

**DIRTY SUNBEAMS & CULTUREDALE
YOUTH MUSIC TAKEOVER PRESENT**

**A BEGINNER'S GUIDE
TO CALDERDALE
GRASSROOTS MUSIC**

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A Beginner's Guide to Grassroots Music in Calderdale

Hi, and welcome to this special edition of the Calderdale Grassroots Music Guide.

This publication came out of conversations between a few of the Grassroots Music Venues about how we could mutually support one another.

The Grassroots music scene in Calderdale is thriving - some say the best it's ever been - with incredible venues The Trades Club, The Golden Lion, The Grayston Unity, The Puzzle Hall Inn and The Blind Pig (all members of the Music Venue Trust), local bands (the likes of The Incident, The Caymans, Grow, Doogle and The Short Causeway, to name just a few), and a wide-range of events across the various towns that make up the borough, each with their own unique character.

We want to see it continue to grow and develop, to be enjoyed by even more people, and have a sustainable future.

With that in mind we decided to work with music website Dirty Sunbeams and CultureDale's Youth Music Takeover to produce this guide.

Inside you'll find profiles on some of the artists, venues and behind-the-scenesters that make up the Calderdale grassroots music network, with a focus on tips and advice on how YOU can get involved - especially if you're a young person.

Of course you might ask - at what age do I stop being a young person? We believe that music, especially in its grassroots, up-close-and-personal, community-led form is like the fountain of youth - so we didn't want to put an upper age limit on who this guide is for. As long as you've got the energy to try new things and an open curious mind you'll find something out there for you and be welcomed with open arms. Your own teeth and hair are just an added bonus.

We have a rich past and a potent future. It's the perfect time to get stuck in and help write the next chapter.

Hope to see you down the front!

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Photography by Mike Hamp

A HOTBED



OF TALENT

Grunge bands, folk troubadours, jazz collectives, poetry, open mic, creative writing classes, northern soul club matinees, film nights and even yoga... The Grayston Unity, in the middle of Halifax, is the town's epicentre of live entertainment.

The venue has two amazing rooms, one a classic, low-level basement that holds 110. The other is the 16-capacity Tiny Grayston, a tightly-packed top-floor snug reclaiming the official title 'UK's smallest independent live music venue'.

The owner, Michael Ainsworth, has put on literally hundreds of gigs. His impressive roster includes Pulp, The Bug Club, The Lovely Eggs, John Grant, Midlake, Low and Nadine Shah.

He is also well-known for giving young adults great opportunities in the live music industry.

NURTURING NEW BEGINNINGS

Michael: "I remember back at that age how difficult it was. I suppose that's stuck with me. And now I have the chance to try and do something about it.

I've been lucky that I came across Tom, our sound engineer and now full-time venue manager. I can't praise him highly enough. He's only 21 and he's just brilliant.

My previous sound engineer, Oscar, started with us when he was only about 15. He's now about 23 and working abroad on some huge shows.

We also have Niamh who's doing a full-time level 3 apprenticeship. Iris is doing sound with Tom. Then we have Harry, a graduate from Leeds Conservatoire and Joe, 17, both learning the music business side of things.

JUST REWARDS

They get paid. I think that's important. Money is kind of tight but I just don't believe anyone should be doing anything for nothing. It follows through to playing gigs. No bands should ever play for nothing.

If somebody is enthusiastic and wants to learn, then we'll try and accommodate them. At The Grayston, we are supportive, encouraging and friendly. I think everyone is approachable here. It's just that kind of place. I often use this word, but I think it has real substance."

SOUNDS GOOD?

Michael is always open to taking on passionate, diligent young people. If you're itching to get involved in the live music scene and The Grayston sounds like the perfect fit for you, get in touch.

THE GRAYSTON UNITY

8 Horton St,
Halifax. HX1 1PU
Contact: Michael
@graystonunity
thegraystonunity.co.uk

Tom Townsend

@tomtownsnd

In the three years he's been at The Grayston Unity, Tom has had a massive impact. He started off working behind the bar at 18 and has quickly risen through the ranks, becoming sound engineer and now, still only 21 years old, venue manager.

Tom actively trains up future sound tech hopefuls too. And he's widely respected by local bands, frequently going out of his way to help them with the technicalities of their live set-up, event promotion and more.

Q) TOM, HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTO MUSIC?

"I studied music at high school and learned guitar. Then I got offered an opportunity to learn basic live sound at Illingworth Moor Methodist Church, where my family is part of the congregation. I later got a taste for technology and just knew I wanted to become a live sound engineer. I went on to study Music Technology at Calderdale College."

Q) WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST GIG NIGHT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED SO FAR AT THE GRAYSTON?

"It was the day we opened the new Grayston. We were in from 8am making the venue fit for purpose and then we opened for an invite-only evening. It was the first time we did a show with an audience in there and the whole building was running at 100% capacity. But afterwards we sat down - myself, the bar manager and the owners - and just admired the new place, this thing of beauty that we had all put so many hours into building."

Q) AND YOUR MOST NERVE-WRACKING MOMENTS?

"Forgetting to save a show file - the preset we make of the band after soundcheck - then going on to mix the support. There have only been a couple of times that's happened and mixing on the fly was needed, which is always a real test of skill."

