

# soundcheck

Issue 30 | Feb 2024 | FREE

## Reading's FREE live music guide



### WHO ATE ALL THE CRAYONS



+ live gigs for February  
+ POP Classics

**A DESOLATE WARNING TOUR 2024**

The Purple Turtle  
**Weds 14th Feb**  
**FREE ENTRY** 18+ 10 Essential

**NOAH AND THE LONERS**  
 Plus Supports

**THURSDAY 15TH FEB**

**LIMPOPO GROOVE**  
 upbeat, afro-lusion  
 jazz with tribal beats

**THURSDAY 29TH FEB**

**THE DING DONG DADDIOS**



**Turtle UNDERGROUND**  
 LIVE MUSIC EVERY MONDAY  
 IN THE MAIN BAR 7.30PM TO 10PM

-----

**EVERY MONDAY 3 BANDS**  
 THEN STRAIGHT INTO...

**CLUB RECKLESS**  
 10.30PM TO 3AM ROCK, PUNK, EMO, ALT METAL

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WANT TO PLAY @ THE TURTLE UNDERGROUND  
 COME DOWN AND ASK FOR KIAN  
 OR MESSAGE @GROOVECULTSHINDIGS

**FOUND NATIVE**  
 PURPLE TURTLE 25.00 - 55.00

**REMIX EVERY FRIDAY**  
 DJ SET 1960s  
 GUESTS 1970s  
 1980s  
 1990s  
 2000 - 2023

**SATURDAYS ALSO MAIN BAR ON JOE & JEN**

**THE WINGMAN**  
 SUNDAY 12.00 - 03.00  
 WHAT SUNDAY 12.00 - 03.00  
 12.00 - 03.00

**9 GUN STREET**  
**READING RG1 2JR**  
**WWW.PURPLETURTLEBAR.COM**



# Sound-check #30

Come on then, 2024. What have you got?! According to the Music Venue Trust predictions, maybe not a lot. Oops! An average two venues a week closed, across the UK, in 2023 and more than a third of the remaining ones lost money, which all looks a bit shaky to say the least.

Meanwhile, here in Reading, The Face Bar's busy, The Butler's got loads on, The Turtle is upping its game quite hard, The Oakford have decided to get back in the game now that the 'office crowd' they chased for a while all work from home on a Friday, the Rising Sun is still alive and kicking... you get the point.

It's not all good, mind – most of this is because nobody's getting paid for playing because there's no money anywhere – but it does show there's an audience round here, which is a start.

If you've picked up this Sound-check, with a picture on the front of someone you've most likely never heard of, then that word 'audience' probably means you!




Come on in. Come on out! There's a good chance you'll love it. Go, on... just pick one at random and have a go.

And I'll probably see you there.

– RICH



Glass Half Broken @ The Purple Turtle, 15.01.2024 Photo: Alex Marlow

-  /soundcheckreading
-  /soundcheckrdg
-  /soundcheckrdg

This band seemed to come out of nowhere in the second half of last year and suddenly they were selling out a headline gig with crowds of adoring fans. Naturally, Sound-check thought we should investigate. So, who are Who Ate All The Crayons?

They have a gorgeous indie-folk sound a lot like Mumford and Sons which of course helps explain their popularity, but it's the vocals that do a lot of the heavy lifting, finding comparisons to Jeff Buckley. Big words!

There is already an EP out and another single is due any minute. First of all, though, let's get the obvious question out of the way and find out about one of the coolest new band names I've heard in a long time.

Harry sheepishly explains that it came from a rather less-than-cool place and wasn't even their idea. "We just saw it on a toilet cubicle door. We were just like, ah, yeah, that'll do for now. So, some drunk out there, they get the credit." So, if you can remember writing that in a pub then they're very grateful.

The full band (let's just call them Crayons between us) are Harry on lead vocals, Luke on bass and backing vocals, George on lead guitar and Lee on drums. All but Lee are based in Newbury, which is close enough to Reading to count as local and anyway I get the feeling you'll be seeing a lot more of them in the town this year.

