job made me £700 and it was a buzz; it didn’t feel like a big deal at all.

Did you realise what you were letting yourself in for? Well, I’d been very promiscuous in my youth and didn’t really have an issue with having sex with people I didn’t know. When I looked into it further and started working, I realised it could actually be a real date, and that people would spend quite a lot of money to take me to some really nice restaurants. I thought getting paid to eat would be pretty good.

What did your Mam and Dad think? They were very disappointed and exasperated, but they didn’t try to talk me out of it. They just accepted that I wasn’t going to be normal like the other three children, and thought “she’ll have a go and will come back with her tail between her legs in a couple of months”. It’s a taboo subject - my Mum’s a foodie and I thought having paid to eat would be pretty good.

How do you feel when people ask you about your job? Well, I’d been very promiscuous in my youth and didn’t really worry about being involved in the shagging-up of a relationship? It wasn’t all married men; probably about fifty/fifty. And no, I never felt guilty - there had to be problems in the first place for the guy to be calling me. If he was going to cheat and look elsewhere, he was going to do it no matter what. In some ways, I’ve held a lot of marriages together that would otherwise be lost through affairs; I wasn’t ringing them up all the time asking why they hadn’t called.

What’s the difference between what you did and the average one-night stand? Well, I’d been very promiscuous in my youth and didn’t really have an issue with having sex with people I didn’t know. When I looked into it further and started working, I realised it could actually be a real date, and that people would spend quite a lot of money to take me to some really nice restaurants. I thought getting paid to eat would be pretty good.

Most books and films on escorting are either unbelievably positive or relentlessly grim. What’s your reality? I had some amazing experiences; I’ve travelled the world and been to hotels and restaurants that I could only ever dream of. I had a great time and met a lot of interesting people, but it’s not the same for everyone; I can only speak from my own experiences.

Did you exchange gory details with your friends? Oh yeah! I’m a woman - we do all the nitty-gritty. A lot of my friends admire and respect me for having the balls to do what I did - they find my work stories a bit more interesting than theirs.

So why write a book? I’d read Belle de Jour and I wasn’t impressed. It fuelled misconceptions about escorts and that it was just about men wanting sex. That wasn’t how things were for me and I wanted to set the record straight. There are many different levels of escorting; you can just have sex with men, or you can have longer dates that offer more of the companionship side of things.

Why didn’t you write it under a pseudonym? Because I’m not ashamed of what I’ve done. And because I’ve finished doing it. I’ve closed down that chapter of my life. I found writing it very therapeutic; I tried to understand the dynamics of my family and the reasons why I went into such a job.

What kind of feedback are you getting from your former clients? It’s been really good, actually. One said he read it with apprehension, intrigue and much fondness. The danger now is that people think they know me really well having read it. Clients I’d seen for a long time suddenly feel like they’re on a different level with me - a more personal level. On the other hand, one client has just written to me saying how disappointed he was that I hadn’t written about him...

Ever fallen for any of them? I never fell in love with any of them. There was this one guy who was single, and we quite liked each other and met up twice or four times, but it just didn’t work out. I’ve had a few guys that have fallen for me and I’ve had to stop seeing them; it’s quite a fine line. I never kept in touch with people between dates - the only contact was to arrange a date.

How above board were you? Did you pay taxes, for example? Of course I did. I was registered as a self-employed escort, so the Inland Revenue knew exactly what I was doing for a living. It was like any other self-employed business; when I wasn’t going out on dates, I was spending time looking for work, updating my website, and so on. I could go a couple of months without having a job - I’d get enquiries, but these wasn’t anybody that I wanted to see.

And what was the scariest place you were taken to? I like Pizza Hut, don’t get me wrong - but I got taken to the one in Stratford in London and there was piss all over the floor of the toilets and it was disgusting. For a dinner date that was... yeah... not great.
Icebreaker have been at the forefront of the contemporary music scene for 20 years. Programme features two classic 20th century works, Gavin Bryars’s Jesus Blood and Philip Glass’s Music with Changing Parts as well as the world premiere of a new work Disposable Dissonances by leading Irish composer Donnacha Dennehy.
Until recently Matt Aston was producer and programmer at the Lakeside Arts Centre. Whilst there he directed several successful productions including the acclaimed *Retirement of Tom Stevens* by Billy Ivory, *The Kiss* by Glyn Cannon and *Empty Bed Blues* by Stephen Lowe. He’s currently considered to be one of the rising stars of British theatre, but he’s not exactly a luvvie - as his Christmas production of children’s favourite *Flat Stanley* pays testament. We spoke to him about his career so far...

Are you originally from Nottingham?

No, I’m actually from Walsall. I came to read Communication Studies at Trent Polytechnic in 1992. I thought it would be media studies related but it was mostly sociology and psychology. Over two and a half years I didn’t do a stroke of work and then in the last six months had to work hard to get a degree. I was going to move to London or go back home but at the end of 1995 I got a few running jobs at Carlton Studios and I ended up staying here.

So how did you get involved in the theatre?

After I finished university I was on the dole and doing odd jobs for the best part of a year. Then I got a Saturday job at The Nottingham Playhouse minding the stage door. That turned into a three-month contract on a community project and as one contract ran out, another would appear. I used to sit in on rehearsals and sit backstage and watch how everything worked and then this job came up as a producer. At the same time I put together some half-hour mini-shows that I directed. I got to know directors and actors and more about how things worked. Then the African arts producer left so I ended up getting that job, putting on hip-hop shows which was pretty bizarre. After that I got a job as front of house manager.

You’ve played a big part in establishing the Lakeside Arts Centre as a theatre venue in Nottingham...

When the Lakeside was first built I was approached to work there on secondment, to help open it for the first few seasons. I programmed a lot of stuff that I produced and directed, starting with Kenneth Alan Taylor in *Knapp’s Last Tape* and luckily that worked out really well. The programming was always done in consultation with my boss Shona Powell (Director of the Centre) but she never really stopped me doing what I wanted to do and luckily they were mostly happy with what I did. I think she appreciates the relationships I have with writers.

Were you interested in the theatre before you came to Nottingham?

I went to audition for Oliver! at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre when I was eight. I learned all the words to the Artful Dodger song *Chisumder Yourself* and I queued for two-and-a-half hours. It was my go-to show and then they said “Sorry we’ve got to clear the house” so I didn’t get to audition and I was absolutely devastated! As a teenager I used to go to the theatre quite a bit with my Mum. I can’t act and I’m not formally trained or anything. To be honest I never thought I’d work in theatre but I had a vague idea that I wanted to work in telly or film. Theatre for me is not just about good actors and good words, it’s also about that moment that you can’t capture on television or in a film.

How did you come to direct Billy Ivory’s first play, *The Retirement of Tom Stevens*?

He came to see a play of mine and he really loved it. He told me he’d got this script that he’d written ten years ago and his producer and his agent and everyone else told him it was a stage play rather than a film, so he offered it to me. The rehearsals were hell and Billy was really stressed. We had two nights of previews which went well and they were followed by the press performance. The first half of that night was probably the worst hour I’ve ever spent in the theatre, with the actors all over the place forgetting and fluffing their lines. I looked round to Billy and he was clutching his seat and clenching his teeth. He was looking rough as he had this football superstition that he’d got this script that he’d written ten years ago and his producer and his agent and everyone else said “Sorry we’ve got to clear the house” so I didn’t get to audition and I was absolutely devastated! As a teenager I used to go to the theatre quite a bit with my Mum. I can’t act and I’m not formally trained or anything. To be honest I never thought I’d work in theatre but I had a vague idea that I wanted to work in telly or film. Theatre for me is not just about good actors and good words, it’s also about that moment that you can’t capture on television or in a film.

It was the only press night ever where I didn’t go down to the bar to chat to the critics. Billy said we had to go backstage to talk to the cast but I wouldn’t do it, as I knew that would make them more nervous. Fortunately they turned it around and the second half was probably the best hour of theatre I’ve ever seen. I’d like to turn Tom Stevens into a film, but Billy’s a bit reticent about that because it works as a stage play and he doesn’t want to spoil it.

What are you working on at the moment?

I left the Lakeside in July to work as a freelance, with an agreement to come back and do four or five shows. At the moment I’m working on *A Day In The Death of Joe Egg* at the Playhouse. I’ve never seen it produced but we did a reading and that’s when a play comes alive for me. The play is really dark, the story of a couple raising a child with cerebral palsy. Laura McEwen, who also worked on *Smile* at the Lakeside, is doing the design and I’ve cast the lead - Mark Benton. He’s the Nationwide Building Society guy in their TV ads.

In May I’ll be directing another play by Billy Ivory. I’ve been trying to get him to write another play and he came up with the idea for *Bomber’s Moon* about a year ago. It’s a play dealing with platonic love, friendship, war, loss and getting old. It’s about his Dad being in the RAF and together with Tom Stevens it is part of what will become the Southwell Trilogy. Early next year I’ll be directing a new play about D.H. Lawrence by Stephen Lowe, which will be the second half of *Empty Bed Blues*. It will continue the themes and use the same set, so maybe in the future they’ll be shown together. As Billy says “A proper writer is Stephen - good with words”.

Are you ever tempted to follow other creative types and move to London?

A lot of people have said the streets are paved with gold in London, but I find things are a bit incestuous there and people all want to do the same things. In Nottingham you can be just as creative, if not more so, than in London. You get to work with great people here - to me Billy Ivory, Stephen Lowe and Amanda Whittington are three of the best writers in the country. I’m certainly not going anywhere for a while yet.

*A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* plays at Nottingham Playhouse from Friday 19 March to Saturday 3 April. *Bomber’s Moon* plays at the Lakeside Arts Centre in May.

Read more theatre reviews and interviews at leftlion.co.uk/theatre
Whether he’s presenting bizarre solutions to social problems on Five Live’s The Mark Steel Solution, casting an eye over historical figures for The Mark Steel Lectures on BBC 2, writing for the Independent, churning out an alternative history of the Labour Party or presenting one-off stand-up diatribes about the city he’s in, Mark Steel is always enlightening and always entertaining...

When you last played Nottingham, the crowd berated you for not knowing that we’d burnt down our own castle in protest against the Duke of Newcastle’s opposition to the Reform Act of 1832...