5 TOP TIPS

Tom's five top tips for aspiring sound engineers

- 1. Ask lots of questions.**
If you don't understand something, just ask!
- 2. Be a good communicator and be personable.** It's always nice to hear that bands like the venue because of how friendly the service is.
- 3. Watch lots of tutorials** (accredited ones, that is) - and try to put those lessons into practice where you can.
- 4. Listen to lots of music.** Go to gigs and observe mixing styles. See where things are placed into a mix.
- 5. Most important of all, practice critical listening.** This is the practice of being able to listen to a frequency and know what frequency it is. This is great if you are using old school gear or gear that has no real-time analysis function and you have to figure out what's feeding back.



THE INCIDENT

@officialtheincident

The Incident are a theatrical new glam-rock duo from Halifax, invoking the spirit of Bolan, Bowie and Freddie Mercury. With only a handful of gigs under their star-spangled belts they already seemed destined for big things.

The band first took shape during lockdown when songwriter Tom Davies, 19, taught himself piano and began writing. His sister Emma, 14, was already no stranger to performing. She is an actor, known for playing Jess Beaker, the daughter to Tracy Beaker, in the beloved children's TV show.

Tom and Emma both have soaring, operatic voices. And when they collide, it's pure dynamite. For live performances, they have bolstered their line-up to a full band of five.

"STAGGERING"

The Incident were recently discovered by Justin Hawkins of The Darkness who said "You don't hear voices like that very often do you. Staggering. There's not much you can say when someone's that talented."

They are embracing the much-deserved attention and having some fun along the way. Tom turned up to their sold out show at The Grayston in an open-top Rolls.

The Incident are one of the most supernaturally gifted bands in the area right now and they carry the flag for Calderdale music in glorious fashion.



GROW

@growtheband

Grow are a feel-good, retro-rock four-piece from Halifax. The band came together at the end of 2023 and have since played all over Calderdale, including The Trades Club twice, one of which was supporting indie-dance icons The Soup Dragons.

They have developed their 70s groove through a slightly different channel - local jam nights.

'AMAZING CHAOS'

Jack, 19 (bass & vocals): "There's a few around the valley. There's a big difference between a jam night and an open mic. It's just complete chaos, but amazing chaos. There's so many people who come down, people who aren't that confident to play in front of a crowd, but they'll have a go. It makes it special."

It's fitting that the band have honed their skills in such a collective environment. In fact, the current crop of emerging bands are interconnected in many ways - to the area and to one another.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Jack: "The drummer from The Caymans, Toby, is one of my best mates. Me, him, and Tom, the lead singer from The Incident were in a band called The Afterlife. That was 2019. I was still at high school, in year nine. We all started off together, learning how to write songs."

They are quick to highlight the support they've had from elsewhere too.

Harry, 21 (keys): "The Grayston, of course. And Phil Wilson. Jack's dad. He's a hell of a man. He's been in bands before and he knows what he's doing. Tom Townsend. He's helped us with sound and helped set up our EP fundraiser. Tom's been so good to us."



ANYTHING GOES

The Puzzle Hall Inn is a unique, community owned venue. Situated on Hollins Mill Lane in Sowerby Bridge, the live music space-cum-pub is a 17th-century building that is community-owned and run largely by volunteers.

A UNIQUE AND QUIRKY ENTERTAINMENT VENUE.

The place is steeped in musical history. Young local bands and underground international acts have been playing there for decades. The events team embrace the complete spectrum of genres. Expect

anything from delicate noir-folk ballads to ear-mangling doom metal. There are open mics too - one of which, Technical Difficulties, is for electronic and experimental music - as well as regular folk and jazz nights.

The Puzzle has stages indoors and out and a free entry policy. Artists are paid from bar takings and audience donations.

EXPECT ANYTHING FROM DELICATE NOIR-FOLK BALLADS TO EAR MANGLING DOOM METAL.

INTERNATIONAL ACTS

A number of different promoters regularly put on gigs at The Puzzle. Gareth Scott of the band Kimber's Men heads up the schedule for the monthly Lore Night, a showcase for regional folk and roots artists. Geoff Amos uses his well-honed connections for the jazz nights. Andy Abbott of ADRA Promotions organises gigs for a lot of underground and experimental acts, many of them connected to the international DIY scene. This year alone he's had artists from Latvia, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Pakistan and America.



Photography by Mike Hamp

The venue is very open-minded to new or wannabe promoters staging their own events too. Many of Calderdale's seasoned promoters started out at The Puzzle, or have staged specific events there over the years.

Director, Sam Irvine, has seen a vast number of those gigs. His mum ran the pub back in the 1990s and was largely responsible for ramping up The Puzzle's reputation for live music. Sam grew up in the place and returned to take over the reins in 2018. Before then, the pub had been sat vacant for two years. Increased rent prices had forced out the previous tenant. Sam led a crowd-funder to take the pub into community ownership.

BECOME A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

The Puzzle's events committee are now looking for people to join the team and help run their many gig nights and festivals. There's the chance to get involved with just about anything you want - booking bands, promotion, sound engineering, event logistics, you name it.

THE PUZZLE HALL

For more info, get in touch with Sam @puzzlehallinn 01422 835237 21 Hollins Mill Lane, Sowerby Bridge HX6 2RF

Andy Abbott

@zadanzig

Andy Abbott of ADRA Promotions is a key figure in the Yorkshire live music scene, as both promoter and musician.