Things have certainly fallen into place for them. They only played their first gig together in February 2023 and it was then just a couple of months before they were playing for BBC Introducing at The Purple Turtle. Following that they appeared at a few small festivals and other gigs around the south of England, before wrapping up the year with their own headline gig upstairs at Brewdog. Incredibly, that sold out in three weeks and the guys had to sadly turn a lot of people away. In total, they reckon they played twenty-five times last year so they certainly understand how to put the effort in.

They met at an open mic night at the end of 2022. Lee and George, who have known each other since primary school and played music together for the last fifteen years, had been performing their regular guitar and harmonica show of country covers as a duo for nearly a year. Then one day Harry walked in.

George says "It was a little bit of fate really. One night there was a free seat at the table so we sat down next to Harry. Harry ended up saying 'I'm actually looking for a lead guitarist and a bass'. It was perfect!" Soon afterwards they all met up for some jams and it took off from there.

Harry and Lee had been playing together for a while and already had some gigs booked, including supporting Carsick, building up to the BBC Introducing night. That meant the others had to quickly learn the songs, but together they managed to pull it off in front of a full Purple Turtle.

When it comes to the music, between them they have some really diverse influences. George is into some heavier stuff ("Sabbath!"), while Luke covers some pretty broad territory "I like a lot of hip-hop, but I like lyricism and that's why I like rap. And I like country as well, like Neil Young, Bob Dylan. There was a lot of punk as well when I was growing up, from my Dad. Pretty much everything."

Harry is more into folk-rock like Mumford and Sons, Big Thief and Wunderhorse. This is where they've found a nice sweet-spot where they overlap and come together in the middle.

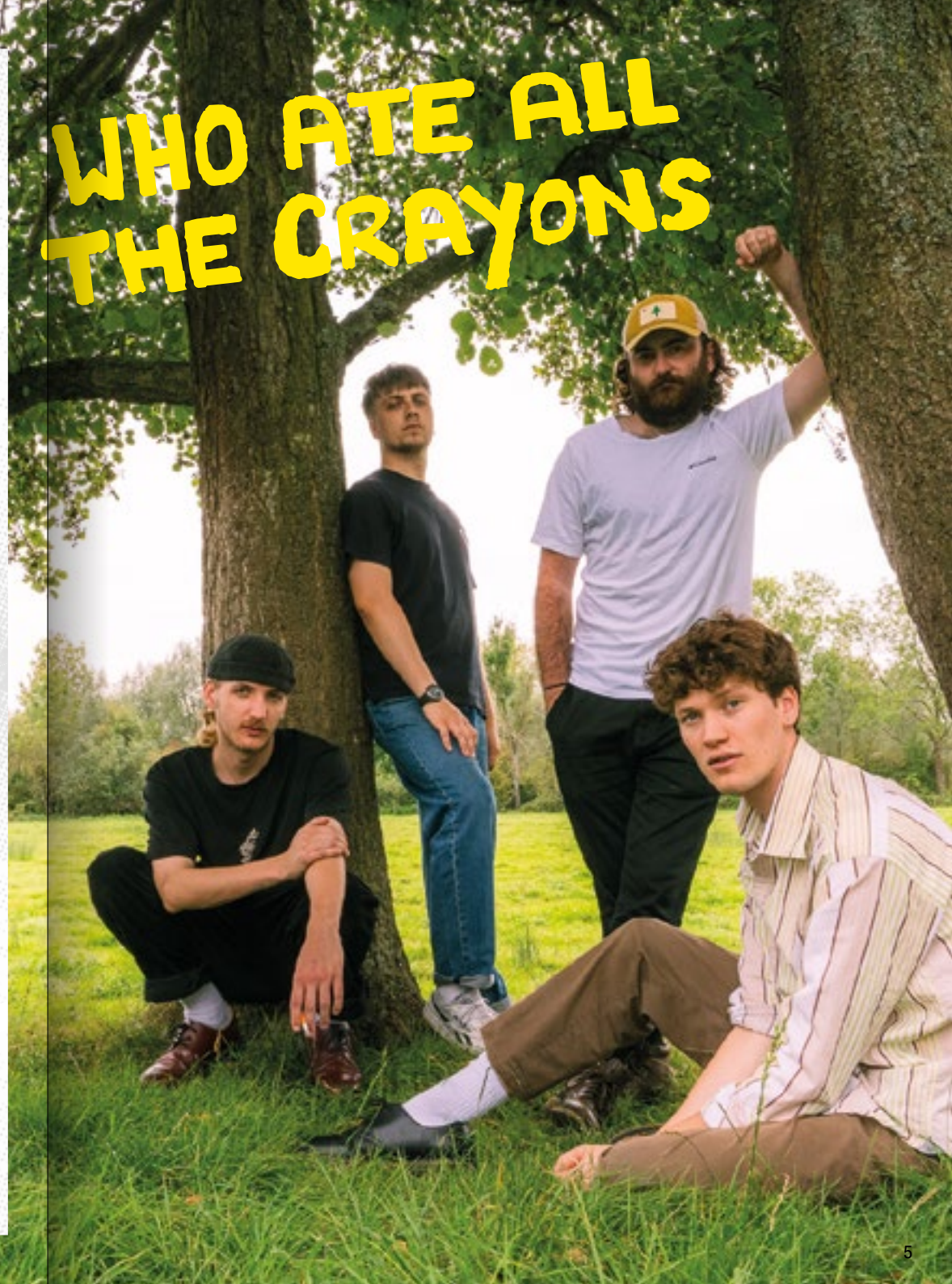
George explains "The sound that we've, I guess, developed and settled with has ended up being either folk-rock or folk-indie-rock. That's what we describe ourselves as now. Sometimes it might not be that obvious in the songs where the influence has come from but all our styles and the way we like to play and the influences have just dripped into the songs."