I remember that with great affection. It was a Sunday night and the gig was packed. It was also the night that Lewis Hamilton won the world motor racing championship. I don’t know about ‘berating’ but it was great fun. I think I said something like, “You started off brilliantly in the 1300s with your Robin Hood but from there on you went all downhill. You had the castle where the royals launched the civil war and then you were terrible in the miners’ strike.” Then someone shouted out about the burning down of the castle. What a truly excellent thing for people to heckle about at a comedy gig!

We wanted to ask you about the miners’ strike. At football matches against Yorkshire teams, we always get called ‘scabs’...

Really? That’s something, isn’t it? Well, Gillingham play at Crystal Palace they get “you all live in a caravan and you’ve all a bunch of pikeys” and all that sort of thing. It’s just that a place gets labelled with the easiest possible stereotype. When Manchester City came down to Nottingham the week after Harold Shipman was convicted, they all started singing “Did a doctor kill your Gran?” The sheer ability to sink to those sorts of depths I thought was genius.

Do you think we let the country down during the miners’ strike?

Well, that’s a complicated question. The strike started in South Yorkshire and the pickets were bringing people out from other areas. I think the pickets were having some effect at that time in Nottingham, but there was a massive police presence which had a real impact on the ability of anyone to try and bring the Nottingham miners out. In the seventies there were local wage agreements that had been accepted by the Union. Nottingham miners were able to produce more coal - even though it was worse quality - and therefore they were actually paid more than others. So they got a sense of feeling better off and not being a part of the Union as much. I think those wage bridges undermined the sense of collectivism throughout the NUM. Bloody ball - I’m going back to things I’ve never really thought about for twenty years here...

Last year you did Mark Steel is in Town, with a whole set about the place you were performing. Seems quite a challenge...

I think most comics like to do something about the town in their sets because it shows that they’re thorough and interested. But obviously I took this idea a lot further than most. I have to do it all again now, as we have a new series in the pipeline. The first one is in Darlington, in Kent. Plainly enough, it’s harder to get started with those sorts of places but the really undiagram places are, in some way, the fun ones because they’re more challenging and satisfying. You think there’s nothing interesting about a place, but then you scratch around and realise there is.

How do you research all the places?

I go to the town and have a wander about. Then I get any books that have been written about the place. It’s amazing how every single town has a local historian who, for absolutely no benefit to themselves, has spent three years of their life writing up something like The History of Railways in Didcott. They are magnificently tedious! I read one book about the history of a signal box in Kent - a whole book about just one signal box! I had to buy that because you think that this bloke’s going to be quite jokey about it, but he’s not. It really is just the history of this signal box and nothing interesting happens at all. Anyway, I do a bit of that and then spend a couple of days looking at the internet and look at all the news stories. Then I go back there again for another visit. But there are loads of things about every town that are quite distinct, really.

When can we expect the new series?

I think it starts in April - I hope it’s not earlier than that because I’ve got to write the bloody thing! It’ll be on Radio 4 again - I’d love it to be on telly but that depends on the tally people letting me. It’s going to be on some download system or something, not the ‘listen again’, but something where you can actually download it.

So are we going to get a Tory government after the next election?

It looks like it, doesn’t it? I sort of still hope that Labour do manage to win, but the real motor of change is from below. I think what’s really lacking in society at the moment is organisation to protest. There are still a great many people who feel some sort of resentment about the way that society is run - as the Facebook Rage Against The Machine campaign proved. I wouldn’t exaggerate it - it’s just a song - but there’s no sense of strategy or organisation with the people who are angry about the people that run society so nothing much happens. It will all start to come together when people become more than a disparate group of annoyed people and start to become a unified group that can discuss strategies and so on. Then the world can start to change, in some way or another, at least.

You did a lecture on our very own Lord Byron. What are your favourite things about him?

Just his utter zest for life. He was a life of someone who just thought that every aspect should be up to the maximum. No matter what it was: if he was going to have a love affair, it was going to be the most emotional love affair ever. If he was going to have a one-night stand, it was going to be the most traumatic, ridiculous, eventful one-night stand. He was just the most astonishing life and embodied passion. If he’d been around now he would have backed Rage Against The Machine for Christmas number one, too...

Read a longer version of this interview at leftlion.co.uk/literature
Some people seem to have a grudge against graffiti. But here at LeftLion we appreciate a bit of colour on our streets, and while none of us particularly like seeing someone’s name or a tag of a penis thrown up everywhere, we do admire a well-worked piece on an otherwise blank wall. So this issue, for your reading pleasure, we got in touch with four of the best of the current crop of Nottingham’s (legal) street artists.

Kid30 (aka smallkid)

Describe your work …
On walls I mainly paint characters. My canvas work is a lot more varied. I have a different pen style and a paint style and the subject matter is based around personal experiences, different people, animals and things that are interesting me at the time.

What inspires you?
Being really curious about odd things and having small man syndrome.

What’s the best thing about being a street artist?
Your clothes get ruined with paint, your car gets ruined with paint, you spend wasted weekends travelling and aching from going up and down ladders. You get beef from other writers, your work never stays up for long, you hang around in grotty areas, you think about painting all the time. You’re skint and hanging around in the freezing cold and loads of people seem to be better than you!

Tell us about a recent project or goal…
If you were allowed to paint anywhere in Nottingham, where would you choose?
I’d love to paint all boards or hoardings put up in the city that cover building sites or disused spaces. I’d paint the whole area where the old Broadmarsh ramps used to stand. While I’m at it, I would build a few new ramps and it would be like the good old days.

If you were allowed to paint anywhere in Nottingham, where would you choose?
I would like to paint a really high wall on a cherry picker, as I’ve never done that before.

If you were allowed to paint anywhere in Nottingham, where would you choose?
The Cooling Towers at Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station would be cool – the bigger the wall the better! So if you have got a big spare wall and you want it painting, drop me an email.

Which other artists do you admire?
I always admire the other members of my crew, Oxygen Thievez. I also have admiration for any artist who is passionate about being creative and keeping it real.

What’s good about being a Nottingham-based artist?
Not the weather! I’m Notts born and bred. Artistically there is plenty going on for a city of this size and the diversity of people and venues makes it a good place to work in.

Which other artists do you admire?
There are some good people making a lot of big moves in our local scene right now.

Tell us about a recent project or goal…
My highlight of 2009 was painting at Glastonbury with the rest of the Oxygen Thievez crew and working on the biggest collection of zombies ever in one space at The Big Chill Festival. My goal for 2010 is to put on a personal exhibition, which I have been working on for a while now, based around some of my canvas work. I’m off to Australia in January and February to escape the cold and to hook up with people there for a few projects. I’m looking forward to painting more walls in different cities and trying to keep true to myself and my art.

What’s your favourite colour?
I’m well into my colour combinations, like greys, whites and pinks or greens and yellows. I don’t really have a favourite colour though, but if I had to choose I’d say gun metal grey. I’ve not made this up it’s an official colour that is used in the Royal Air Force for painting planes!

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Onga B

Describe your work to newcomers...
I like working with letters and forms, abstracting their shapes and turning them into different, sometimes unrecognisable, objects. I like to see craftsmanship in art, so I try and push myself. Techniques and delivery with paint is also important to me. I have worked with organic shapes, but right now I like straight lines. I also do a lot of collaborative painting with my crew, Must Try Harder. This is generally a concept conceived by one artist, and then we all input further ideas, building the concept together like a giant jigsaw puzzle.

What drives you as an artist?
Perfecting ideas, trying new things and trying to improve on my own techniques with the other artists I’m working with at the time. A location, a colour, a concept and the media in one form or another all inspire me.

Tell us about a recent project or goal…
As always, we all Must Try Harder.

What’s good about being a Nottingham-based artist?
There are some good people making a lot of big moves in our local scene right now.

What’s your favourite colour?
At the moment I like Montana electric blue, but it changes a lot.

If you were allowed to paint anywhere in Nottingham, where would you choose?
I’d love to paint all boards or hoardings put up in the city that cover building sites or disused spaces. Or just give us a tram!
Danny Berman - aka Red Rack’em - is a busy man these days. After a summer of festival appearances and putting out production on a plethora of underground labels, he can count Gilles Peterson and Rob Da Bank among his fans. He also has his club-rocking, genre-busting international DJ sets and a huge fortnightly podcast to take care of. And this year is set to be even busier...

What brought you to Notts?
I was a non-linear TV editor in the late nineties, having the time of my life in Liverpool working for the dodgy cable channel LVR TV. I’ve actually been News Bunny, but that’s a different story. I got a job editing corporate films for Boots and Experian so I moved here in 1999, but I wasn’t really cut out for the corporate life and got the sack after a month. Years of unemployment, dance music and low-quality housing ensued.

Why are you called Red Rack’em?
I was inspired by artists like Yam Who, Red Astaire and Blackbeard so I put out a lot of unofficial hip-hop remixes from 2004 to 2006 and that style was dubbed ‘pirate soul’ by the press. Bootlegs were called ‘booties’ in the shops. Booty is pirate treasure. I loved Tintin books as a child. I can’t say any more than that about it as this is a family magazine.

You’ve played in nearly every venue in town. What do you make of the Nottingham scene?
In the early noughties, I used to go out all the time to nights like Detonate, DV, Pure Fifth and in more recent years I went to a lot of the early dubstep parties like Heavyweight Rocksteady plus disco/house night Basement Bongalos and the early Fatpunter parties. But I don’t really go out much in Nottingham anymore as I am away playing gigs most weekends and I really feel my age when I go out these days.

My take on Notts right now is that it’s probably just as exciting for people under twenty as it was for me when I was going out all the time in 1999 to 2004. But it does seem like there’s a lot less variety on offer these days in terms of venues and musical styles. I think the types of music being offered to young people in the whole of the UK these days are increasingly commercial and everything seems really dumbed down. I found it inspiring when I played the last set at this year’s Big Chill at the radio station as a lot of the massive crowd were under twenty and they were all going mad to vintage house from Chez Damier and ten-year-old garage from Zed Bias. My set got recorded and hosted on the Big Chill website so it’s great to have a permanent record of that night. You can check out that set at leftlion.co.uk/redrackembigchill

What do you think was the turning point for you in busting out of Notts?
I’ve released a wide variety of music in the last few years on many different labels that all have their own promotional reach, which has brought me to the attention of a much wider audience. It’s been a bit of a snowball effect. I played at Snowbombing, Glastonbury, Bestival and Big Chill, which means my music is being promoted to hundreds of thousands of people. My remixes of The Revenge, Tricky and the Joubert Singers have been really popular - Greg Wilson, one of the biggest names on the disco/edit scene, played my remix of the Joubert’s gospel disco classic Stand On The Word in nearly every one of his DJ sets in 2009.