He is also a vastly experienced member of the underground, international DIY network. He started putting on gigs in his hometown of Matlock when he was 15. He then discovered the DIY scene in Leeds when he was 18.

"I found there were all these gigs happening outside of the known system, away from proper venues, in social clubs, function rooms, pubs, squats and temporary spaces. And these bands were decent and interesting. They sounded great, they could play. Sometimes they were from Chile, or America, or France. For me, as an 18 year old, it was amazing. It was an epiphany.

GETTING STUCK IN

"I soon got very heavily involved. I was playing in bands, organising gigs as a collective, and doing a record label with friends. It was very much about taking control of the means of production and doing things in an ethical, transparent way."

“

THE PUZZLE IS UNIQUE. YOU'VE GOT A VERY OPEN-MINDED CROWD. THE VOLUNTEERS ON THE COMMITTEE ARE REALLY SUPPORTIVE.”

Andy has since played gigs around the world and booked bands at countless UK venues, but to him, The Puzzle remains a special place.

"Because all the gigs are free entry, as a promoter you're putting on an event with very little financial risk. You can kind of do what you want, within reason.

It's a small indoor venue, so if there's six people in there, it still feels like a nice, intimate gig. If you've got 70 or 80, it's thriving."

THE CAYMANS

@caymansbanduk

The indie-pop quartet from Halifax caused a media stir in February when The Libertines' Pete Doherty granted them an impromptu gig slot. The Caymans spotted Pete in Leeds city centre, asked for an autograph, played him a demo and he was so impressed he got them to open for The Libertines at The Wardrobe that very night.

Life has been hectic since, with a flurry of media interviews and gig bookings filling their time. They found space in their diaries to get in the studio with Ukrainian producer, Yaroslav Ponomaryov, to work up a double-A sided debut single, brimming with hooks, breezy melodies and crafted rhythms. Think: Inhaler, Stereophonics and The Strokes.

Q) WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT THE LOCAL LIVE MUSIC SCENE?

Jacob Brown, 18 (bass & vocals): "It's the other bands and the people that come week in and week out to watch us. There's an overwhelming feeling that all the bands are just trying move up the ladder. We all have that in common and we're all willing to help and lend a hand to reach what we're all after."

Q) YOU'VE HAD A LOT OF LOCAL SUPPORTERS IN THESE EARLY STAGES OF YOUR CAREER. WHO HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY HELPFUL?

"Our manager, Aaron, has been a massive supporter and opportunity-arranger for us. Also Niko Mykyta and Yaroslav Ponomaryov who do all our media and producing, respectively. The Caymans would still be a pipe-dream without them in the picture."

Q) WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR MOST MEMORABLE GIGS TO DATE?

"Our first gig was Clifton Festival, on Toby's 18th birthday. We've played some great venues since - The Piece Hall, The Blind Pig, FocusFest and Brodstock just to name a few."



A LOCAL LEGEND

The world-famous Trades Club is now a thing of legend on the UK gig circuit, with high-end live music production in an intimate setting.

The venue has two Regularly name-dropped by iconic bands and deemed 'the hippest venue in the North', The Trades Club boasts a high-spec technical set-up and has showcased the likes of Sleaford Mods, Stereolab, Idles, Patti Smith and Thurston Moore.

The venue, now in its 100th year, offers bands an intimate yet relaxed and professional space in which to perform. Mal Campbell is the Booker and Promotions Manager. He runs the majority of the events and has always been keen to encourage young local bands.

Mal has given precious stage time to The Orielles, The Lounge Society, Splint, Working Men's Club, The Short Causeway and plenty more during the early stages of their music careers.

The team at The Trades are very community-focused, their slogan being 'By The People, For The People'.

“

ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT WORKING AT THE TRADES CLUB IS THAT WE PUT ON A GOOD PRODUCTION FOR THE VENUE SIZE”

They host numerous charity nights and fundraisers, and there's a regular open mic too - a chance for anyone to perform on a famous stage with a top-quality sound production.

JOIN THE CLUB

Mal Campbell: "I'm currently working with a young promoter, aged 18, who has recently put on her first show. We're about to have a feedback session and look at putting on another event. We have young people selling merch for bands too and the occasional young external promoter will come along.

I'd now really like to offer opportunities to young people (18+) to shadow our sound and lighting engineers.

One of the great things about working at The Trades Club is that we put on a good production for the venue size, so you can learn skills that still apply at much bigger venues."

Fancy joining The Trades' team? For more info and to find out how you can be involved, get in touch with Mal.

THE TRADES CLUB

Holme St, Hebden Bridge. HX7 8EE
thetradescub.com
@the_trades_club
@mal_trades_club

Q) WHAT'S THE BEST NIGHT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED AT THE TRADES CLUB?

"The Orielles headlining in 2017, after playing numerous times at the club over the years. They'd just signed to Heavenly and the club was full of young people. It was the beginning of the young local music scene that still exists now, seven years later."

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

Q&A with Mal Campbell

Q) AND WHAT HAVE BEEN THE MOST STRESSFUL MOMENTS?

