

CONNECTIONS

All proceeds from this magazine go towards the encouragement of local amateur talent at 'The Candle Club' Talking Heads, Southampton



Candle Club founders Clive Roberts & Simeon Hill



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Trying to make Connections

Welcome to what we hope will be the first of many 'Connections', the essential newsletter for would-be (and existing) entertainers.

We think this A3 folded photocopy is sure to become an invaluable piece of paper for budding performers. Why? Well, we hope it will develop into a comprehensive source of information on all things related to the performing arts, from where to buy equipment, to getting gigs, and hints and tips on all things that go in between.

Not only is this news sheet intended to benefit musicians, poets, jugglers, comedians... whatever, by its content, it also has a secondary function as a fund raising tool for furthering the aims and objectives of 'The Candle Club' as outlined in the A6 flyer (copies of which can be obtained from The Talking Heads, Portswood, Southampton, who incidently, kindly supply the venue and have agreed to assist with this project).

However, this could be the first and only issue of 'Connections'. It can't possibly be published every quarter (April, July, October and January) without your support and help. We need help with editorial content, money from the purchase of (very reasonably priced!) advertising space, and adverts to be included in the 'free ads' sections, plus help with distribution etc. Sorry, but it's over to you. As you have probably guessed, I only just scraped through 'O' Level English and the thought of writing essays terrified me. I was only really interested in Art, Graphics and Music. However, if you are happy to supply the content I am quite happy to put this Newsletter together.

Hopefully, between us, we can make some good 'connections'.

Get your act together!

So, you think you're the next Bob Dylan or Joan Osbourne? Or maybe you think you're funnier than Spike Milligan and want to prove it. What next?

Well you get along to the *Candle Club* of course. But, unless you're incredibly confident, it is likely that you will find it very difficult to get up under those glaring spotlights without some trepidation. What are you afraid of? Well making a fool of yourself is probably the first thing (unless that's part of the act!). Because of the friendly atmosphere of the *Candle Club* this is unlikely to happen. In fact, 'novices' tend to get bigger applause than anyone. Having said that you, will still want to appear reasonably professional.

So, a few useful tips. Firstly, come to the *CC* for a couple of weeks and watch other acts. You will soon notice how some acts come across better than others. Why? They are probably just as nervous as you.

(Continued on bottom of page 2)

INSIDE:

Buying an acoustic guitar	Page 2
Candle Club Gossip	Page 3
Been there done it	Page 4
Wanted and for Sale	Page 4

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Buying an acoustic guitar

*Some useful hints and tips from
'Martin' guitar specialist, Vince Hockey*

Over the past twenty five years as a guitar maker/repairer, I have been asked many times what to look for when buying a guitar, new or second hand. It's not a simple thing to answer, but here goes.

If you are thinking of buying a used guitar there are quite a few things to look out for. And if you've already bought one you might feel you know some of the mistakes I am about to point out, that I made myself!

The first decision is whether you want nylon or steel strings. After you've bought the guitar, it's not a good idea to change your mind.

The neck and the body are the next considerations, and if they are joined together you're over the first hurdle. There isn't much choice when it comes to neck width, except that nylon strung guitars are usually much wider than steel strung. Although some makers have seen the sense in making differences less obvious, enabling you to buy one with a neck that is similar to a steel string and vice versa.

Body shapes and sizes don't offer much choice. Either jumbo or standard, with or without cutaway, a well made standard can sound equally as good as a jumbo but with a slight difference in warmth and depth.

The bridge (the dark bit) is very important. The thing to look for is the saddle (the white bit). There is no set height for the saddle to show above the bridge but if the strings are high off the fingerboard and the saddle is low, there may be no room to lower the strings to make it comfortable to play.

Necks are the next thing on the list. A quick squint down the neck from the tuning peg end (the lumpy bits at the top) will show if there is a bow in the neck. Don't be too alarmed there is supposed to be a slight one but not the ski jump type. A simple test is to press the string down at the first fret (the metal stripy bits) and at the same time with the other hand, at the twelfth fret and there should be a gap between the bottom of the string and the top of the

seventh fret of approximately 1/32" (in old money) or 1mm, which, from the tuner end, looks horrendous but is about right. A lot more than that is a problem if there is no truss rod in the neck to adjust, or there is no adjustment left if there is one!