He said that when they were recording last year, Harry had maybe sixty per cent of the songs already done – the structure, the lyrics, the rhythm, etc, and they then worked as a group to finish them off. "I think being a two-piece, sometimes the sound can't be always big enough. And I think Harry's vocals especially suit a big sound and having four people in the band makes that so much easier."

Some of the songs have been around for quite a while. Harry wrote 'Five Seconds' when he was just sixteen. Sometimes he only realises years later what he was actually writing about, relating it to what was going on in his life back then. "A lot of it's like exorcising out emotion and giving that to people on stage. How much of myself can I leave on the stage? And how much as a group can we really drive that home for people, so they come away from the performance and be like, wow, I've actually felt something there. That is always my goal."

Harry's vocals are a huge part of the performance, but it's taken some serious practising without any

# WHO ATE ALL THE CRAYONS





There is one bunch of lads in particular who were the first to bring home the realisation that they are getting a following. Luke says "I have to give them a shoutout. The Ultras we call them. We did a gig and there were three or four lads at the front. They think we make the best music and come to every gig. And I see them out quite a lot." Keep on the Ultras!


Luke adds it's not just fans who are showing up, "We've got such a good collective of people around us that want to help us out. It's people that can see the potential and help in any way and that's what we really appreciate the most I think."

Harry says that includes getting invited down to Abbey Road studios, "Somebody approached us and said 'Listen guys I'd love to give you guys the opportunity to come up to Abbey Road and record a couple of your tracks. Just use the space. Hang out.' And we're really excited about it."

After that they're back on the road again. A few local gigs are planned including the Arlington Arts Centre on 6th April, then headlining the Chill and Gin Festival in Portsmouth on 5th May, all leading up to another EP tour in August.

George sums it all up, saying "We just wanna keep playing live, but music that we want to release at the end of the day. The bonus on top is that people enjoy it and they like it and they connect with it and if they even like one song, that's great." ■

Look out for the new single 'Tired' coming out in March and loads more gigs.

 @whoateallthecrayons

formal training. "Yeah. Screaming in my bedroom, annoying my neighbours. I don't do it as much now. You have to really fine-tune where your range is and then once it's there, that's when you can start projecting places."