"22nd June, 2012. Evacuating the club in the middle of a show as the town was flooding."

The first Heavenly Weekend we put on in 2017 as well. We didn't really have enough staff and it was exhausting. There was a lot of snow and one of the headline bands cancelled at the last minute. It was hard work but very satisfying."

Q) YOUR TOP 5 TIPS FOR ASPIRING GIG-MAKERS?

- 1. Do your research.** Find out what you can about the venue and promoter before you speak to them.
- 2. Learn how to tune a guitar and change guitar strings.** Then you can offer to roadie for a young band.
- 3. Be friendly and confident** - even if you don't feel confident.
- 4. Offer to volunteer** at your local music venue.
- 5. Social media** - offer to help with the venue's social channels.

"And if you get offered work experience at a venue: Arrive early, ask questions (but pick your moment), offer to make tea or go and get coffees, wear comfortable shoes or trainers as you will be on your feet a lot and bring earplugs, painkillers, water and deodorant."

THE HAZY JANES

@thehazyjanes


A dynamic, blues-rock duo from Halifax, The Hazy Janes are Ellis Best (vocals, guitar) and Bron Bury (drums). They formed three years ago while in their mid-20s and have since ingrained themselves into the local scene, so much so they have a song - The Grayston Boogie - named after one of the region's prime venues.

The first local venue they played was the old Grayston Unity. They did three gigs there in all, each one a sell-out. They're headlining the new venue on Horton Street as part of their album launch tour in November. They've also played The Puzzle twice, enjoyed a handful of support slots at The Trades Club and, earlier this year, played a sold-out headline show at the Hebden Bridge venue for the launch of their EP.

The band takes influence from acts such as The Doors, The Dead Weather, The White Stripes and The Black Keys.

"The people of Calderdale love their live music. They are so welcoming to new bands, regardless of genre. And the local venues are so supportive of new talent. Places like The Trades Club, The Puzzle and The Grayston Unity have continued to offer us amazing opportunities from day one." - The Hazy Janes





**“IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF
THE YOUNG LOCAL MUSIC
SCENE THAT STILL EXISTS
NOW, SEVEN YEARS LATER.”**

**Mal Campbell, on
The Orielles' headline
show at The Trades Club
in 2017.**

ECLECTIC, DIVERSE SOUNDS



Spiritual home to the late great DJ-producer, Andrew Weatherall, The Golden Lion in Todmorden has developed something of a cult status within the dance music industry.

The venue hosts a dazzling array of eclectic electronic nights – house, dub, techno, reggae. Venue owners Gig and Waka run the dance nights, along with Waka's son Matthew.

David Holmes, Utah Saints, Andy Votel, The Orb, Groove Armada, Joy Orbison, Darren Emerson and Goldie are

among the innumerable DJ greats to have graced the place in recent times. Oh, and Jarvis Cocker.

In the upstairs gig room there's a barrage of cutting-edge live music – indie, folk, metal, funk, you name it – mainly run by Lou Karwowski of Dark Matter Promotions.

The Lion also has an open mic every Thursday, UFO meets, trade stalls and more. Gig, Waka and Matthew have a liberal, party ethos and are BIG on community.

OPPORTUNITIES AT THE GOLDEN LION

Gig: "On event days, people can come and do anything and everything, really - they can do the door, they can help do the sound, they can help with the lighting set-up. They can do everything. We'd love them too. That'd be great. Someone can help me with the online, creating an event page. Instagram. We'd look after them, get them free food and drink - and money if they're doing good."

If someone wants to come in and write about the night, review the night, that's great too. We already have a photographer and a video guy. So someone can come and follow them. We are making a Golden Lion movie, a music documentary. So someone interested in that field could get involved."

For more info and to get involved, contact Gig.

THE GOLDEN LION

Fielden Square,
Todmorden. OL14 6LZ
@goldenlion_todmorden
goldenliontodmorden.
co.uk

WAKA ON BOOKING BANDS

"You've got to commit 100%. You've got to be prepared to fail and don't let failing stop you. It's about keeping afloat. Sometimes, occasionally, I wake up and say 'I've had enough. I'm not booking any more bands.' Then an hour later I get an email from an agent and get excited again."

GIG ON RUNNING A VENUE

"I think everyone has to have an integrity about what they're doing. You know, it's a small valley, a small industry, so whatever you do, it will come back to you. You've got to have a good moral complex."

Matthew Humphreys

@_matthewhum

Once a Golden Lion punter, 26-year-old Matthew Humphreys, Waka's son, is now predominantly venue manager. He has been gradually taking on more responsibility at The Lion over the last few years, ever since studying for a politics degree.

Matthew: "First and foremost, it's about making sure the pub itself is operational, ordering the beer and stock, arranging the cellar, getting ready for opening, painting and decorating, changing light bulbs - nearly every day - cleaning and so on.

Then it's all about booking nights, setting up for DJ gigs at the weekend, creating event pages, ticket links. Plus, lots of social media stuff on Facebook and Instagram, replying to emails, updating the website.

Then there's the running of our record label, Golden Lion Sounds. It should really be a job in itself running the label and a lot gets neglected due to spending too much time on everything else. But it's a cool little side project.

I've learnt something from everyone I've crossed paths with. From the owners to other bar staff, locals, punters and artists; from learning how to run a business and all the 'boring stuff' like profits and margins, to dealing with agents and managers, to setting up equipment.