I wasn’t really cut out for the corporate life and got the sack after a month. Years of unemployment, dance music and low-quality housing ensued.

That remix got you a lot of airplay on Radio 1...
I have had a lot of support for my Red Rack’em, Hot Coins and Marlinspike projects on Radio 1 from Gilles Peterson, Rob Da Bank, Mary Anne Hobbs and even Zane Lowe. Gilles invited me to play at the Worldwide Awards in January and I went on straight after Jazzywax to a full house at Cargo in London, which was an amazing experience and my set was broadcast on Radio 1 the following week.

“Smugglers Inn” brings a fresh new twist to the show as well.
Your Smugglers Inn podcasts go out fortnightly on Notts-based internet radio station myhouse-yourhouse. How important has that been for getting your name out?
It’s been going for a couple of years, and gets over 700 downloads a fortnight, which has helped me build an international audience. Sourcing two hours of brand new quality music and guest mixes every fortnight isn’t easy, but I’ve been lucky enough to build up a really strong network of labels and producers contributing tracks and also listeners who want to hear new music. The most satisfying thing for me has been the community side of things - artists remixing each other’s tracks after hearing them on the show, and certain labels are using it as an A&R hub to find new tunes to sign. I also really enjoy promoting other DJs on the show with the guest mixes, which brings a fresh new twist to the show as well.

Is any new material set to drop in 2010? Will we be blessed with a debut album?
Well, I’ve got loads more singles on the way and a couple of albums on the go. I have got another Red Rack’em EP on Untracked out in February which has been getting Radio 1 play from Gilles. Then I’ve got EPs coming out on Detroit house label Undertones, Colt/AI/Delete’s new label Shift plus the hot new house label Home Taping.

Album-wise, I’m working on the Marlinspike album right now which is a hybrid of 2-step garage and Detroit house/techno with vocals - I’m hoping to get that finished mid-2010. I’ve also just had the Hot Coins album (which is on the new wave, post-punk disco tipi) signed to a very exciting new label, so I will be putting that together in the next few months as well. So that’s this year taken care of...

Smugglers Inn is broadcast fortnightly, Wednesday nights 7-9pm at myhouse-yourhouse.net. The podcast is available from redrackem.com - or search ‘Smugglers Inn’ on Myspace.com/redrackem
**FIGHT CLUB**

It’s a concept that, to most people, evokes brutality, sadism and horror. Two men enter a cage and begin fighting until only one bloody other can stand up. That’s not a TV sport, it’s ancient Roman stuff - that’s the end of civilisation, right?

But, the rising popularity of mixed martial arts, in both the US and now the UK, is undeniable. Many see it as the natural heir to stand-up comedy and boxing, and a means for men to express themselves in a society where violence is forbidden. It’s hard on the eyes at first, but also exciting, intrigue and competitive - and there is no match fixing to be had.

Jimmy Wallhead is a 25-year-old member of the East Midlands-based Team Rough House, a brand new MMA crew known for producing well-schooled welterweight fighters. He currently holds three titles (House of Pain British Champion, Gladiator British Champion and Clash of Warriors World Champion) and is ranked in the top ten welterweights in both the UK and Europe. His professional record currently stands at nineteen wins and five losses.

How does your training differ from stand-up or boxing training?

The training is very similar - you get a bit of both. That’s the way it’s meant to be. You train with no rules, and then you have the fight rules. Although you don’t get a lot of those anymore, the feeling of being boxed in on the ring is the same. Training is much calmer these days though, I’d probably just give guys a bitchslap.

**Michelle ‘Warrior Queen’ Baron**

Michelle is a 23-year-old from Bournemouth. She trains at Majestic boxing academy and her current fight record is a mixed bag with one win, one draw and one loss.

How did you get into MMA?

I went to a gym and wanted to try boxing. Then one day I came home and I was putting the trash out and I saw a flyer for it. I thought, ‘That looks scary, I’ll go have a look.’ The first time I went in I didn’t even train, I just stood around. The coaches around me are amazing - I get a lot of cringing before a fight. They’re the best, thank you. Not at all. You can’t tell anything from a man’s size - looks can be deceptive.

**Do you have any pre-fight rituals?**

Not really. I’ve had a couple of losses because of those. But you grow and learn to control your anger out.

**If you could fight any celebrity who would you choose?**

David Beckham - yeah, I’d shoot him a few times. And maybe I’d have to intervene, but I wouldn’t try and hurt anyone.

**What background do you have in combat sports?**

I played kickboxing with my friend who came down from Chesterfield - we show them our training. I also do a bit of Brazilian Jujitsu with some friends.

How often do you train in an average week?

I do my running in the morning before work. Then I work nine to five. Times change. Women never used to be allowed to go to work. Now they can do whatever they want, but we’re always fighting for it.

The coaches around me are amazing and study the other fighters so I can come back better.

What crosses your mind before you head to the ring?

I always hope that I won’t break my nose as that wouldn’t look good. I like to stay calm and be confident in your own abilities. I’m a Christian as well, so I pray a lot.

What background do you have in combat sports?

I love the training. I think we need more education and more workshops here in this city. Last year one of my friends, Bernard, got sent to hospital.

The coaches around me are amazing and study the other fighters so I can come back better.

**Words from: Jimmy Wallhead and Michelle Baron**
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SPECIAL GUEST: REYA SUNSHINE - MODEL AND DJ - HOSTING THE EVENT!
Mahmood Besharate is a 31-year-old taekwando specialist from Beeston who trains at the Cobra Gym and Sport Nottingham. Until recently he fought in K-1 tournaments where he won nine fights and lost three. He then switched to MMA where he won his first, and to date only, fight.

How often do you train?
Usually twice every day. I do jogging, thai boxing, sparring, wrestling, running and loads of work on my cardio. I always take Saturday as my day of rest.

Is this a full-time job for you?
I wish it was, but I need to work on the side as well. I'm an engineer by trade, but right now I'm out of work so it gives me even more time to train.

How do you mentally prepare for a fight?
A week before I try to cut everything down and concentrate on my techniques. I'm quite a relaxed guy, even before a fight - but when I step into the ring it's a totally different story.

What background do you have in combat sports?
I'd been doing taekwando for over fifteen years. In 2006 I was in a fight against someone who was really aggressive. I was beating him and so his brother jumped into the ring and tried to knock me out. After that I decided it wasn't the sport for me, so I trained with Owen Comrie and started to win quite a few fights. In MMA you can use all different types of styles as tools and it makes it more exciting - you constantly learn a lot of new things.

What crosses your mind before heading out to face your opponent?
For the last few minutes before a fight I'm just buzzing to get in there, but that's the whole fun of it. If you didn't have that feeling then it wouldn't mean anything - you can use those nerves to make you perform better.

Do you have any pre-fight rituals?
Not really. I just try to relax as much as I can because once you're there you've got to go through with it.

What music do you come out to?
I've had quite a few different tunes, but my favourite is *Jesus Walks* by Kanye West. That's my knockout tune!

Who are your favourite other sports people?
Floyd Mayweather Jr is my current favourite. From the old school I used to love Bruce Lee - he was my biggest inspiration when I was a kid! Oh and Masatatsu Oyama was an amazing guy.

While out in town do you find yourself sizing up other people and deciding whether you could have 'em?
No. I'm not into trouble and I'd just walk away from it. Most of us don't go down town drinking anyway - it would be bad for our performances.

What do you do when you're not fighting?
I like having fun with girls. But I try not to let it get in the way of my training.

They say love and hate are intertwined. Is there anything erotic about fighting?
No. I don't really know how to answer that. But no, there's nothing sexual about fighting for me.

If you could fight any celebrity who would you choose?
I can't really think of any. I get on with everyone as long as they're cool with me.

What about Floyd Mayweather Jr?
Nah man. He's in a different class to me - he's gifted! Even if I trained for another 200 years then I wouldn't be able to catch him. And I'm not going to live that long.

Anything else you want to say to our readers?
Thanks to all the people who helped me out to get me where I am right now. My Thai boxing coach Owen Comrie, Nathan Leeverton from Shootfighters, my condition coach Guy Baker and King of The Ring promoter Nash Somani. I couldn't have done any of this without you.
Friday 5 February sees Write Lion present poetry from Leicester’s Word! at The Arts Organisation. They’re really good (find out more at myspace.com/wordleicester). Come on down and introduce yourself. It’s free entry all night and you can even bring your own boigo!

We’ve also got our fourth Write Lion podcast out in early February and interviews with the authors reviewed below online at leftlion.co.uk/literature

**As You Pass**

by Cathy Grindrod

What will you make of these circles the sun has made, such in its own perfect halo of light? A spider might stop, finish, make itself small for shadows; a fish choose just one side, welcome its limits; a heron, gaunt on guard, dive into its centre, clean; a kitten pat its paws inside each one all morning long. And you? What will you make of these circles the sun has made? Crawl through them then, nose them apart. Look, they are reforming, unfazed, even as you pass.

**A Little Lost**

by Amy Elizabeth

Words echo and bounce in my throat, tumbling upwards and grinding my tongue. Like acid it spills and breaks; into a foreign voice. My eyes sting all rivers ebb and flow, into a foreign voice. Like acid it spills and breaks; tumbling upwards and grazing my tongue. Words echo and bounce in my throat, a kitten pat its paw inside each one all morning long? a heron, gaunt on guard, dive into its centre, clean; a kitten pat its paws inside each one all morning long. And you? What will you make of these circles the sun has made? Crawl through them then, nose them apart. Look, they are reforming, unfazed, even as you pass.

