

Clifton Riot!

Before we leave the immediate vicinity of the city centre a mention must be made for the recently opened Spencers on Colston Street, a few doors up from the concert organisers the Colston Hall. The Dockland is half-way along the prime drag, City Road — which can be a hassle for women, but the place is worth visiting.

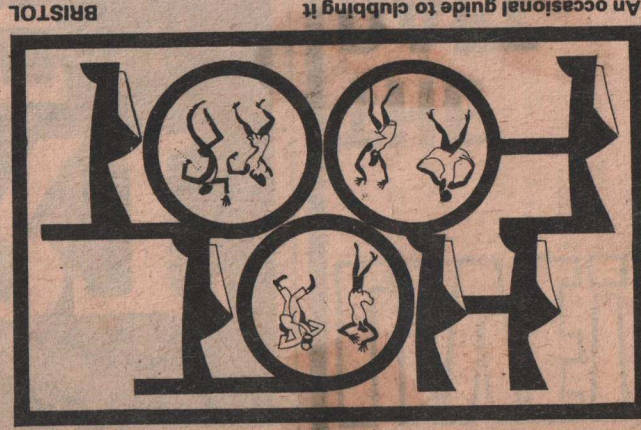
Trinity is a renovated church sitting on a corner opposite Trinity Road police station and is technically a club as they have to be sharp for licensing purposes. The seats are no longer pews, but some grave-stones still stand outside. The refurbishing and quality socialising and music. The Dockland Settlement hosts live music most Saturdays which can be of a variety, or something a little punk crossover audiences. The Granary is proud of its record and the place inspires affection in spite of its restricted viewing space and hardy perennial **The Old Soul** rebels. Whereas that odds with any image as young vision mixed in cramped surroundings. Fountains merge with tops fuelled by the easy funk disco in the far room. It's in marked contrast to the breeze-block mentality and owner so often it are **Misty's** and **Cinderellas**. close proximity of each other On Park Street itself within club in town.

bar prices, it's the best value on weekdays and reasonable and with a 50p entry charge relatively short space of time, of acquaintances in a place to hang out or see a lot and a pizaburger point. It's a perch on the bar stools if a new face descends the stairs is flamboyant posers. Stares shoot out from the patrons dealing with some of the more flamboyant posers. Stares which are over-worked pentagon-shaped mirrors opened out and extended and considerably smartened up, with bigger and better bars and a pizaburger point. It's a place to hang out or see a lot of acquaintances in a relatively short space of time, on weekdays and reasonable bar prices, it's the best value club in town.

On Park Street itself within close proximity of each other are **Misty's** and **Cinderellas**. are **Misty's** and **Cinderellas**. Misty's has changed its name and owner so often it becomes confusing, but

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An occasional guide to clubbing in BRISTOL

adaptation in the '60s as and structures of the **Locarno** and **Mayfair Suite**, to be found in the new Bristol Centre. **Steamers** in Princes Street is a Mod '60s club with its young conformist clientele at bridge at the bottom of Park Street and is another example of the strange sound and vision mixed in cramped surroundings. Fountains merge with tops fuelled by the easy funk disco in the far room. It's in marked contrast to the breeze-block mentality and owner so often it becomes confusing, but

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IT COMES as a surprise to know that the most commercially successful independent record label in Bristol produces music not normally associated with prevailing trends in the city. The label is Riot City Records, run by Simon Edwards, who combines this with holding down a full-time job with the AA, running Heartbeat Productions, publishing Disorder Records, and finally merchandising the Vice Squad business.

Simon's cramped top-floor Clifton flat is crammed with company product and the walls are decorated with posters promoting Riot City and his first foray into the record business with Heartbeat Records. That outfit released some interesting sounds from the likes of the Glaxo Babies, Apartment and the Art Objects, but never broke into significant territory out of Bristol. The most important release was the Avon Calling compilation of Bristol groups and set among them was a track by Vice Squad. Simon: "That track sparked quite a lot of interest and when Vice Squad came round to my flat to discuss doing an EP I decided to give it a go. I pressed 1,500 copies and didn't think it would do that much, and it suddenly started selling very heavily.

"We put out a second EP by Disorder and everything went very well - I had record sales that I'd never had, or even dreamed of before. And at the time I was the pioneering label doing it as 'No Future' Records (a label based in Malvern) hadn't started up and I was in quite a unique position.

That debut Vice Squad 'Last Rockers' EP and its successor 'Resurrection' have now both sold over 20,000 copies, spurred on by encouragement from the Sounds Features Editor Garry Bushnell, culminating in Beki Bondage adorning the paper's front page. Vice Squad eventually signed to EMI, although they retained their Riot City connection, and are an incredibly popular group with punks, and some non-punks too. What did Simon see as their appeal?

"They weren't just an every-day thrashing punk band; they had something else about them. They had songs and the songs were good, like with 'Last Rockers' you can understand what they're saying.

"When Peel played the session he said Vice Squad seemed to be the only band that had come out of the New Punk thing by taking punk away from '77, and doing it 80's style."

In contrast, most of the other Riot City groups (court Martial, Chaos UK, Abrasive Wheels) pump out fairly orthodox punk - fast and indecipherable - but financially the results have been more productive. Edwards maintains that he has not Edwards to borrow large amounts of money to maintain and expand the label, so how are the money matters arranged?

"It's a pure 50/50 profit margin split between me and the bands which at this stage is the only fair way to do it. I'm not into signing bands, like say Disorder, for three years on a percentage mark-up and all that rubbish. The bands don't understand it, and I don't like it as I had to use it with Heartbeat and it was a bit of a pain to be quite honest. Working this way is nicer. It gives the bands more freedom and its how I believe Rough Trade started."

With Heartbeat, Simon Edwards had less control over the label's activities because of its licensing arrangements with Cherry Red, but he still feels satisfied with what it achieved. In view of the relative failure of other labels in operation at the time, like Fried Egg and Wavelength, how would he sum up Heartbeat's history?

"With Heartbeat I wasn't trying to put out good records and each record in its own right never failed really. The ones that didn't sell a great deal got a lot of Radio One air-play and I was the first independent label to get daytime exposure as Paul Burnett, Dave Lee Travis and Simon Bates were all playing The Letters' single ('Nobody Loves Me')."

But in spite of all of these well-intentioned organisations and the wealth of talent in Bristol, the city has still not taken off or been regarded as a major music centre, even if the signs in the last year have been more encouraging. With Riot City Simon Edwards has made moves on the punk direction, but why, in his opinion, did he think that overall Bristol had lagged behind?

"It's down to a basic lack of music industry interest in Bristol. Bristol hasn't got any strong writers or strong people in the music business that are working for it, whereas places like Manchester and Liverpool have.

"Bristol has never had a movement, its a very fragmented city with lots of different things going on and people don't mix and gell together - it's the Clifton trendy crowd versus the rest all the time. It's funny because I was always in

the middle of it all; I took hands from Clifton and bands from anywhere else.

"It's like the problems I had getting the Avon Calling album together. Every band from each of the labels in the town were going to be on it. When some of these people heard that Vice Squad were on it they all thought it was going to be the worse thing in the world and they wouldn't go anywhere near it, so they pulled out.

I found that attitude totally bizarre and pathetic because Avon Calling was trying to portray Bristol music, not any particular person, sound or movement. I even had a phone call saying 'you've no right to put out music like that' - I couldn't believe it. So all the way along I've been totally ignored even though I'm probably doing the most that anyone's done in Bristol for music."

DAVE MASSEY



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