I've probably learnt more than I would have doing three different uni courses!"

Matthew's golden rules for event management

- 1. Be patient.** Start small before you go big. Do some things with 'smaller DJs'. Some of the best nights took a while to build up and get a name for themselves.
- 2. Be realistic.** It's very hard getting 220 down for a night, especially in Todmorden where there's no accommodation and the trains stop at 11pm.
- 3. Be respectful.** If you're putting nights on at someone else's place, be respectful and understand that it's their place and not yours.
- 4. Build good connections.** Find genuine people and be supportive to what others are doing. There's a lot of people doing it with good intentions and they're the people to learn from and potentially collaborate with.
- 5. Do it for the right reasons.** It's not necessarily going to make you a lot of money. Do it for the love of it.

Lou Karwowski

@darkmatterproms

Lou runs Dark Matter Promotions. She is the main booker and promoter of live bands at The Golden Lion. Recent acts include Deja Vega, Kontiki, Chemtrails and Gnod.

Lou has a PhD in Computational and Theoretical Chemistry and a scientific background in neurodiversity. Inclusion is a key part of her ethos when staging a live music event.

Lou: "We always strive to be fair, equitable and inclusive. There are increasing numbers of diagnoses in ADHD, autism, dyslexia and other neuro-types, particularly in the younger generation. We understand how difficult life can be without support or strategies in place and we welcome people to our gigs from all backgrounds."

Q) WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A GIG PROMOTER?

"It's like riding an exhilarating rollercoaster. At the same time, you're helping to support the UK and global music culture. Plus, you're meeting and working with so many fantastic people from all over the globe. It makes everybody's world bigger."



IT'S LIKE RIDING AN EXHILARATING ROLLERCOASTER"

Q) WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR BIGGEST LESSONS FROM DOING GIGS?

"Flexibility, positivity and communication are key. Problems will arise - it's how you deal with them that matters."

Q) WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS TO SOMEONE LOOKING TO GET INVOLVED IN MUSIC EVENT MANAGEMENT?

"Learn to be resilient, adopt a can-do attitude, be humble and be prepared to get involved with anything that needs doing. It's a team effort and no task is below anyone. If it needs doing, get it done. And lastly, have a laugh!"

THE LOUNGE SOCIETY

@theloungesociety

Hebden Bridge four-piece, The Lounge Society, have been one of the region's biggest success stories in recent times. Signed to Dan Carey's cult label Speedy Underground at the age of just 15, they were swiftly launched into the spotlight. Their 2022 debut album, *Tired of Liberty*, was lauded by the music press. A series of high-profile live shows followed and their fan base grew.

This year, they have been busy writing material for a second album. To do so, they went back to basics and set up camp in The Golden Lion, with hugely-respected local promoter, sound engineer, DJ and all round good guy, Andy Sloman.

Cam (bass & vocals): "Coming into this space at The Golden Lion, it feels similar to when we were first rehearsing in the living room. It's come full circle in that respect. It's like it doesn't matter if the music we play here never makes it outside this room."



ANDREA BROUG

@andreabroug

Andrea and her friend, Heather, have become regulars at The Trades Club open mic nights, playing under their collective name, Belle. The 16-year-old goes to a lot of folk gigs in the area too, many of them at Wadsworth Community Centre, and her folk band have performed at a number of ceilidhs.

"There is so much diversity in the local music scene. A great example of that is the open mic night at The Trades Club. There's everything from folk to electronic music - and everyone is welcome.

That first gig or performance is always the scariest, but once that's out of the way, your confidence grows and your performance skills improve. So don't be afraid and sign up for that first open mic night and do that first performance because it will pay off."



REBECCA SPOONER

@rebeccaspooner

Open mic nights are the musician's playground. A chance to perform, learn, experiment, meet people and, quite possibly, secure gigs. That's precisely what happened to Todmorden-based singer-songwriter, Rebecca Spooner, 18.

"I think the best thing about the local scene is that there's literally something for everyone, whether you're watching or playing. It's so utterly bizarre and brilliant.

It has really allowed me to find my style of songwriting. What does the audience respond well to? What do I enjoy performing? How do I feel when I perform? After every performance, I feel a little bit more confident and stronger with who I am and what direction I'm going in. And the audiences locally are always so lovely and friendly."



THE SHORT CAUSEWAY

@shortcausewayband

Hebden Bridge trio, The Short Causeway, have become something of a house band at The Trades Club over the last couple of years.

Ironically, when Claudie and drummer Rufus played together in the Hebden Bridge Brass Band as kids, they used to rehearse right underneath the venue. At high school, they then hooked up with bassist Hayden - brother of The Lounge Society singer, Cam - and the band was born.

"It feels rare to have such a vibrant scene in a rural town in the north, I suppose. We just saw bands playing, fancied a crack at it and were given the chance - just because of there being venues around who care about young people and live music."

"Other bands in the area have been great too. The Lounge Society have always been supportive and The Orielles have always had good things to say."



DOOGLE

@doogle

Multi-instrumentalist doogle, aka Joe Robinson, already has a debut album to his name and has become a regular on the live music circuit across the north of England.