**Evaporate**

by Steve Page

We watch the elect individua; we step slowly forward into history. The faces crowd. Hollow eyed immobility. This enigma of human identity. As noises as morning shadows. Unfolding, mad-bright into the sun. The centre of a limitless territory. This is where I mastered. The art of not talking. Stalking movements of London’s undone. Big loose kinds of the charity shun. Drably huddled in Attica模式. Knowing neither praise nor disgrace. Whirling their standards all over the place. I tried not to touch them, except on the tube. Where, it was still OK to touch. This is me on my backside on Liverpool Street. Knocked down by some old Irish bore. Watching the footbagg dance over. The looming black whales of Bishopsgate. I crunched that rock salted road. Shattered crystals, like sharp settled snowstorms. Danced Sunday’s light to the siren’s whirring wall. While the masters; tucked away. In their Baricical beds. Slept like cotton wool babies. Fully and Sam lived on Charteris Road. Sam’s splintered childhood was seventy years old. I held his young hand to lattice London’s streets. Seven Sisters, Jamaican Dumplings, Talmud, Tagine. Into Finsbury Park where his Mum liked to eat. Seven Sisters, Jamaican Dumplings, Talmud, Tagine. Into Finsbury Park where his Mum liked to eat. Whose we picked at the manacled mind. And I learned that old chestnut, to be cruel to be kind. Where we picked at the manacled mind. And I learned that old chestnut, to be cruel to be kind. Mother love or sex love? Where we picked at the manacled mind. And I learned that old chestnut, to be cruel to be kind. Mother love or sex love? Where we picked at the manacled mind. And I learned that old chestnut, to be cruel to be kind. Mother love or sex love? Where we picked at the manacled mind. And I learned that old chestnut, to be cruel to be kind. Mother love or sex love? Where we picked at the manacled mind. And I learned that old chestnut, to be cruel to be kind.

**I’ll have mine fried thanks**

by Bella Bartok

Yieldless, cracked with intent of human destruction. Sparrow’s spoken of the uncommon, it’s softness remnant of polished metal, of feathers that shine under street lights, reveal no lack of laurels within that of a crow. The siblings of those smaller shrink inside their shell, kicked from the branch, inadequate souls. Let us eat.

**Dream Musings II**

by Sara

And so she departed these shores, this plane. Her grounded terrain. Ever - loving - maintaining her sane... And where is she now? Four springs later? From where the presence departed. Life’s not been a bad of roses... That life supposes Life’s not been the easy path... Monumental monolog. Life’s still here in all its faces. People still meandering and settling in their places... Love moves; forward, back, erases... But replaces... To the universal spaces... That my terrain leads me eventually... Beholds and graces...

**A somet from Sven the Snowman**

by Lord Biro

If you’re fed up with watching the soccer and would prefer a frizzellor game come and play with me and my snow balls round the back of Ye Oude Measlow Lanes.

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**Mr. Bloody Sunshine**

Adam Watts

Mr. Bloody Sunshine is a fantastic debut novel from another of Nottingham’s fine repertoire of self-published authors. Dean works as a drood in the soulless fast food franchise, serving pizzas to people who can’t comprehend why there is no large stuffed crust option.

The monotonous drudgery of his mundane day-to-day life relents only during those beautiful moments of adrenaline-pumping intensity when he goes out on a kill, as such, the pace of the story jumps and shifts according to the protagonist’s state of mind.

Adam Watts articulates a whole range of cynical observations through Dean’s often hilariously pessimistic rants about people and society, which I somewhat worryingly found myself completely agreeing with. Like a British working-class echo of American Psycho, Watts’ graphic imagination is at times truly horrific - an essential quality for any good purveyor of horror. All signs point towards a bright future for this young novelist. Jamie Rhodes

**Make Less Strangers**

Steven Wilcoxson

This third publication from recently formed Weathersvane Press proves conclusively that they are serious about publishing local talent and, perhaps more encouragingly, in taking risks.

I say this because Make Less Strangers is a debut not only by an unknown and young author, but one which does not conform to the usual narrative structure. Set in the endless happy hour of sex, self harm and substance abuse that was early noughties Nottingham club culture, we are taken through a fractured narrative that rapidly cuts between characters as they collide on their hedonistic pursuits.

On occasion the meanderings are quite beautiful, such as the short sharp listing of details which punctuates the narrative.

At times Wilcoxson is too adventurous and abstract, potentially boring a reader’s attention. Overall, however, this is an admirable 106-page gamble that reads like the bastard child of Quentin Tarantino and Bret Easton Ellis. James Walker

**The Sky, Head On**

Cathy Grindrod

Shoestring Press, £8.95

Cathy Grindrod was Derbyshire Poet Laureate from 2006 to 2007 - but we won’t hold that against her. Her fifth collection The Sky, Head On has just been published by the Besotted-based Shoestring Press.

Characters in these poems are seeking escape, their experiences of life is often weighed up and revealed through observation of the natural world, while evocative images of flowers echo from one poem to the next – as ineffective herbal medicine, photographic subject and sensual metaphor: “A girl stands waiting / waiting at a bus stop / arms full of cornflowers / that uncompromising blue” and “waking chilled / she finds herself alone / inside a fridge field.”

Cathy’s poems have appeared in a number of publications and anthologies through the years. Her skill at capturing intense emotions with a reflective, original voice shines through in this latest collection. Look out for Beeston Lock, The Nottingham Mechanics on North Sherwood Street and a painting from Nottingham Castle all making an appearance. Aly Stonesman
The Engines of Armageddon
The Engine of Armageddon
Album (Self-released)

The metal world is not exactly right now. The charts are awash with X Factor idola, you can’t walk into a local bar without being assaulted by Lady Gaga and the metal section of any big music shop is confined to a few tiny areas. It is not the best of times for new bands. But the members of Armageddon are a world away from Simon Cowell’s protégés, sounding like Hella Belis blasting out from the speakers on opener ‘Praglogue’. The band chimp and change styles so fast that it’s often hard to keep up with them, moving from early Metallica-style thrash guitars, through to long, drawn out and slow solos and numerous fea-ins accompanied by growling singing. Songs like Shock and Ave and I Am A Suicide Border show how accomplished this band already is, with all three band members clearly being talented musicians. Pull marks to them for coming up with an album this rewarding first time around. Engines Of Armageddon are willing to bring all different styles to the table in an effort to produce a rarity of late - a really exciting and individual metal album. As long as the band are willing to try new things, the gumes may have a bright future after all. Lauren Walker

Available to buy from Amazon or from the band’s website
enginesofarmageddon.com

In Isolation
Virus
Single (Self-released)

In Isolation are a four-piece band based in Nottingham, aiming at a fusing of blonde comedy of contemporary and eighties indie with new wave and post punk. Virus is their latest single, and this slab of angular guitar rock, available as an mp3 download, is anything but stark - it presents a slick and well-produced homage to new romantic synth pop with a guitar-driven twist. Perhaps most surprising and distinctive are Ryan Swift’s vocals which teleport us back Tardis-style to the days of Simon Le Bon - romantic synth pop with a guitar-driven twist. Perhaps most surprising and distinctive are Ryan Swift’s vocals which teleport us back Tardis-style to the days of Simon Le Bon -

Glades
The Glades EP
EP (Self-released)

Glades’ self-titled debut EP is an interesting listen. The band’s first album Leaf and Feals among their influences. But they may wish to consider adding Clap Your Hands Say Yeah to that, as opening track I’m Not A Climber bears similarities to the American group’s 2005 debut album. The sound of Yannis Philippakis is evident though on second track From A Different Town; this punchy punk definitely wouldn’t be out of place in a packed out Rescue Rooms. The three-track EP reaches its climax with perhaps its best offering. Though its title One Day Dearer Bit May Explore may seem to have little to do with the song, you’ll be humming the guitar hooks for hours after. The band’s range of artistic inspiration for this musical sampler has served them well; they produce a polished sound that sits up well near to their contemporaries. Glades is a promising start from the simple yet sublime slide-guitar line that is one of those touches advised to have a listen. This should be a definite purchase in the near future for any of indie disposition. If you wear Balletts and have a taste for disco, this song screams radio-friendliness and is sure to win them some notice. Watch this space...

Available from the band at gigs or to download from iTunes
myspace.com/gladesband

Lisa de’Ville
Reverie
EP (Self-released)

It’s usually the dark and mysterious things in life that are the most intriguing and seductive, and this is certainly the case here. Lisa de’Ville is something of a veteran of the local music scene having played in various bands including Black Vinyl Heart. But now she is striking out on her own, and as a showcase for her musical talents and songwriting ingenuity, this EP hits the mark. Lisa has a beautiful soaring voice which has the potential to cut your heart in two in the same breath. Lyrically she is bang on the money with pressed guitar melodies and creepy all over this EP; giving it a rather autumnal and sombre tone. Blue glides along on a simple yet sublime slide-guitar line that is one of those touches that turns a song from good to “Oh my god this is great”. Although Lisa comes across as introspective on this EP you get the feeling that she is no pussee and has a well stocked arsenal of weaponry which is only shown to those that truly deserve it. This EP proves that the dark side is always the more attractive option. It is a case of the sweetest songs being those that tell of saddest things. Paul Johncock

Available from Lisa’s website or at her gigs
lisadeville.com

Theorist
World Put of Robolos
From mild-mannered Metal Mickey to the terrifying T1000, the human race’s relationship with robots has always been a strained one. Acting like the audio equivalent of Will Smith in I, Robot, Notts born-and-bred band Theorist present this Eastern promise of a futuristic, cybernetic aural attack on a world of androids. Best known under the name Zero Theory, his classic hip-hop beats on local thyme heavyweight Cape’s Oop Out I and 2 albums are legendary. These were followed up by a producer EP release on Breakin’ Head which, if you can’t get hold of the homemade originals, you should definitely buy. Theorist wastes no time with pleasantries, enquiring on opener Theorist How would you feel if you were the only human in a world full of robots? No time to think as a mighty drum track comes crashing in, rousing a war cry in the listener before before presenting the ever changing, ever changing,

Here’s To Tragedy
In Flames
On 14th Oct 2005 (Self-released)

I’ve heard an old wives’ tale that super skinny jeans increase the blood flow between the heart and the brain, increasing a feeling of energy and giving the eye causes poor depth perception. Here’s To Tragedy are more proof that skin tight skinny jeans, is bad for your health, but highly addictive. This EP is a hitofotious emo-tronica. Clearly schooled by AFF’s Davvy Harlow, singer Sia proves an expert in emo crooning. “I’m gunna send shockwaves through your core” he warns with a heart full of unnerving and perversent intent. The title track conjures images of a glanced-up-Enter Shikari. With stadium rock chorals anthems and unpostetious guitar work, To The Shade of 14 could ride comfortably on the airwaves of their taezy emo peers. I Wish I Had A Girl Like Vikki Boys is a 1000mph drag race against the likes of Pendulum and The Flaint, while Sp Tuấn is a shimmerring bubble of pop rock. Final track Caught In The Piring Line makes a slow burning, haunting sensation, urging the listener to “embrace only the shadows” and “deny the warming light” before coupling a feel of the main’s gothic side to a blissful, spellbinding, warm and inviting sound

Available from the band at gigs or through their MySpace
myspace.com/herestotragedy

Mas Y Mas
La Bala
Album (Self-released)

La Bala, the third record from cross-cultural musical conquistadors Mas Y Mas is a deliciously rich mixture of Latin rhythms, soul, flamenco styles and fancy vocals. The album is wonderfully against the grain compared to any other release from Tooting Nomads press release. It would be easy to cringe yourself into despair and put a MySpace pose if the songs weren’t punctuated by sharp electronic flourishes, flair and an over-reaching passion

Available from all major download sites, at gigs and through the band’s website
masymas.co.uk

WIGFLEX003
Shortstuff - Regressia / Taylor - Squexge (Split 12" WIGflex)

Having a blossoming electronic label on Notts ‘doreste’ is very significant. Being too young and too far away from Wellington I was delighted to hear the early days of the Warp label, which is now considered the stuff of legend.

