



Voxgate Basingstoke as reported by Cerise...

Voxgate UK #3 (Basingstoke) was organised by Andy Lomas - the day before his and Caroline's wedding!

If you've ever visited the chat rooms on EV and Homeland, you're bound to have run into one of three couples who not only spend many an hour there, but actually met there, fell in love - and are getting married! Ian Tait (Nai) from the UK and Cynthia Abernethy (Cyn) from the US married in England in 1999, Sabine Boelting (Sab) and Mike Lubek (The Dancer), both from Germany (but different sides of it!) married in Scotland, and Caroline Van Luit (Link) from Canada and Andy Lomas from the UK. Andy and Caroline were about to get married the very next day in England before flying back to settle in Canada - and still Andy found time to arrange Voxgate, the mad devil!

Both Cyn and Caroline would be in the UK (sadly Sabine and Mike couldn't make it), it was a sunny April day, Midge was playing only the second full-band show in the UK this year as a warm-up for the following week in Japan - what better time for EV and Homeland regulars to meet up and yak?! I felt it was my duty to annoy all and sundry with the ol' digital camera (it was a bit of an early one - excuse the quality!).

21 of us were to meet up at around 4pm at the Spruce Goose, a Beefeater pub 5 minutes away from the Basingstoke Anvil where the show was to be played. Rob Harris (Superman) and I were supposed to be photographing the soundcheck and since we were going to be late, we checked out the Goose on the way past at 3.30 - to find Diane Rushby, Elaine Jenkins and Kate McMillan (Trillian) already well ensconced and downing the drinks.

We joined the meal two hours later, to find that everyone had arrived and found each other, and had only just ordered. I whipped out the camera and proceeded to put more faces to names - you can see what a mad bunch we all are, at the bottom! Apart from those already mentioned, there was Shafiz Yusof who had come from Malaysia, Frantisek Horava (a name you'll be familiar with from the Listening Room) from the Czech Republic, and Manuela Sens (Manu), Nicole Streckenbach, Rita and Claudia Hahn and Claudia Guth from Germany. The rest of us didn't have so far to come: Chris Bird (of Ultravox tribute band Astradyne); Caroline Allen (Caz) who started Ultrafixion, the first Ultravox site on the web; Trillian's mum Sheila Leek; Paul Hitchcock (PH) and his sister Joan; and Rob Harris and myself, your friendly EV editors.

On the surface it seemed simple; a meal before the show for 21 of us, then on to the bar to meet 26 more who couldn't make it to the meal - making a grand total of 47! But when you're splitting the bill and bar tab for 21 people you'd better have a degree in mathematics - especially if the restaurant adds the bar tab into the main bill without telling you!!! Luckily Diane had a handy calculator in her bag, in fact she seemed to have everything in there but the kitchen sink. Strike that, actually we're sure we saw a flash of something bearing the legend "Armitage Shanks"...

Later, at the Anvil bar we met up with; Sue Goulding who runs Homeland, Jo Leonard and Alan McBride (I didn't get a photo, sorry guys!); Pam Bay (lacking in my photo duties here too, must have been the beer!); Anne and Mick Cherry, Damian Sinnott, Steve Vitti (who has just recorded a beautiful relaxation CD called Water's Edge), all of Ultrarox, the Ultravox tribute band - John Somers and his wife Denise, Dave Wilson

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(vocals) and his wife Wendy, Glyn Rickards (drums), Mark Cox (kbds), Stephen Grania (kbds), and Mark (new guitarist); Phil and Irene Kirk; Bill and Sue Cox with Melissa and Alex; Alison Collins and Alison McBride (The Two Alisons); and Bert Geers and Timothy Verhulst from Belgium. Did I miss anyone..?!

The gig flew by too fast, the only let-down being the Anvil's staff, who would insist on wading into the crowd every two minutes to tell off errant photographers. Personally I found that far more disturbing than the occasional flash. Rob and I came in for flak too, despite having previously arranged that we take show pics, and we were shooting with high-speed film (no flash!). After a nose-to-nose argument with one of the stewards we gave in, so apologies for the lack of show pics. To be honest the lighting was too low to get anything decent anyway - someone actually shouted out to Midge that they couldn't see him because it was too dark! However, the newly-rehearsed Man of Two Worlds was a real treat (not heard that one live for 15 years!), along with The Dancer and the ever-popular Lulu song To Sir With Love.

After the show we reconvened in the bar, then later outside the stage door to chat to Midge and the gang. It was so great to meet everyone face-to-face (some familiar, some for the first time), and I think I can safely say that we all had a fab time. Andy and Caroline finally left to many shouts of good wishes for their wedding next day (pictured in the Media Archive), and after some more yakking we all trailed home with smiles on our faces...

Well, it's time for the pics... no bribes were accepted, no retouching done. You may find yourself chatting to someone pictured at another Voxgate one night - and who knows, love may be in the air! ;o)

Cerise.