But young Harry screaming away in his bedroom had a purpose. "I always bring it back to Mumford and Sons. I think at a very early age I realised, OK, so if you're gonna sing, you gotta have a style. And I think listening to Marcus Mumford and the way he sings, he's got such a unique voice, I thought that's just what you had to do. Then Jeff Buckley eventually came into my life and I realised, oh wow, you can hold your notes longer than you'd expect."

With the new single, recorded at Studio 91 in January, they're trying to tie everything together and push the band forward as a whole. Harry says they've built the band around the way he can push it vocally and now they want to bring in the harmonies, building it up, layering it, then just hitting it as hard as they can. It's still Crayons but bigger, more complex, more intricate and more emotional.

They'll be out there playing it with all their hearts, hopefully growing on last year's success. Last summer they played relentlessly, including a stretch of nine weekends in a row, growing a fanbase and attracting more people who weren't necessarily related to them.

**25mm & 57mm Pin Badges available**

Premium quality badges made in Oxford

**25mm**  
10 badges £10  
50 badges £18  
100 badges £25

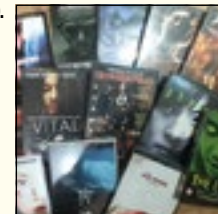
**57mm**  
10 badges £18  
50 badges £38  
100 badges £65

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Head over to our Facebook page for more prices

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# OXFAM MUSIC SHOP

We sell films on Blu-ray and DVD. We've revamped the section to be more selective and focus on interesting titles: World Cinema, Horror and Vintage Hollywood in particular. Pictured is a nice collection of 'Tartan Asia Extreme' titles.



**Joyce**  
*Hard Bossa*  
If there is one artist I would recommend to almost anyone, it's Brazilian psychedelic jazz/folk singer, Joyce. Beautiful, melodious songs embellished in sumptuous sophisticated ornament.  
Do your ears a favour!

**Tammi Terrell**  
*Irresistible*  
UK mono pressing of the sole LP by Motown legend Tammi Terrell.



**J Mascis**  
*Elastic Days*  
We are lucky to still get donations of recent and even newly released vinyl. This is the 2018 LP by veteran grunge rocker J. Mascis

  
www.pop-classics.com

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**Open Mon-Sat 10am-6pm.**

We are always very grateful to receive any musical items. Vinyl, CDs, tapes, 78s hi-fi, instruments, sheet music and comics or graphic novels. We can arrange home collection if required.

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**OXFAM MUSIC**  
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**0118 9561598**

# gigguide

## THU 1 FEB

**RISING SUN ARTS CENTRE**  
**Imbolc Fireside Concert:**  
**Daughter of the Water**  
**+ Stuart Clark**

£7.50+bf adv, £10otd

*Come in from the cold, and join us for a magical evening of folk noir. Entry includes a Weaving workshop to make an Imbolc cross which commences at 7.30pm, with Hardwick crafter Suz Williams. Music starts at around 9pm.*  
eventbrite.co.uk