Now, however, I have the chance to follow an excellent label from its humble beginnings, rejoice at their triumphs and smile as their artists garner more much-deserved attention. The first foats Shortstuff’s ‘Regressia’ track, Regressia, which is dominated by a great beat. The track starts simply enough until the melodies all come in at one in a time. Xylophone-like sounds play off one another until washing synth fades in and becomes the song’s central theme. It’s a great hook for a dance floor filler. Taylor’s Squexge opens like Pac-Man on an increased pleasant musical mood with a - computer keyboard motif introduces the track and is slowly chased by synthetics and waveforms before building atmospheres, beats and sy nephogies which are equal parts Ausbehts and Boards of Canada. The track slowly evolves into a sort of electronic slow dance, surrounded in mystery but with just enough impact and pace to keep folks on their feet. Keep your eyes on wigflex at all times, and if you can attend one of their club nights then I’d advise you to jump at the chance. Anthony Whitton

Available on vinyl from OhMyGhosh Records, Junk, Boomkat, and Chiwix UK. Download available from Beatport. wigflex.com

You can now listen to one track from each review on our Sound Of The Lion podcast. Visit leftlion.co.uk/sotl and sound of the lion podcast. Visit leftlion.co.uk/sotl and
NEW YEAR, NEW MUSIC

It’s a brand spanking new year and with it comes a whole bunch of bands for you to check out and around and about our fair city. From eighties pop to nineties metal and cheese to local talent and garage - give your tabs a boost with this lot: Peaky Alligators, Spaceships are Cool, Cheeney Hawkes, The Curtis Whitefinger Ordeal, Lean Valley Band, Nitche Ebb, Marina and the Diamonds, Hot Chip, Hadouken!, (Hed)PE, Katastoria, Burn The Negative, Idle Hands, UK Beatboxing Championships, Stiff Kittens and The Four Tops.

Light Night is back, for its third year, to brighten up the dark landscape for the weekend of 12-13 February; musical highlights include a Leftlion and Dealmaker Extravaganza in Trinity Square. Our DJ-based line up includes sets from Red Rack’em, Vayl Absort, Beatmasta Bill, Win GB and Yuna. Dealmaker. More info at leftlion.co.uk/trinity

Valentine’s Day is the same weekend and for the love birds amongst us there’s Pitty Patt’s - Lovers Lounge. One venue worth a mention by heading dahn London Town, we’ve got it all cultured then don’t be chucking money away if your new years resolution is to get a bit more impressed by that plethora of aural delights?

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If any band in the city deserves the ‘ones to watch’ tag, it’s The Swiines. Scott Bugg, Adi Young, Daniel Taylor and Rory Black have been casting their spiky-pop pearls across the city for the best part of eighteen months, supporting the likes of The Holloways and The Subways, and getting noticed by the likes of BBC 6 Music. So Sarah Morrison caught up with them for a chat about their upcoming new single, growing up with Britpop and giving Nottingham a right proper slap...

Adi, what inspired you to become a musician?

The love of music. I started playing guitar at 15/16 or so when Britpop was happening, listening to Oasis Colour Scene and Kula Blacker, and just wanted to be a rock star from then. Everyone went round school acting like they were Liam.

So how did the four of you link up?

From two other bands, The Bots and The Arcane. We all got together for a jam - just to play some music, 'cos we were still with our other bands. We didn’t want to break them up, but we all just clicked and everything sounded great - so we formed The Swiines.

What can punters expect from a Swiines gig?

An all round guarantee; visuals, music…people just wanna get involved when they see us. It’s about music at the end of the day, innit? We’re not just some typical indie band with jangly guitars. It’s more full-on - people have said it’s a proper rock ‘n’ roll sound.

What’s your favourite gig been?

Rock City, when we supported Subways, was definitely the most memorable. That was the biggest. I mean, we had roadies, and could hear the cheering while we were backstage. But we were talking about this the other day - we kinda prefer the smaller gigs.

What’s your gig like?

Well, we play a mixture of original stuff and covers, we’ve got a lot from ‘90s and ‘90s, and Amazon and Spotify. And come out and see us play!

Describe your songwriting process…

It’s nothing formal really - a lot of improvising, feeding off each other. They usually come from one of Scott’s ideas, we’ll have a bit of a jam and whatever comes out of it usually sounds pretty good.

Who are your heroes?

In recent years, Alex Turner - his lyrics are just phenomenal. Going back, the Gallagher brothers made the 90s for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude for me, it was happy days. And Kurt Cobain - the whole grunge attitude...
NOTTINGHAM EVENT LISTINGS...

Monday 01/02
Rave Monsta Radio
The Loft
Free, 8pm - 1am

Notts in a Nutshell
The Maze
£3, 8pm
With The Franchise, Apollo, Cavalry, Upium Toad and Stay For The Festival.

Thursday 04/02
Sonny Side Up
Bonnington Theatre
£10 / £8 conc, 8pm
Stan Sulmaz (tenor), Jim Mulllen (guitar), Steve Watts (bass) and Tristan Mathioli (drums).

Wire and Wool
The Alley Cafe
Free, 8pm - 12am
With Undercats Hicks, Mortmouth, Beatmasta Bill, Cooper, Paul Mincher and Jake Bugg.

The Wiyos
The Maze
£10, 7.30pm
Plus support

SIBA National Beer Festival
Canalside Bar and Restaurant
Free, 12am - 12am
Runs until: 07/02

Mandy Tatton Band
The Hubb
Free, 5pm

Dive : FOAMO [Chew The Fat!]
The Market Bar
£3, 9pm

Dogma Presents MJ Cole
Dance
Free, 8pm - 1am

Friday 05/02
Oceansize
Rock City
£10, 7pm

4am Forever
The Lion Inn
Free, 9pm - 11pm

Friday 05/02
Marble
The Maze
£4, 9pm

Put Two Sugars in it: Dolly Disco
The Alley Cafe
Free, 8.30pm - 1am

Saturday 06/02
Percussion
The Loft
Free, 8pm - 1am

Artificed
The Chameleon Cafe Bar
8.30pm
Plus Dutch Schultz, Beyond This Point Are Monsters and Cyril Snear

Outriders
The Lion Inn
Free, 9pm - 11pm

Fade
Gatecrasher
£8 / £10, 10pm - 4am

Notts in a Nutshell
The Maze
£3, 8pm

The Soul Ska Shakedown
The Golden Fleece
Free, 9pm - late

SAD!
The Chameleon Cafe Bar
£4 advance, 8pm

I'm Not From London
The Malt Cross
Free, 8pm - 12am

Spaceships Are Cool, Tim McDonald and The Leisure Class, Duicnea and Owain-My Dark Star Rising.

Wholesome Fish
The Hubb
Free, 9pm

Julie Butler Fundraiser
The Coop
£3, £4, 7.30pm

With Scarlet's Wake, Tina Taylor, Phil Ashmore, Sharp Knees and Scotty Egg.

Tuesday 07/02
Artificed
The Chameleon
£8, 8.30pm
Plus Dutch Schultz, Cyril Snear ad Beyond This Point Are Monsters

Lostprophets
Rock City
£22.50, 7.30pm
with support from Young Guns.

She Keeps Bees
The Rescue Rooms
£7, 7.30pm

Tuesday 09/02
NME Awards Tour 2010
Rock City
£15.56, 7.30pm

The Maccabees, Bombay Bicycle Club, The Big Pink and The Drums.

Rack and Ruin
The Maze
£4, 8pm

Tuesday 09/02
Bonsai Band!
The Malt Cross
Free, 8pm

Wednesday 10/02
Mike Snow
The Rescue Rooms
£7.50, 7.30pm

Chesney Hawkes
The Malt
£10 adv, 8pm

Thursday 11/02
Empirical
Bonnington Theatre
£10 / £12, 8pm

Nathaniel Pacey, Lewis Wright, Tom Farmer and Shaney Forbes.

Notts in a Nutshell
The Maze
£3, 8pm

Last Call Home, Twenty Year Hurricane and more tbc.

Deli
The Hubb
Free, 9pm

Dogma Presents TRG
Dogma
Golf, Ashburner, Senate and Yossh.

Friday 12/02
Fusion Club
The Loft
Free, 8pm - 1am
Dynamic (Good Looking records), Kaysha, Beggar Su.

Idle Hands
The Lion Inn
Free, 9pm - 11pm

Rubber Room
The Maze
£3, 8pm

Pit of Curiosities
The Rescue Rooms
£3, 8pm - 11pm

Dj Katie
The Hubb
Free, 9pm

Flight Club
Maze
Free before 10pm / £4, 9pm - 3am

Wednesday 10/02
Hot Pink 66
The Robin Hood
Free, 9pm

Hot Club De Paris
The Bodega
£6, 7pm

Doolip
Steadfast
£10, 10pm
with Erol Alkan and Rustie.