The 17-year-old has taken inspiration from many sources on his musical journey - his dad, his drum teacher and even a homeless busker in High Wycombe.

"My dad played guitar a lot in the house. Then, when I was about six, I started playing drums and went through the grades. My drum teacher, James Newsome, was amazing. I honestly do not know where I would be without him.

I then joined a few bands. I mainly played with a punk band in Bradford called Alarm77. Our first gig was at a skate festival at the Orange Box in Halifax.

I started playing guitar at Christmas 2021. Then in Easter 2022, I spoke to a homeless guy called Neil in High Wycombe who was busking. He was a lovely guy. I was 14 then and I was inspired so I started busking too - in Hebden, Huddersfield and occasionally Halifax.

A FORM OF ESCAPISM

My first solo gig in a 'proper' venue was a gig I promoted at The Grayston Unity in Halifax. I went from solo to full band last September at college - I'm one year into a Music Performance course at Access Creative Manchester.

Music is a really important part of my life. It is both a form of escapism and expressionism that I can use to communicate with others. My songs are often insights into my feelings and personal life. It helps me express feelings that I otherwise may not know how to deal with.

The local music scene has done a lot for my confidence, both in music and in life. I have no issues getting on stage in front of people now because of how welcoming and friendly the environment is.

My advice to anyone looking to get involved is to just start. Do everything you can. Always say "yes" to any opportunity. Come down to The Grayston for our youth showcases and get speaking to people. Get down to as many open mics as you can and try to start conversations. You'll find people are super supportive and friendly."

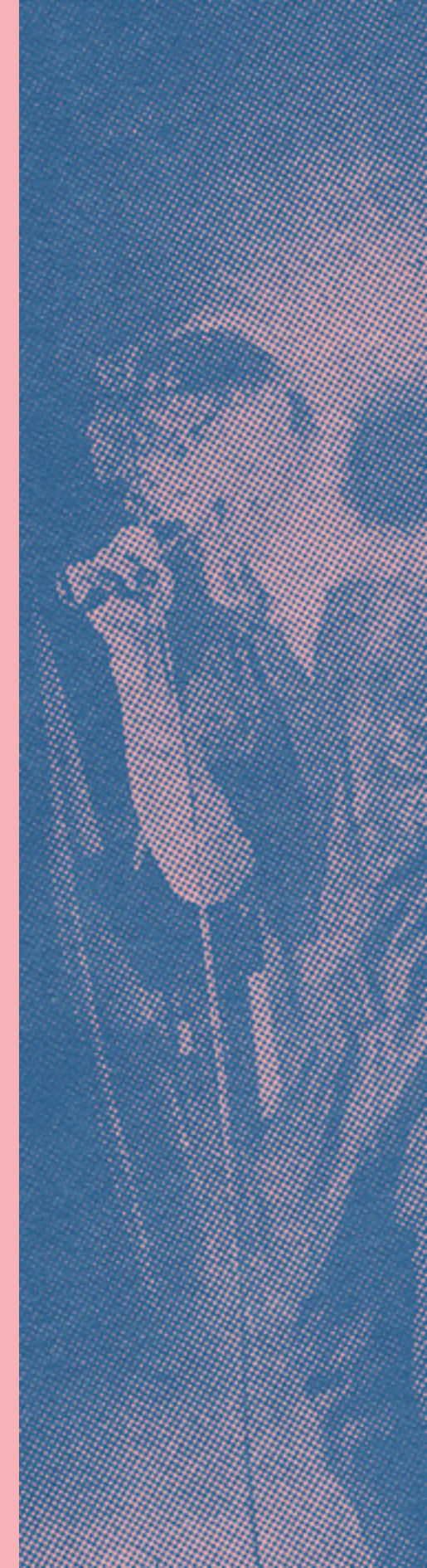


TOP 5 ARTISTS OF ALL TIME

1. Neutral Milk Hotel
2. The Mountain Goats
3. Pinegrove
4. Paolo Nutini
5. Modern Baseball

ONES TO WATCH

1. The First Ones
"a young heavy rock band in Huddersfield. Their tunes are class. They've just released a new EP that sounds absolutely mint"
2. Grow
3. Sooner Or Later
4. The Incident
5. Mason Whittle



12 YEARS IN THE MAKING



Photography by Mike Hamp

The Blind Pig is a bustling pub venue with a brand new makeover in the centre of Sowerby Bridge.

Set across two floors, the spiral staircase connects the downstairs bar to the quirky, top floor, open-plan gig space.

There's a great sound set-up at The Pig, overseen by Callum Hall, who works for Pro Audio Systems. His aunt, Julie, is the manager of the venue. Between them, they put on a varied mix of top live bands every weekend.

They also run a sister venue, The Turk's Head, across the street.

Looking to the future, Julie and Callum have just put in a new stage and undergone a rebrand aimed at a more youth-oriented market. They've also made moves to improve their accessibility by running a TV feed of the upstairs gigs to a big TV screen on the ground floor.

They're keener than ever to help train and support the next generation of people who want to be part of the live music scene.

MENTORING FUTURE TALENT

Julie: "We've already got two or three young lads that will quite often pop in to mentor under Callum. So while he's doing the sound, he's explaining everything to them. It's a digital desk, which is great for them to learn with. And Callum's a great teacher, one of the best to learn from. He could go full-time as a sound engineer all over the world.