## SAT 3 FEB

**FACE BAR**

*Club Velocity & New Mind*



**Screaming Dead**  
**+ The Freudian Session**  
**+ D\*S\*A**

£8.80 | 8pm | 16+  
*Horror Punk legends!*  
wegottickets.com

**RISING SUN ARTS CENTRE**

*Club Velocity & New Mind*



**Tom Webber + Alan Caruso**  
**+ Grace Pounds**

£11 | 8pm | All ages  
wegottickets.com

**THE BUTLER**

*Shadow Promotions DIY*

**The Latchkey Kids + Dan**  
**Bibby & the Aesthetic**  
**Knobs + Masquerader**  
**+ Modern Shakes**  
**+ Batwings**

£5adv, £7otd | 6pm | 18+  
wegottickets.com

**THE CASTLE TAP**

*Old Goat Promotions*

**The Bourbon Massive**  
**+ Nuke Cucumber**  
**+ Coppermouth**

Free | 7:30pm

## SUN 4 FEB

**SUB 89**

*Heavy Pop*

**Pip Blom**

£17.60 | 7:30pm | 14+(U18 w/adult)  
gigantic.com

**WATLINGTON HOUSE**

*Readifolk*

**Dove's Vagaries**

£8otd | 8pm

## MON 5 FEB

**PURPLE TURTLE**

*Groove Cult Shindigs*

**Turtle Underground**

**Elucidate + Lake Acacia**  
**+ Mark Woosnam Band**

Free | 7:30pm | 18+

## TUE 6 FEB

**UP THE JUNCTION**

**Live @ The Junction**

Free | 8pm | 18+

*The tiny stage comes alive on Tuesdays.*

## THU 8 FEB

**SOUTH STREET**

**Belinda O'Hooley**

£19 | 8pm | all ages  
whatsonreading.com

**FACE BAR**

*Heavy Pop*

**Courting + Flat Party**

£15.40adv | 7:30pm  
14+(U18 w/adult)  
gigantic.com

To list your gig here, for free, just email all the info to [copy@sound-check.co.uk](mailto:copy@sound-check.co.uk).

Info is correct at time of going to press. (At least, I've tried very hard.)

Websites refer to where to get tickets.

bf = booking fee

otd = on the door

adv = advance

tbc = to be confirmed

## FRI 9 FEB

**PROGRESS THEATRE**

*Jazz in Reading*

**Jean Toussaint Quartet**

£19, £17(conc), £10(U16) + bf | 7:30pm

*Grammy Award-winning saxophonist and composer.*

ticketsource.co.uk

**THE BUTLER**

**Rocket Kings**

**+ Damien A Passmore**

**& The Loveable Fraudsters**

**+ Lee Switzer-Woolf**

Free | 8pm

## SAT 10 FEB

**OAKFORD SOCIAL CLUB**

**Puma Theory + Deva St**

**John + The Nations United**

Free | 7pm | 18+

+ 19 Something DJ set

## MON 12 FEB

**PURPLE TURTLE**

*Groove Cult Shindigs*

**Turtle Underground**

**Strangers In Transit**

**+ Coppermouth**

**+ The Medicine**

Free | 7:30pm | 18+

## TUE 13 FEB

**FACE BAR**

*AEG Presents*

**The Clockworks**

£15.80 | 7pm | 16+ (U18 +adult)  
axs.com

YOUR FRIENDS EYES ARE ENTRANCED  
THEY KNOW THAT IT'S US

# BEAT CONNECTION

NEW MUSIC DISCOVERY

# HEAVY POP DORK

# DEADLETTER

MARY IN THE JUNKYARD  
MAN/WOMAN/CHAINSAW  
GAG SALON  
+ DJ ANDREW FURSEDON

## FRIDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

ST LAURENCE CHURCH, READING RG1 3AJ

DOORS 7:00 PM  
TICKETS:  
HEAVYPOP.CO.UK  
AGES: 14+  
(UNDER 18s WITH AN ADULT)

@HEAVYPOPPROMO

# ARE YOU LISTENING?

## SATURDAY 11th MAY 2024

ARE YOU LISTENING? FESTIVAL, READING

- First Ten Artist Names (A-Z) -

**Antony Szmierok • BarrelHaus**  
**C Duncan • Dr Satso • Grace Pounds**  
**Home Counties • Kah'Nya • The Mezz**  
**The Mysterines • Picture Parlour**

+ many more acts to be announced

Multiple Reading Venues

Tickets and info:  
[areyoulistening.org.uk](http://areyoulistening.org.uk)  
f x @aylfest

HEAVY POP

[heavypop.co.uk](http://heavypop.co.uk)

08  
FEB

**Courting**  
The Face Bar  
07:30pm

01  
MAR

**JOHN**  
The Face Bar  
07:30pm

18  
MAR

**BDRMM**  
The Face Bar  
07:30pm

## WED 14 FEB

PURPLE TURTLE  
**Noah And The Loners**  
+ Tape It Shut  
+ The Bourbon Massive

Free | 7:30pm | 18+

## THU 15 FEB

PURPLE TURTLE  
**Limpopo Groove**

Free | 8pm | 18+

SUB89  
*Divergent Promotions*  
**Xentrix + Tortured Demon**

£19.80 | 7pm | 14+  
ticketweb.uk

## FRI 16 FEB

RISING SUN ARTS CENTRE  
**Scott Clay**

£11 | 8pm | All ages

Americana singer/songwriter based in Nashville, USA. Scott is embarking on his first, ever, European tour in 2024 including this intimate show at the Rising Sun Arts Centre.  
wegottickets.com