Saturday 13/02
Manière des Bohémens
The Malt Cross
£3, 8pm

Reprogression
The Loft
Free, 8pm - 1am

Krusadad
The Lion Inn
Free, 9pm - 11pm

Fade
Gatecrasher
£8 / £10, 10pm - 4am

Notts in a Nutshell
The Malt
£10, 9pm

With Luke Black, Paul Sekhri, Mark Cohen and DJ Wax on.

Pitty Patt Romance O Rama
Circus of the Casanova
The Bodega
£6, 8pm

With Cherry Deville, Ruby Rose, Miles Away and Billie Rae.

Ghoul Garden
The Maze
£3.50, 8pm

Love Ends Disaster!
The Rescue Rooms
£3, 7pm
Plus Stop Eject and Pope Joan.

Blaze Bayley
Rock City
£7, 7pm
Plus Sincence.

Francis Dunnery
The Hoot
£20, 7pm

Junk Yard
Gatecrasher
£8, 10pm - 4am

Notts in a Nutshell
The Malt
£10, 10pm

With Luke Black, Paul Sekhri and Mark Cohen

Fench-Soler
Steadfast
£5, 10.15pm

NIS EXBOYS DO IT INDOORS

The skate kings of Notts keep rolling on

Established in 2007 and the only independent skateboard company that’s owned and run by Nottingham skateboarders, Nise was born of the need for somewhere to skate where the British weather couldn’t drench you and the police couldn’t nick you.

Founded by Benjamin Durman-Fletcher and his second-in-command Thomas Strevey, Nise commenced operations by renting a studio space in Sneinton and building an indoor ramp, creating a safe, friendly environment for local skaters. Nowadays, they sell skateboard hardware and apparel on their website, have just released their first DVD and are on the hunt for new places to install ramps.

The entire music operandi of Nis is to keep it Notts (as borne out by their commitment to using local artists, designers and manufacturers as often as possible). They also have a strong anti-minginess policy, with realistic pricing, subsidising trips for younger skaters, and the fact that any profits go straight back into running the project.

If you’ve just taken up the sport, they should be your first point of contact. With over a century of boarding experience between ‘em, they’re only a phone call or email away if you need help or advice, and they’re commencing weekly tuition sessions at Sproatbridge Leisure Centre between 12pm and 2pm every Saturday from February – so if you want to hone your skills and get immersed in the Notts skateboarding scene, email ben@niseskateboards.com for further details.

For more: www.niseskateboards.com

Nis Boys Do It Indoors

Nis Boys Do It Indoors

Friday 05/02

CULT 45S

DJ Bailey joins the Cult for one night only

The mighty Cult are one of the top dogs on the Notts dancefloor scene, and renowned for bringing some of the most forward-thinking DJ/DJs artists in the game to Hootdowns - Pabio, Marcus Intalex, Kabuki and Lonxus, B.P.Y and Big Bud have all played some blinding sets for Cult in recent months. And now they’ve relocated to a cozy new home.

The recently refurbished Market Bar is the place to get all Cult from now on, and there are reasons why. The state-of-art Function One sound system, the extended license that will give you up to 4am to bust a move, and the fact that it’s one of the skillest venues in Goosegate.

To celebrate Cult DJ sessions’ second birthday, they’ve lined up Radio 1Xtra legend DJ Bailey to bless the decks on 5 March. With over fifteen years service on the DnB scene, Bailey is a highly respected icon of the genre whose bookings now stretch across the globe, whilst his Radio 1Xtra show has been grabbing many awards and accolades throughout its seven-year stint.

More importantly, Bailey is a veteran turntablist who was one of the original residents at the legendary Metalheadz nights at the Blue Note club in London – so he’s not just going to roll up with a record bag and stand over the decks all night. Having perfected this craft, he can’t be found and foremost, and he knows how to work a crowd.

Bassheads and scrub sessions second birthday, Friday 5 March. 10pm-4am. The Market Bar, 22 Goscroft, Huckley, NG11 1FP. Tickets: £5

Cult Drum and Bass sessions second birthday, Friday 6 March. 10pm-4am. The Market Bar, 22 Goscroft, Huckley, NG11 1FP. Tickets: £5

www.cultur.co.uk
**Event Listings...**

**Sunday 14/02**
- Pitty Patt Burlesque Workshop
  - The Bodega
  - £15, 1.30pm
- Lovers Lounge
  - The Maze
  - £2, 6pm
- Me and Mr Jones
  - The Hubb
  - Free, 9pm

**Monday 15/02**
- Acoustickle
  - The Maze
  - £3, 8pm
- Hot Chip
  - Rock City
  - £17.50, 7.30pm
- The Lost Levels
  - The Bodega
  - £5, 8pm

**Tuesday 16/02**
- Club Vadar
  - The Maze
  - £3 / £4, 8pm
  - Bonus Beyond, Sideways Falling and Arcanite Reaper.
- The Jon Allen Band
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £8.50, 7.30pm
- Blonde Louis
  - The Bodega
  - £5, 7pm
- ‘Multa
  - The Malt Cross
  - Free, 8pm

**Wednesday 17/02**
- Futures
  - Rock City
  - £6, 7pm
- Richie Muir
  - The Approach
  - Free, 9pm
- Holly Williams
  - The Maze
  - £10, 7.30pm
- Marina and the Diamonds
  - The Bodega
  - £8.50, 7pm

**Thursday 18/02**
- Nik Kershaw
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £16, 7.30pm
- Gracious K (Migraine Skank)
  - Stealth
  - £5, 7pm
- Shinel
  - The Maze
  - £9, 7.30pm
  - A club night for those with learning disabilities.
- An Audience with Billy Davies
  - The Approach
  - £10 - £30, 7pm
  - Is the Premier League Calling?
- Ben Martin Band
  - The Hubb
  - Free, 9pm
- Straight Lines
  - Rock City
  - £6, 7pm

**Friday 19/02**
- Nitzer Ebb
  - Rock City
  - £15, 7pm
- UK Beatbox Championship
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £7, 8pm
- Toasted Frog
  - The Lion Inn
  - Free, 9pm - 11pm

**Eklektik**
- The Maze
  - £4 / £5, 9pm - late
  - Goli and Ashburner, 25 Past the Skank (Live), Hanuman, Still Motion, Beatmasta Bill and Thingyman.
- Swansong
  - The Robin Hood
  - Free, 9pm

**Saturday 20/02**
- Wholese Fiska
  - The Malt Cross
  - £5.30, 8pm
- Kris Ward
  - The Approach
  - Free, 5pm
- Oh My Gosh! - Boom Bap
  - The Loft
  - Free, 8pm - 1am
  - Four Deck set with Squigglely and Furious P.
- Evil Scarecrow
  - Rock City
  - £5, 7pm
  - Plus special guests Sons of Merrick and Isolysis.
- Elvis Fontenot and the Swampers
  - The Lion Inn
  - Free, 9pm - 11pm
- Stiff Kittens
  - The Bodega
  - Free, 10pm-1am
- Fade
  - Gatecrasher
  - £8 / £10, 10pm - 4am
- Smokeskreen
  - The Maze
  - £5, 10pm - 4am
- So Many Dynamos
  - Stealth
  - £5, 10.5pm
- Jennifer Batten Deux
  - £35, 1pm - 4pm
  - Get guitar lessons from Michael Jackson World Tour member.

**Sunday 21/02**
- John Gomme
  - The Hubb
  - Free, 9pm
- Folkwit Sunday
  - The Robin Hood
  - Free, 8pm
  - Jason Steel and Prints In The Snow.
- Rock City
  - £10, 7.30pm

**Monday 22/02**
- Catch Me I’m Naked
  - The Maze
  - £5, 8pm
- The Brothers Movement
  - The Bodega
  - £5, 8pm
- Noisettes
  - Rock City
  - £14, 7.30pm

**Tuesday 23/02**
- Cole Stacey
  - The Maze
  - £5, 8pm
- Mastodon
  - Rock City
  - £16, 7.30pm

**Wednesday 24/02**
- Bizarre presents
  - Rock City
  - £11, 3.30pm
  - Chipmunk, Daisy Dares You, Tine Tempah and Skepta.
- Notts in a Nutshell
  - The Maze
  - £3, 8pm
- The Rutherford, Aliment Collective, Noel Street, The Hubris and more tbc.
- The Heavy
  - The Bodega
  - £8.50, 7.50pm
- Nick Harper
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £10, 7.30pm

**Thursday 25/02**
- Nick Coady Quartet
  - Bonnington Theatre
  - £10 / £12, 8pm
  - Robbie Robson, Peter King, Ross Stanley, Nick Coady and Steve Keogh.
- Local Natives
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £9, 7pm
- Toby Kennedy Trio
  - The Hubb
  - Free, 9pm
- Swimming
  - The Bodega
  - £8, 5pm

**Thursday 25/02**
- This City
  - Rock City
  - £3, 10pm
- Roger Clyne and the Peacemakers
  - The Maze
  - £10, 7.30pm
  - Plus Owen Harvey.

**Friday 26/02**
- Pesky Aliigators
  - The Lion Inn
  - Free, 9pm - 11pm
- Those Monsters
  - The Old Angel
  - £5, 8.30pm
  - Plus Alright The Captain.
- Old Basford
  - The Hubb
  - Free, 9pm

**Saturday 27/02**
- Soasiss
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £10, 7pm
- Dee Dymond
  - The Approach
  - Free, 5pm
- DJ Cosmos B’day Bash
  - The Loft
  - £8, 9pm - 1am
- Imperial Days
  - The Loft
  - Free, 8pm - 1am
- First Aid Kit
  - The Bodega
  - £8, 7pm
- New Tricks
  - The Lion Inn
  - Free, 9pm - 11pm
- Fade
  - Gatecrasher
  - £8 / £10, 10pm - 4am
  - Eric Prytz, Antonio Vendone, Paul Lyman, The Element Sound System and DJ Angelo.

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**Ale’d Basford**

No Roar deals at The Lion at Basford

Standing under the striking shadow of the old Shippoo Brewery, The Lion at Basford is a gem in the rough of traditional pubs, drawing in both locals and Real Ale Seekers far and wide. Not only does it stock a veritable cornucopia of non-Pissy Bir beverages, but it’s also rammed with history; its beer cellars are part of the original Nottingham cave network and are some of the deepest in the city.

Playing host to regular regional CAMRA festivals, it has a longstanding reputation as one of the best traditional pubs in Notts, with up to a dozen ales on permanent standby. At least two are local beers. Microbreweries don’t get overlooked either.