Anyone who comes in here is well looked after. I'll make sure they've got a taxi home and they've got drinks while they're there.

We'd love to do a young bands showcase at least once a month, putting on two or three bands on a Sunday afternoon. We've done it a couple of times and it's been really successful."

THE SUNDAY SESSIONS

"I got in touch with The Caymans after their gig with The Libertines. They come in to watch the bands anyway. I said, 'Well done, lads. You need to play on this now. You want to get some gigs.' We had them play on a Sunday afternoon and we put the Deep Sea Lemons on too. We've had The Carmines play too. They were really good.

We want to get these young people playing with a proper sound system to a proper audience. You can have the most amazing band, but they need to be able to read an audience.

It'd be lovely if a group of younger people took that over, the whole event, from the sound tech to the bands to promoting, to ticketing. They'd get paid for it, because I wouldn't charge for the room or anything. They can come along, set the ticket price, go for it and keep the takings.

I'd be there to help them, guide them and set up the events. Once they've done a few, they'll be up and running."

THE BLIND PIG

For more info, contact Julie via The Blind Pig's Facebook page - facebook.com/theblindpiguk

Callum Hall

@callumhallaudio

Callum Hall is in high demand. As well as being sound engineer at The Blind Pig, the 31-year-old has a busy day job with Pro Audio Systems and still finds time for regular freelance gigs.

He first got interested in music when he was at school. He learned the bass and started gigging at 15. Callum then studied Music Technology at college and Sound Engineering & Production at Birmingham City University.

Soon after, he started doing the sound for bands at The Blind Pig - where Julie, his aunt, is the landlady - and quickly fell in love with the place.

Q) WHAT MAKES THE BLIND PIG SUCH A SPECIAL PLACE?

"Julie's passion for free-entry gigs means that anyone can come and enjoy themselves, which brings in a real mish-mash of genres and subcultures.

The PA is the best I've seen in a small venue. It's a dream to work with. On top of that, the bands are looked after and paid fairly, so everyone wants to come back, which keeps the standard of performers high."

Q) WHAT'S THE BEST NIGHT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED AT THE BLIND PIG?

"Last year's Noise in the Valley Festival. We had brilliant up-and-coming bands, a venue full of appreciative fans and we were working with another local venue, The Puzzle and local band The Tall Trees."

Q) AND THE MOST STRESSFUL?

"It's those gigs where there's a lack of trust from the artist. Fortunately, it's been years since this has happened. I've got better at communicating with bands, to ensure they know I'm there to support them and want the best for the gig."

Q) WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR BIGGEST LESSONS?

"I got thrown in at the deep end with my first real gig after uni. I joined a regional theatre tour at the last minute. They were desperate for someone with an audio background. But audio is such a broad spectrum. I've found it best to throw myself into whatever work I can and lean on the experience of other crew members to improve my own skills.

The most important thing to learn is signal flow and how to troubleshoot effectively. When there's a problem the last thing you need is to waste time chasing a fault in the wrong place. Being level headed and logical helps greatly."

TOP TIPS

Callum's Top Tips for budding sound techs.

1. Build your skills.
2. Learn to drive and get your own reliable transport.
3. Learn about IT infrastructure.
4. Become great at networking.
5. Be nice and be positive.
6. Know your worth.
7. Persevere.
8. Be realistic.
9. And finally... Remember, everyone has bad shows from time to time, so analyse what went wrong and be honest with yourself. If there's something you could have done better, learn from it in time for the next one.



WRITE, DESIGN, EDIT, VIDEO, CREATE

Dirty Sunbeams is an independent, non-profit music website that helps students and young adults interested in a career in media, journalism or content production.

It is a space for you to find your creative voice, develop key skills, learn and grow, all in a relaxed environment.

You can write articles, interview bands, create videos, design graphics and manage the social media channels. You can do all of this or focus on one aspect. And you can come and go as you please. There's no expectation. There's no commitment needed.

KICK-START YOUR CREATIVE PORTFOLIO

The web site enables students to produce their own content, under the guidance of founder and editor Stephen Desmond, so they can build up a body of named work, putting them in a better position when applying for jobs or university placements.

Niamh Robinson, a student at Kirklees College and digital content apprentice at The Grayston, has been writing artist features and creating video reviews of live events since launch. In that time, she has interviewed a range of talented musicians, not least the legendary Nile Rodgers, ahead of his summer show at The Piece Hall.

Niamh: "It has given me the freedom to try things out, particularly with my video skills, and I've learned a lot in a short space of time."

THE PHILOSOPHY

- Dirty Sunbeams is strictly non-commercial and not-for-profit.
- Everyone is welcome. Everyone works as a team. There are no egos.
- Content creators should strive to add value in all that they do.

THE EDITOR

Dirty Sunbeams' founder, Stephen Desmond, has held senior content and marketing roles at the BBC, AOL, Expedia and Nutmeg, among others. He has a 2:1 BA (Hons) in English from Sheffield University.

THE NAME

Stephen wanted a memorable name for his website, one that loosely symbolised the emerging talent in the area – the 'rough gems'. After spending far too long considering far too many options he settled on 'Dirty Sunbeams'. And apparently Johnny Marr said he liked it. So that settled it.