Finally, there is the cosmetic side to look at. I say this because if all of the things I've talked about are OK, the finish is not such an important issue.

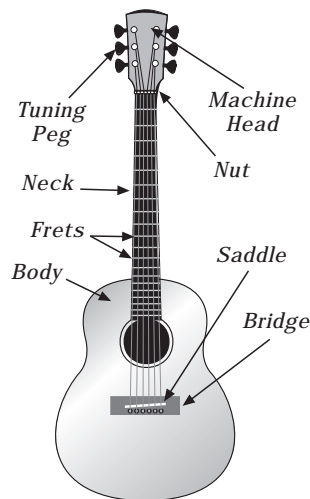
All guitars get dings and scratches, so unless it is really bad and you

can't stand the sight of it you shouldn't need to look at a new one. Also refinishing is expensive and if you do it yourself it may end up looking worse than when you started.

If you have played an expensive guitar you will have a rough idea of how comfortable it feels and if you can get that sort of feeling from the one you are about to buy, it's a good start.

Buying a new guitar is not such a tricky problem, but, you get what you pay for. In a guitar 'tutor' a long time ago the best advice I have heard said "*buy the most expensive guitar you can AFFORD!*"

I have worked for the Martin guitar company for the last twelve years and see lots of expensive guitars that are great and cheaper ones that are



Guitar terminology

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Get your act together!

(Continued from page 1)

Once you have decided to take the plunge make sure your act is ready. Do you know the words? It's far better to memorise lyrics however tempting a music stand seems as a prop to hide behind - you can always sit down if it makes you feel less vulnerable. If you're a guitarist, is your guitar in tune?

O.K., you're finally on stage shaking in your boots. Try and make sure you're comfortable before doing anything. Easy to say I know, when you are not in a terrified state, but checking equipment and making sure the microphone is horizontal and pointing directly at your mouth does make you look as if you know what you're doing if nothing else! (look out for article on microphone techniques next issue - Ed) Say hello to the audience and introduce your material. Why are you doing it?

Try to keep going when you are under way. Most mistakes won't be noticed by the audience.

Finally, try not to tail off at the end and destroy any tension created. For example, if you're a guitarist don't strum unnecessary chords at the end of a song (however glad you are to have got through it without cocking up!) Presentation is just as important as the material you're performing. Try and create 'light and shade' in your act to keep people interested, even if it is just by changing the volume of your voice. Mind you, a lot of the audience will probably carry on chatting. Don't take it personally!

Amazing, the audience is applauding and you survived. Well done. Now you've got a whole week to polish up your act ready for next Monday!



COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Microphone Techniques •
- 'The trials & tribulations of forming a band' •
- How to copyright original material •

WAXING LYRICAL

We need your input for this feature. Are you getting Gigs, recording, got any tips... let us know

Modern Times

Richard Hunt talks about producing his CD's There's just no getting away from it. If you want to promote your band, songs, or just you and your incredible talent, then you can't beat spending time, effort and money down in a proper recording studio. As the pile of "thanks, but no thanks" letters from the music industry mounts up, at least you know that you've given it your best shot. And there's always hope.....

But what if you just want a reasonable quality recording of your masterpiece for your own suspect purposes? We've all got access to yer average microphone and cassette player, but you know your stuff's better than that! Best to invest heavily in drinks for people who just happen to have the required kit.

Your first newly acquired friend should be the nice chap with the four track tape recorder. For those of you that don't know, these run standard cassettes at twice the speed and simultaneously record two tracks on each side of the tape. So you can record perhaps vocals, lead and bass guitar and Crassio all at once.

The usual Dolby filter does a fine job in noise reduction, but a word of warning. With just a bit of jiggery pokery, you can get totally carried away with it all and, just like a kid who mixes all the colours of their new paint set together, the end result can be remarkably similar. Namely, muddy brown shite!