As you’d expect, the snap is traditional too, with snacks, light bites and grills a-plenty on offer – as well as curry-and-a-pint for £5.95 on Wednesdays.

Ale and food is not all that The Lion offers though; oh no; it’s a quality live music venue too, with their Sunday lunch jazz sessions, Tuesday night blues jam and their Thursday open mic evening.

With good jazz not that easy to find in Nottingham, the former has been a staple of The Lion for fifteen years, putting it head and, er, mane above the rest. Well worth a short tram hop.

44 Mosley Street, New Basford, Nottingham, NG7 7FQ

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For More: [lefthion.co.uk/lists](http://lefthion.co.uk/lists)
Tuesday 02/03

Tubelord and Tall Ships
The Chameleon
£6, 7.30pm

Tinchy Stryder
Rock City
£14, 7.30pm

Wednesday 03/03

The Stranglers
Rock City
£23, 6.30pm

Revolution Sounds
The Maze
£8, 8pm

Thursday 04/03

Carlene Carter
The Maze
£17, 7.30pm

Haddouken!
The Rescue Rooms
£12.50, 7pm

Friday 05/03

Splinter
The Robin Hood
Free, 9pm

Heaven’s Basement
Rock City
£7.50, 7pm

Saturday 06/03

Percussion
The Leave
Free, 8pm - 1am

Fade
Gatecrasher
£8 / £10, 10pm - 4am

Tuesday 06/03

Trivium
Rock City
£16.50, 6.30pm

Nat Johnson and The Figureheads
The Bodega
£5, 7pm

Borderline
The Hubb
Free, 5pm

de10Shn Sound: 7th Bday!
Image Bar
£5, 8pm - 4am

Sunday 07/03

Vader
The Central
£12, 6.30pm

Plus As You drown, Divine Chaos, Lodkaeron and Threndy.

(HED) PE
The Rescue Rooms
£10, 6.30pm

Threat Signal and Attila.

Tuesday 09/03

Lisa Mitchell
The Bodega
£6.50, 7pm

Audio Bullys
The Rescue Rooms
£12.50, 7.30pm

ATC / BTPAM - Split EP Launch
The Chameleon
£3, 8.30pm

Wednesday 10/03

Gift of Gab
The Rescue Rooms
£10, 7.30pm

Katatonia
Rock City
£6, 7pm

Wednesday 10/03

The Invisible
The Bodega
£7, 7pm

L-VIS 1990
The Market Bar
£3, 9pm

Thursday 11/03

Brazilica
The Hubb
Free, 9pm

Dag For Dag
The Bodega
£6, 8pm

Friday 12/03

The 69 Eyes
Rock City
£11, 7pm

Aba-Shanti-I Soundsystem
The Maze
£5.99, 8pm - 2am

Saturday 13/03

Karnivool
Rock City
£8, 7.30pm

Saturday 06/03

Star City: The Future Under Communism
Nottingham Contemporary set the bar high with their debut exhibitions from Francis Stark and David Hockney, and it seems they aren’t going to drop their standards anytime soon. As part of Polska! Year of Polish Culture, Star City is a major – and unprecedented – exhibition inspired by science fiction and futurology under Cold War communism during the sixties and seventies. This, according to co-curator, Lukasz Ronduda, was “the last time people living in Warsaw Pact countries believed in the future.”

Star City - named after the USSR’s secret cosmonaut base - showcases leading artists of the post-communist European art scene who revisit how the future was experienced and imagined from the other side of the Iron Curtain, and explain why those visions are important today. The list of artists is too extensive to mention but, impressively, over half of the works on display have been commissioned especially for the exhibition. Pieces featured range from film to print to installations to sculptures. In addition, there will be a range of real objects from the Space Race and Soviet popular culture, including propaganda posters, sci-fi toys and a life-sized sputnik replica.

The works within Star City are by turns socio-political and imaginary, melancholic and absurd, ravishing and satiric. One of the highlights includes a huge sculpture, by Tomaszewski and Malinowska, of the first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova. The piece will occupy the entire 300-metre square room - appropriately named, The Space – and you’ll be able to enter the cosmonaut-cum-deity through revolving doors that are situated between her open legs, which isn’t an invitation anyone should turn down in haste. Tobias Putrih will be building a retro-futuristic cinema, made from the glass walls of a seventies Yugoslavian supermarket, to accommodate the screening of Nakevichus’s alternative ending to the Tarkovsky’s seventies cult classic, Solaris.

Star City: The Future Under Communism looks to be an important, ambitious and impressive exhibition that shouldn’t be missed by young or old. Equally, it will emphasise the space that Nottingham Contemporary has to offer as a gallery.

Star City, 13 February-18 April 2010, Nottingham Contemporary, Weekday Cross, NG1 2GB
nottinghamcontemporary.org

Valentia’s Day
Star City: The Future Under Communism

Nottingham Contemporary
### Saturday 13/03
- Reprogression
  - The Loft
  - Free, 8pm - 1am
- Ghoul Garden
  - The Maze
  - £3.50, 9pm
- DJ Mark Hughes
  - The Hubb
  - Free, 9pm
- The Pity Pat Club
  - The Bodega
  - £6, 8pm

### Saturday 20/03
- The Fillers
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £10, 7pm
- Him
  - Rock City
  - £20, 6.30pm
- Lean Valley Band
  - The Hubb
  - Free, 9pm

### Monday 15/03
- Fan Lovin’ Criminals
  - Rock City
  - £17.50, 7.30pm
- Autechre
  - Stealth
  - £10, 8pm
- Rob Hall, Russell Haswell and Didjit.

### Friday 19/03
- NorthSea International
  - The Robin Hood
  - Free, 9pm
- The Hidden Cameras
  - The Bodega
  - £11, 7pm
- Edguy
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £15, 6.30pm

### Saturday 27/03
- Emery
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £10, 7pm
- Burn The Negative
  - Stealth
  - £5, 10.15pm
- Ronnie Londons Groove Lounge
  - Grosvenor
  - £3 before 11pm, 8pm - 1am

### Sunday 21/03
- Turin Brakes
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £16.50, 7.30pm
- Stiff Little Fingers
  - Rock City
  - £15, 7.30pm
- Brother Ali
  - The Bodega
  - £8.50, 7pm

### Wednesday 24/03
- Theo Silver
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £13.50, 7.30pm

### Friday 26/03
- Funky Thump
  - The Loft
  - Free, 8pm - 1am
- Nachtmystium
  - Rock City
  - £8, 7pm
- Smokin’ Hogs
  - The Robin Hood
  - Free, 9pm

### Saturday 27/03
- The Fillers
  - The Rescue Rooms
  - £10, 7pm
- Ronnie Londons Groove Lounge
  - Grosvenor
  - £3 before 11pm, 8pm - 1am

### Sunday 28/03
- The Sunday Sessions
  - The Robin Hood
  - Free, 6.30pm

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### Writing Industries Conference, Saturday 6 March, Loughborough University / writingindustries.com

Attention, wordsmiths looking to take a huge step in their literary careers: quite possibly the most intelligent thing you could do all year would be to attend the Writing Industries Conference, held in March at Loughborough University. WIC 2010 will bring together writers from across the East Midlands professionals from the writing industries to share knowledge, develop skills and forge new contacts.

200 writers from the region will have the opportunity to hear from and meet with writing industries professionals in a variety of settings: there’ll be a series of panel discussions exploring specific areas of writing, from breaking into commercial publishing to working in the community (including our own Editor, Al Needham, gobbling off about his sex blog Todger Talk). There’ll be a fair featuring stalls from local publishers, funders and other organisations. And there’ll be plenty of opportunity to meet, talk, chat up and God knows what else with others over a coffee.

Perhaps because Writing East Midlands and the Literature Network are helping to coordinate the conference there is a real writer-focused emphasis to the events, the culmination of which is the opportunity to have one-to-one sessions with agents and editors. That’s right, you read correctly: there’s an opportunity to physically talk to someone important about your own work, although places for this are limited - see writingindustries.com for application details.

Tickets for this event are going for £42, but LeftLion would like to offer one lucky member from our forum a bursary to attend WIC 2010. Details of how to apply can be found on the WriteLion #4 podcast, which will feature further information from conference coordinators Aly Stoneman, Damien Walter and Catherine Rogers.

### Scribe Vibe

The cream of East Midlands writers are linking up in Loughborough - and LeftLion want to get you in for nowt!

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Writing Industries Conference, Saturday 6 March, Loughborough University / writingindustries.com

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### Scratch Night!

SATURDAY NIGHT KNEE UP!

**Great Attractions**

- **At the Malt Cross**
  - Every week our resident bands & DJ’s will astound & entertain!
  - 8pm till late
  - £3 on door
  - More details: www.maltcross.net

**Friday Night Reggae**

**12th March**

- Dub Roots Reggae
  - Proceeds to Caribbean Forest Conservation
  - 8pm ‘til 2am
  - @ The Maze/Forest Tavern
  - 257 Mansfield Road, Nottingham NG1 3EF
  - Venue tel. 01159475650
  - More info at: www.myspace.com/tropicaldubstorm

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### Good Intent & UK House of Roots presents

**The Mighty Aba-Shanti-I Soundsystem**

**For the First Time in Nottingham**

**The Man Who Rocks Leicester Carnival Year to Year!**
There’s a new art gallery in town - but it’s not in the Lace Market...

Opening in November 2009, Cuadros Contemporary Art Gallery is situated within Huckley (inhabiting the space that was formerly Plank) and cements the city’s reputation as the fastest-growing art scene in the UK.

The aim of Cuadros is to celebrate local and international artists by sourcing, displaying and selling artwork at reasonable prices. A mere nose around its cozy duplex space tells you all you need to know; impressive original pieces alongside signed, limited edition prints by world class, highly collectable artists.

Prior to opening Cuadros, owner George managed a chain of galleries, which gave him the impetus to support and represent artists of his own taste. Cuadros has also been set up to help in the promotion and education of contemporary approaches to art in Nottingham, whilst bringing the personal touch which can often be lost in commercial art spaces.