JOIN DIRTY SUNBEAMS

There are now spaces available for more people to join Dirty Sunbeams. Interested? Get in touch.

Send an email to DirtySunbeams@gmail.com. Or take a look at the site - DirtySunbeams.com - for more information.

Top Tips

Dirty Sunbeams' tips for interviewing bands

1. Do Your Research.

Listen to the band's back catalogue. Read biography pages on a couple of different sites. Read past interviews. You want to feel like you really know the band before you meet them.

2. Prepare Interesting Questions.

Don't ask anything that has been asked countless times before. If you've done the research, you already know the answers. Identify the high-level topics like 'the new album' and draft a few core questions specific to that artist.

3. Environment. On the day, think about where you're recording it. Is the sound going to come through OK? Is there too much background noise? It doesn't need to be too clean or studio-like. Some ambient background noise of a bar or gig venue is nice. If recording video, is the lighting OK? Make sure your device is well charged. Make sure you're recording before you begin. If there are multiple voices, and you're recording audio not video, write down the names of your interviewees in a seating plan arrangement.



DON'T ASK ANYTHING THAT HAS BEEN ASKED COUNTLESS TIMES BEFORE. IF YOU'VE DONE THE RESEARCH, YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWERS.

4. Length. Generally, 20 minutes of good, solid, focused content should be plenty. If you only get 10 minutes, you'll probably struggle to find a decent story, or it means you haven't probed deep enough. If you end up with 30 minutes-plus, it might become too big to work with effectively.

5. Post-interview. Auto-transcribe the audio to text as soon as you can, in full, before doing any article write-ups or edits. Back up the audio or video file and full text somewhere safe for storage. You're now ready to write a brilliant article.

Will Uttley

@willarduttley

"ONE OF THE BIGGEST LESSONS I'VE LEARNED IS THAT IT'S OK TO HAVE A BAD NIGHT. IT'S WHAT YOU CAN TAKE FROM IT THAT'S IMPORTANT."

Will Uttley, 20, is a sound engineer and drum technician for local band The Caymans. He also works at The Grayston Unity as part of its sound engineer team and at William IV - now The Sore Bee - in Sowerby Bridge.

"It all began when I worked on a college gig for a band called The Filmores. But the gig that really kick-started my love for sound was Stonebow at The Puzzle. I then did a number of Stonebow gigs before working with Toby Walker of The Caymans as a drum tech. I also worked on a pantomime production last year. That was a really important experience.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

The best thing about being a sound tech is the variety. I've worked with a range of musicians from jazz bands to indie rock. I work at different venues too. It's a challenge trying to provide the best sound quality for each particular venue and band.

Anything can happen in a live show and being prepared and having good problem-solving skills, with the ability to stay calm in a crisis, are really important. This has been a big challenge for me as I have a learning disability (Developmental Language Disorder) which makes it hard to process a lot of information.

TOP TIP

Volunteer for local music festivals and events, network with industry professionals at showcase events or talks and reach out to local venues to gain valuable insight and knowledge.

People & places to know

THE GOLDEN LION

Fielden Square,
Todmorden. OL14 6LZ

Contact: Gig, Waka
or Matthew

@goldenlion_todmorden
goldenliontodmorden.co.uk

THE GRAYSTON UNITY

8 Horton St, Halifax. HX1 1PU

Contact: Michael
@graystonunity

thegraystonunity.co.uk

THE PUZZLE HALL INN

21 Hollins Mill Lane, Sowerby
Bridge. HX6 2RF

Contact: Sam

@puzzlehallinn
puzzlehall.org.uk

THE BLIND PIG

4 Tower Hill, Sowerby
Bridge. HX6 2EQ

Contact: Julie
@theblindpiguk (facebook)
blindpig.pub

THE TRADES CLUB

Holme St, Hebden
Bridge. HX7 8EE

Contact: Mal

@the_trades_club
thetradesclub.com

DIRTY SUNBEAMS

@DirtySunbeams
dirtysunbeams.com
dirtysunbeams@gmail.com

**CULTUREDALE YOUTH
MUSIC TAKEOVER**

Phil Stephenson
@culturedale
culturedale.co.uk

BWD

Ben Warrington
bwarrington.design

CultureDale — Youth Music Takeover

Music and its surrounding industry can be notoriously difficult to break into, so we want to provide support and training to the passionate and talented young people of Calderdale to help them fulfill their creative potential. CultureDale's Youth Music Takeover will provide under-25's with opportunities to perform, create, write, and learn essential technical skills in sound technology, staging, production and much more.

We will bring together the best of Calderdale, from educators, local venues and artists, and plenty of technical expertise from working professionals, to provide useful, real-world skills development for those wanting to make a living in the industry. We want this programme to

be diverse, engaging, and in close collaboration with the needs of the youth music scene. We want to harness the energy of local talent and allow them to explore a world beyond GarageBand and Soundcloud, to highlight all the unsung talent behind, beyond, and in front of the stage, providing learning opportunities in roles from stage management to music journalism.

Transferable skills in management, communication, and organisation are invaluable in today's job market. Whether you want to make music or write about it; spend time in the studio or on the road, our Youth Music Takeover will teach young people about the roles they can invest their passion into, and equip them with the skills to succeed.



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