Number two friend, preferably attractive and of the opposite sex, should be encouraged to lend you that top quality mic. that you promise to return a.s.a.p. An absolute must. It's probably best to provide your own recording studio. Garden shed readily available from B&Q. Garage required for bands.

Having recorded your stuff, you will be disappointed



to find out that you can't actually play the tape on anything else! As your first friend will no doubt want his machine back by now, you have to record from the four track onto.....

Well, a very nice cassette deck via stereo leads. But, you might well find that the unavoidable drop in sound quality makes all your efforts seem rather wasted.

Much better to make further use of other peoples' shopping habits. You all know someone who's got a bigger hard disc than you! Simply, (bit of a fib), plug leads into the P.C. and, using pirated software, download music onto their hard disc. No loss of sound quality.

Then the tricky bit. CD writer required. Running out of friends? You're stuffed then. But, if are lucky enough to know a man that can, you can whack out a brand spankin', shiny and new CD within half an hour or so. Numerous advantages. You have a digital copy of music, even if hard disc is erased. You can make copies (cheapest blank CDs 74p each!) and of course, you can fast forward past the crap. The last bit is easy. Give a copy of your CD to all those who helped you. Then start looking for some new friends...



Diary of Andy A. Koostick

(Extracts of a diary kept by an anonymous 'Candle Clubber')

quick chat with t He was still fairly sober at this point. We another guy, the self-styled People's Poet in black leather and looking very "right on" a few weeks earlier, and his act consisted of shout out a word each, from which he would use to give an on-the-spot poem.

He did it pretty well really - could you write Poem about beans, mopeds and lard in fro But he was just a little bit too cocky about didn't really endear him to anyone. Well, his presence felt once more by strutting a flyers for another night's poetry and music is trying to set up at a different club.

But, on to the acts. Somebody had cares on the stage and the resident sound engin even though it meant he took longer than right and to curb the occasionally vicious some teething trouble with the early act disappointed. Shrieking-a-plenty, subson lots of atonal humming and a wretchedly And that was just my singing.

But, the acts gamely battled through the came and went, I noticed that I was sitting blonde woman, really rather demure looking either sitting quietly watching the acts, sitting to her left. Quite mysterious she l We had a guitar duo, who are normally very reason had decided to play two complete same time. Or at least that's what I take si... al fell

(Whilst the main aim of The Candle Club is to encourage new talent, it doesn't hurt to take ourselves a little less seriously every now and then. Does it? - Ed)

who, judging by his songs, must have had the most comprehensively tragic love life ever. He's good though. Some bloke who had brought down a big Wurlitzer keyboard, proceeded to do a very authentic looking impression of a white Stevie Wonder on speed.

There was the archetypal poet who, judging by last night's poems, now seems to have had a serious falling out with his parents, his landlord, and possibly his pet cat as well.

Then, towards the end, came the People's Poet. He swaggered his way on to the stage, and paraded around a bit. Everybody fell quiet. He then announced that he would make up a poem on the spot if somebody shouted out three words for him. Before I knew what was happening, the quiet, demure, mysterious blonde woman sitting by me stood up and shouted out very loudly and forcefully, "W****r, W****r, W****r!" Criekey.

Well, there was pandemonium. People were laughing, crying, hitting themselves over the head with beer mats, strangers were embracing - the works. But, the People's Poet coped very well, put a brave face on it, and spouted some nonsense about self-love. He then asked, a little more timidly this time, for some more words and cooked up some poem about humus, cockroaches and breakfast. It sounded suspiciously like the one he had done a few weeks earlier, but the crowd decided he had suffered enough already and let him live. He slunk off stage and disappeared into the night.

The surreal C4 series is surely only a few weeks away now.

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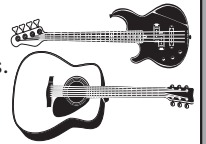
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REVIEWS

In years to come, will you be able to say
that you were there at the first Candle
Club Showcase? No? Shame on you!

If you were, perhaps you'd like to compare
notes?

A brave step forward by 'The Management',
trying to spice up the first Sunday night of
each month, and an opportunity for the
chosen few to do more than just a couple of
numbers.