SUB89  
**Smooove & Turrell**

£22.40 | 7pm  
14+(U16 w/adult)  
premier.ticketek.co.uk

## SAT 17 FEB

OAKFORD SOCIAL CLUB  
**Jopy + HööF + Adomania**

Free | 7pm | 18+  
+ Puma Theory DJ set

FACEBAR  
*Club Velocity/New Mind*  
**Cultura Tres**  
(feat Paulo Jr from Sepultura)

+ In Air  
£14.30 | 8pm | 14+(U16s w/adult)  
wegottickets.com

OAKWOOD CENTRE  
*MGM Music*  
**Stan Tracey's Under Milk**  
**Wood Jazz Suite**

£15(+bf) | 7:45pm | All ages  
ticketsource.co.uk/mgmusic

DOUBLE-BARRELLED  
**The Small Strings**

Free | 7pm

## SUN 18 FEB

WATLINGTON HOUSE  
*Readifolk*  
**John & Di Cullen**

£otd (cash only) | 8pm

## MON 19 FEB

PURPLE TURTLE  
*Groove Cult Shindigs*  
**Turtle Underground**  
**Nuke Cucumber + Bored**  
**Slippy + Roots And Wings**

Free | 7:30pm | 18+

risingsunartscentre.org



**DAUGHTER OF THE WATER**  
Thursday Feb 1st  
£7.50+booking adv, £10 otd



**IMBOLC FIRESIDE CONCERT**  
Entry includes a Weaving workshop to make an Imbolc cross at 7.30pm, with Hardwick crafter Suz Williams. Music will start at around 9pm.

**The Rising Sun Open Mic Night**  
Sunday Feb 18th  
7pm - 10pm | £Free

**New event!** Everyone welcome to an evening of music, poetry and performance. Bar open, house piano and guitar available. Sign up on the night.

**30 Silver Street, Reading RG1 2ST**  
The Rising Sun Arts Centre is an award winning, independent arts centre, staffed and run by volunteers.



The Facebar  
Ambrose Place  
RG1 7JE

**24/2/2024**

Doors: 5:30  
The deluded:  
6:00pm - 6:45pm  
Brick Top UK:  
7:15pm - 8:15pm  
Block 33:  
9:00pm-11:30pm




e-tix.co/BLOCK33

**CLUB VELOCITY/NEW MIND PROMOTIONS SHOWS**  
**AT THE FACEBAR READING 2024**  
[WWW.WEGOTTICKETS.COM/CLUB VELOCITY](http://WWW.WEGOTTICKETS.COM/CLUB VELOCITY)

**FEB 3RD - SCREAMING DEAD** \* THE GO GO CULT  
DxSxA

**FEB 17TH - CULTURA TRES** \* INAIR  
FEATURING PAULO JR OF SEPULTURA

**MARCH 5TH - BEANS ON TOAST**

**MARCH 17TH - COUNTESS OF FIFE**  
FEATURING FAY FIFE OF THE REZILLOS

**MARCH 29TH - THE METEORS** \* VOODOO RADIO  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH GOOD WRECKING TONIGHT

**APR 10TH - THE HAWKMEN**

**APR 18TH - GHOST DANCE** \* KORINTHIANS  
GOTH LEGENDS

**MAY 2ND - FUNKE & THE TWO TONE BABY**

**JUNE 15TH - GAYE BYKERS ON ACID**

**SEPT 7TH - INKUBUS SUKKUBUS** \* THE GO GO CULT  
GOTH LEGENDS

**SEPT 14TH - THE CARAVANS** \* DEAD HOMBRES  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH GOOD WRECKING TONIGHT