The gallery is also proud to represent graffiti artists Urban Camrae who specialise in large-scale street art for community projects and developers as part of Nottingham’s regeneration schemes. Jon Burgerman and Tim Lee are just two of the many local artists making waves internationally that the space is keen to promote. Upcoming events will include everything from one-man shows to group exhibitions, making Cuadros well worth a visit

Cuadros. 1A Heachcoat Street, Huckley, NG3 3AR
There’s no place like home when you’re hungry and for a great range of both Indian and Bangladeshi dishes, try Bombay Brasserie in Mapperley.

Bombay Brasserie

7 Thurland Street, NG1 3DR

www.bombaybrasseriedofomapperley.com

JAMCAFE
What a delightful spread

It’s probably better known as a coffee shop and a music venue around these parts, but the Hickley-based JamCafé do a great line in tasty and ethically-sourced food, too. The moment you walk in, you immediately sense a laid-back and creative atmosphere. With big leather sofas or dining chairs to sit on, intriguing sixties and seventies memorabilia adorning the walls and a consistently good selection of music, they definitely have plenty of style. Plus when we ate there they played Tom Waits songs all night too. Reassuring?

If you’re going in early in the day, choose from their breakfast special (muffins, scrambled eggs, steakby bacon, sautéed mushrooms, polp chopita and homemade baked beans - £5.25), chunky toast and jam for two (£3.50), boiled egg and soldiers (£2.95). Welsh rarebit (£3.65) or smoked salmon and scrambled eggs (£4.65). If you want a quick fix for lunch, there’s a wide selection of sandwiches, wraps and melts such as crispy bacon and beetroot (£4.25), hummus and toasted veg (£4.25), falafel pitta (£4.45) and minted brie pitta (£4.45). Throw in a dozen or so sides and sauces to choose from and this could be a good place for an informal lunch with friends or colleagues.

But if you go there for your evening dinner then you’ll see that they save their best for then. I went for the smoked haddock with chorizo (£5.65) served with sweet potato mash and a spicy tomato sauce. The combination of the fish and spicy sausage might not seem the most obvious, but it worked a treat and left me wanting more. My guest went for the chicken Balti (7.95) with cranberry and leeks, worked in Serrano ham and served with new potatoes. The chicken was cooked to perfection and complimented well by the ham. Other possibilities might try time including eelton, pear and walnut salad with homemade blue cheese dressing (£5.25), three bean stew of tender chicken and mixed beans, served with warm pitta bread (£5.95), shepherd’s pie and minted peas (£6.65) and Teriyaki salmon and noodles with spring onions, ribbon carrots and pak choi (£6.95).

So next time you’re hungry in Hickley, check this place out. There are multiple places to eat around that little haven of independent shops, cafes and eateries - but this is among the best of them. It might take a bit finding at first, but it’s just a minute or two on foot from the Broadway Cinema. Once you’ve found it, you’ll definitely remember it for next time, when you do make sure you take a copy of this mag as there’s a 10% off voucher on page eleven!

12 Hawthorpe St, NG1 3AA 0115 9483 566 jamcafe.info

LE BISTROT PIERRE
Haw haw haw haw haw

If you want an example of a restaurant that knows what it’s on with, look no further than across from Vincenzo’s at the Heading out on the door of Le BP on a weekday dinner hour, there’s several reasons for this; it’s Frenchified without being up itself, it’s cut above the average restaurant without making humping motions against your wallet (having practically taken ownership of the Outstanding Value title at the Nottingham Restaurant Awards last decade). Plus, the snap is – as they say on the banks of the Seine – well prepared, mon d gue.

Where to start? Well, the décor’s lighter than an entire kitchen wall that has been filled with After Eight’s. It’s continental, but not overly so – don’t expect to be assailed by accordion players on bikes with onions slung round their necks. Once you’re, you forget that you’ve virtually next door to a TK Maxx, and that’s the main thing.

The food? Well, them’s the facts. We got stuck into the saucisson de toulouse (£4.95) – a smattering of sausage and the front window by, erm, one of his best mates. That night a couple of Irish coffees before being rolled out onto the street by the helpful but not over-fussy staff (tip: seeing as being French, the language – they know what you want).

It’s easy to see why Le BP is still packing ‘em in even though the place is rammed to the gills and there’s always that for yourself. We managed to fit in a chocolate brownie and a tarte au citron of good scran. So in the second instalment of our food page we check out some loads more places to eat in Notts...

CITY KEBABS
My long relationship with my Kebabs began nine years ago when I witnessed a friend of mine being pretty much thrown through the front window by, erm, one of his best mates. That night a close bond was formed between their kebabs and my mouth that has endured for many years.

Situated but a few metres from the infamous Tharles, City Kebabs is a late night eaterie that - at weekends - feels like Clapham Junction. Probably one of the busiest places in town, with randoms from all walks of life rubbing shoulders - partly due to its central location, but mainly because of its brilliant conveyor belt serving system gets you in and out in ten minutes. Lovely.

The menu is extensive, but where it really comes alive is its range of deep fried then microwaved don’t-ask-where-it-came-from chicken selection. KFC it ain’t, but it could hold its own in an arm wrestle, that’s what I say.

Beane Noodler of MyHouse-YourHouse continues his quest to eat at every takeaway in Nottingham...

RIPPLE
Making Waves

Ripple is a small, but perfectly formed, café bar restaurant in the heart of Sherwood. All their food is made from fresh ingredients, with a massive selection of vegan, veggie and gluten-free fare on offer.

They have an extensive and healthy breakfast menu and lunch offers up a wide range of salads including goat’s cheese and red pepper (£6.25), steak (£8.25) or king prawn, lime and ginger (£8.25). There are also dozens of tasty tapas-style dishes to choose from.

We came to sample the evening menu, though. I started with the mussels in a Thai-style chilli and lemongrass sauce (£5.95). In a city so far from the ocean this can’t be trucy to pull off, but this dish would not have been out of place at three times the price on a posh promenade. My guest went for the crouched goat’s cheese served on homemade raisin toast (£4.95) and found that the sweetness of the bread and chutney complimented the cheese superbly.

For mains, we were tempted by the likes of the honey mustard pork with mash (£11.50), the chicken and chorizo (£9.95) and the char-grilled 10oz sirloin steak (£15.50). But I eventually settled on the charging chino salad (£8.25), a feast of vegetables topped with two Thai-style salmon fishcakes (£2 extra). You know those restaurant salads that are just a token effort? Well this was the complete opposite and I cleared my plate! My guest went for the traditional sausages and mash (£6.95), served with lashings of rich red onion gravy and peas, delicious!

As always, we’ve saved room for dessert and shared a chocolate fudge cake (£4.25) served with ice cream and a big fat strawberry. We also took home a slice of their fluffy cherry and almond cake (£2.50).

A final mention must go to the cocktail menu. I plumped for a mojito, the Mojito (£3). My guest went alcoholic and had the Sherwood Sheesht, a mixture of gin, vodka, lemongrass, lemonade, lime and, fantastically, topped with popping candy like you used to get when you were a kid.

The things which shine through most are the love that has gone into creating the place: the relaxed and romantic décor, the friendly staff, the fresh and wholesome menu and the overall feel good nature. We haven’t even mentioned the weekly specials board yet! You’ll just have to pop in and see that for yourself.

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Aquarius (January 20 - February 19)
Often reading between the lines can be easier than following the text - the human mind is subjective by nature. Final judgements are rarely just and strong opinions are rarely built upon the strength of all the available information.

Pisces (February 20 - March 20)
You can keep your bathroom shower cubicle sparkling clean longer by washing the whole shower stall, then waxing with car wax (not turtle wax as this is green, be sure to get the clear stuff). This keeps blood from sticking to the sides.

Aries (March 21 - April 20)
Be prepared for a shock this month! I sense pain in your future as a drunken debate with friends about the use of stun guns gets messy following your repeated and stubborn assertions that they don’t work on you.

Taurus (April 21 - May 21)
How big was the big bang? How universal is the Universe? The story of the world and its creation has always fascinated you and you’re right to seek out more information. But be aware that the ending will leave you with a lot of unanswered questions.

Gemini (May 22 - June 22)
Give a man a fish and he can feed his family for a day. Teach a man to fish and he can feed them forever. However, be prepared to be shunned by both that man and his family when his children start to die of mercury poisoning.

Cancer (June 23 - July 23)
DH Lawrence once wrote: “The only justice is to follow the sincere intuition of the soul, angry or gentle. Anger is just, and pity is just, but judgement is never just.” Then he went and shagged the gardener.

Leo (July 24 - August 23)
Following a nasty traffic accident doctors will refuse to operate on you this month. This not due to any moral concerns, fiscal dilemmas or even health-related fears. They’re just a vindictive and hateful bunch.

Virgo (August 24 - September 23)
Keep your piping clear under the sink by pouring a quarter cup of baking soda down the drain, mixed with a cup of vinegar. This creates a chemical reaction, which you should follow up with boiling water fifteen minutes later. G’lug with that!

libra (September 24 - October 23)
Discipline is like a refining fire by which talent is forged to become ability. At first it’s hard to make yourself do something outside of your circle of comfort, but eventually you will acquiesce. At this point you are ready to push yourself even further.

Scorpio (October 24 - November 22)
Discipline is like a refining fire by which talent is forged to become ability. At first it’s hard to make yourself do something outside of your circle of comfort, but eventually you will acquiesce. At this point you are ready to push yourself even further.

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 22)
Vegetarians coming round to dinner? Simply serve them up a nice roast chicken or leg of lamb. Since they’re always going on about how tofu, Quorn, and Linda McCartney’s “tastes exactly like the real thing,” they shouldn’t notice any difference.

Capricorn (December 23 - January 19)
This alignment of the stars in March will turn you into an angry, crazed, ferocious and totally out-of-control monster. But this is not down to the astrological implications, it just happens to coincide with your period.

Susukino Crossing, Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan
Susukino is a major red-light district located in Hokkaido, Japan. It’s one of the major pimping areas of the whole country - a definite step up from our very own Forest Road. A walk along the Crossing will reveal all manner of illuminated restaurants, seedy bars, by-the-hour hotels and adult-entertainment establishments.

The photo was sent in by Notts-based filmmaker Simon Ellis, whose short films have been shown across the globe, from London to Los Angeles. The girl holding a copy of our mag is Tokyo artist Komada Kozue who, we’re told, “does huge, bugger-off paintings in front of a live audience, usually in a paint-splattered kimono.”

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