First on, Steve and Dave. Blues through and
through, but no cover versions here, thank
you. All homespun stuff and an excellent
intro for the ever increasing throng of Candle
Clubbers. Two vastly differing voices, blending
easily into a rather too professional sound.
Add two sweet acoustic guitars, nimble fingers
and the thirty minutes had gone by far too
soon.

Sim was on that stage before you could say
"who's on next?" Oh dear, another pair of
lads avec guitars. Rob and James. Rob's the
one with long hair and James is the one with
er... long hair. Almost all the songs written
by one or t'other and pretty damn slick,
considering this was their first real airing in
public. This is really what it's all about,
springboarding talented locals from their
bedsits to... who knows where?

Suffice to say, they went down very well their
eagerness and ability shining through the
songs. Just enough time to get to the loo and
bar before Rik wandered in to claim centre
stage. Could Clive's mile and a half of newly
acquired wiring cope with the onslaught?
Yeah. Would the audience warm to this most
necessary injection of hard hitting lyrics and
electric guitar? Those in the crowd that didn't
(not many!) voted with their feet, but if you
bothered to listen to the Punkmeister, you'll
understand why, by the end of his set, the
place was jam packed with converts, a shoutin'
and a screamin' for more.

Phew! What we all needed was a rest, but
forty winks was out of the question. There
was just the little matter of Luigi and Luigis
and Violaine to consider. The Trio from Italy
did what they do best, belted out mucho
songs from the Homeland to their fellow
countrymen and women! All the rest of us
could do was to get carried along on the
wave of culture, singing and clapping and
feeling more European by the minute. What
fun! Broad grins all round as we approached
the end of the evening at a hundred miles
(sorry, kilometres) an hour.

Could Sim put the brakes on and manage to
bring the evening to a halt without fear of an
accident! Only just! The crowd went on
singing just to prove that they are, of course,
the most important part of the Candle Club
Showcase.

Nice to report that Rob and James have been
getting gigs locally at The Bier Kellar, Hobbit
and have a booking at 'The Heads' for one
of the new Saturday afternoon Band
Showcases. Steve and Dave have played *The
Platform* and *The Mash Tun* amongst others
and our Italian crew have a farewell gig
booked at *The Heads* on Thursday May 27th.
Good luck and keep in touch on the Web Site
you guys! -Ed

BEEN THERE, DONE IT, GOT THE T-SHIRT!

Yes this is Bob White (67) with Stevie Wonder!
When he was playing drums with Bobby Thurston
(Hip 80's soulster) at Gullivers Club in London,
the manager of the club announced to the band
that there would be a party later on in the evening
for some keyboard player. He thought his name
was Steve something or other. After a drawn out
piss take, the joker finally conceded that it was
for Stevie Wonder who happened to be playing
at Wembley that week!

Bob (42), was coerced into having his picture
taken with him by a friend (yes he's very shy,
honest!) He said shaking Stevie's hand was a
very strange experience, because Stevie seemed
to be sussing Bob (34) out, by the way he felt
his hand.

Incidentally, this is not Bob's one and only claim
to fame. In 1977 he played in a band called
'Honky', who made the top 30 in the charts with
a song called 'Join the Party'.

Because of the songs success, they consequently
appeared on Top of the Pops. (The video was on
'Never Mind the Buzzcocks' - Ed). Bob (27),
remembers Dr. Feelgood being on the bill, but
particularly Elton John wandering around the
studios, who wasn't?!

In the 80's he toured with Odyssey, George
McCrae and Martha Reeves & the Vandellas,
amongst others.



A highlight of his career, so far, was touring the
States with Martha, along with legendary Motown
bass player, James Jameson.

An experience he doesn't care to recall was playing
support to Gloria Gaynor at The London Palladium,
when she had her big hit "I Will Survive". Bob
(18) said, "It was a frightening experience getting
up onto this big pedestal at back of the stage and
staring out into what appeared to be an empty
black hall". He survived though.

*We hope to make this a regular feature so, if you had
similar experiences, or know someone who did, please
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