**NOV 5TH - LOS FASTIDIOS**

**DEC 5TH - JOHN OTWAY (FULL BAND)**

**MORE SHOWS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON!**  
[WWW.WEGOTTICKETS.COM/CLUB VELOCITY](http://WWW.WEGOTTICKETS.COM/CLUB VELOCITY)

## TUE 20 FEB

### UP THE JUNCTION Live @ The Junction

Free | 8pm | 18+  
*The tiny stage comes alive on Tuesdays.*

## FRI 23 FEB

### RISING SUN ARTS CENTRE *Club Velocity* In Malcolm We Trust #13 Horse Rock + BarrelHaus + New Puritans

£5.50adv | 8pm | All ages  
wegottickets.com

## SAT 24 FEB

### OAKFORD SOCIAL CLUB Puma Theory + Elucidate + Signature Bold

Free | 7pm | 18+  
*+ Slippery People DJ set*

### THE BUTLER Zenden Greenpurp + Z Machine + Acid Claw

£8adv, £10otd | 7:30pm  
eventbrite.com

### THE FACE BAR Block 33 + Bricktop + The Deluded

£17.50 | 5:30pm | 18+  
tickets.matterpay.com

## SUN 25 FEB

### SOUTH ST STUDIO Knifedoutofexistence + Geheimnisknecht + Lingua della Strega

£8 | 7:30pm  
*A night of experimental art noise.*  
*Please note: Tickets from original date*  
*(Thu 19th Oct) remain valid.*  
whatsonreading.com

### THE RETREAT Stuart Henderson, Simon Price and guests

Free | 3:30pm

## MON 26 FEB

### PURPLE TURTLE *Groove Cult Shindigs* Turtle Underground

Free | 7:30pm | 18+  
*Live music every Tuesday. Lineup tbc.*

## TUE 20 FEB

### UP THE JUNCTION Live @ The Junction

Free | 8pm | 18+  
*The tiny stage comes alive on Tuesdays.*

## WED 28 FEB

### THE LYNDHURST Jazz Singers Night

Free | 8:00pm  
*Come and sing with a live jazz band!*

## THU 29 FEB

### THE BUTLER *Please Ban Music* Horse Rock + The Borough + Baby Teeth + Fox Will Eat Itself

Free | 7pm

## FRI 1 MAR

### FACE BAR *Heavy Pop* JOHN + Dr Satso + HööF

£15.40 | 7:30pm | 14+(U18 w/adult)  
gigantic.com

## SAT 2 MAR

### THE BUTLER *Storm In A Teacup* Burnt Tapes + Making Friends + Resuscitators + Missing The Scene + The Innocent Men + Hell's Kitchen + Jake Cooper

£9adv, £12otd | 3pm | 14+  
*Raising money for the Nick Jonas Ward*  
*at Winchester Hospital.*  
eventim-light.com

### THE FACE BAR March Of The Mods: Gold Steppers + The Start + Brick Top + Wildwood + Rude Not 2

£13.50(+bf) | 4pm | 18+ after 9pm  
*All in aid of Teenage Cancer Trust.*  
tickets.matterpay.com

## SUN 3 MAR

### WATLINGTON HOUSE *Readifolk* Dan Kemp

£8 otd (cash only) | 8pm

### FACE BAR Pistols At Dawn + One Last Day

£11.50 | 7pm | 18+  
tickettailor.com

## MON 4 MAR

### PURPLE TURTLE *Groove Cult Shindigs* Turtle Underground

Free | 7:30pm | 18+

## TUE 5 MAR

### FACE BAR *Club Velocity* Beans on Toast

£19.80 | 8pm | 14+ (U16 w/adult)  
wegottickets.com

### UP THE JUNCTION Live @ The Junction

Free | 8pm | 18+  
*Tiny stage, live every Tuesday. Lineup tbc.*

## FRI 8 MAR

### ST LAURENCE CHURCH *Heavy Pop* Beat Connection Deadletter + Mary In The Junkyard + Man/Woman/ Chainsaw + Gag Salon

£16.50 (Adult 'Early bird' - get on it quick!)  
£13.75 (Teen 'Early bird' - get on it quick!)  
7pm | 14+(U18 w/adult)  
gigantic.com

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Shaking better with you

PLEASE BAN MUSIC

29TH FEBRUARY 2024  
THE BUTLER, READING

HORSE ROCK / THE BOROUGH  
BABY TEETH / FOX WILL EAT ITSELF

\* FREE ENTRY - 4 BANDS - DOORS @ 7PM \*

Live @

UP THE JUNCTION

Every Tuesday  
from 6th February  
from 8pm

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INDEPENDENT FREEHOUSE

THE FISHERMAN'S COTTAGE

Home-cooked food,  
good beer, dogs welcome

Pickin' Lunchtime Sessions  
1st Sun of the month: American Old-Time  
3rd Sun of the month: Irish/Celtic  
Bohemian Night Open Mic  
Every Wednesday

To book a table for your meal,  
please call 07925 336 269  
thefishermanscottagepubreading.co.uk

Jazz  
most Fridays

VG V

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www.whitehouse-studios.co.uk

## Profile: POP Classics

35 Church Street, St Martins Precinct,  
Caversham, Reading RG4 8BA  
www.pop-classics.com



**W**e've got a new independent record shop! It's 2024, record shops are dropping like flies everywhere else but we've got a new one!?!

I thought I'd better go and investigate so I got myself on a bus over the river to Caversham to speak to Damian Jones, a man responsible for Bubblegum at the 'legendary' After Dark, back when this was all fields round 'ere, and now the proprietor of POP Classics; a brand new, predominantly vinyl, independent record shop. So, what's the story here, then, Damian?

"The initial idea goes back to 2022. We'd run our mail order business since 2000 and it got harder and harder after Brexit, so the global marketplace was shrinking... more of our sales were UK and lots of them were local which seems crazy."

"You still have to keep your name in the algorithms through a certain internet presence but it's better selling on a person-to-person basis."

After a bit of a delay getting the premises all tied down, the shop opened in September last year and it's packed with stuff. New releases, as well as the second hand and collectable stuff.

The inevitable question from me, of course: does he stock stuff by independent local bands. The answer is all good news...

"We say to everyone who wants to do that, bring 'em in. We're not looking to make out of it but, if people want to bring records down and say they're available here, then we can sell them on their behalf."

"Kill Committee have got their album in here, now. The Third Lung guys came down and they're, hopefully, going to do something maybe around Record Store Day."

"There's been a few bands in and not just, like, 'indie' stuff. We've got a local jazz guy, a vibes player, we're going to stock his... Louis from the Ding Dong Daddios is doing his solo album we're going to stock that. We're not going to sell those at a profit – just going to make them available."

There you have it. Buy or sell new records, old records, collectable records, local independent records and, of course, memorabilia. There's a screen-printed poster on the shop wall for The Sex Pistols' gig at Reading Uni Art Department in May 1976. Crikey! ■

*The shop's open daily from 10am to 5pm.*

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The Bourbon Massive Turtle Underground, 22.01.24 Photo: Steve Axtell

## sound-check

### GO ON... GIVE ME YOUR BEST SHOT!

If you've got a local gig photo you'd like to see here, you can just email it to [copy@sound-check.co.uk](mailto:copy@sound-check.co.uk) with band name, date, venue and photographer credit. It needs to be high resolution because this is real world print but, if you're not sure, send it anyway – we'll check it for you and use it if it's technically up to spec. Thanks! *(If this thing ever makes any money then, yes, of course you can have some – but that's never happened yet!?)*



Anybody know what that does?



**To advertise in Sound-check**, email [rich@sound-check.co.uk](mailto:rich@sound-check.co.uk). There are details at [sound-check.co.uk](http://sound-check.co.uk). We're keeping it as cheap as possible to just cover the cost of keeping this thing alive so, the more people buy ads, the cheaper it gets!

Reasonable efforts are made to ensure that all info in Sound-check is correct at time of going to press. If you're worried, though, please check with the relevant venue.

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