Blundermen Official Biography

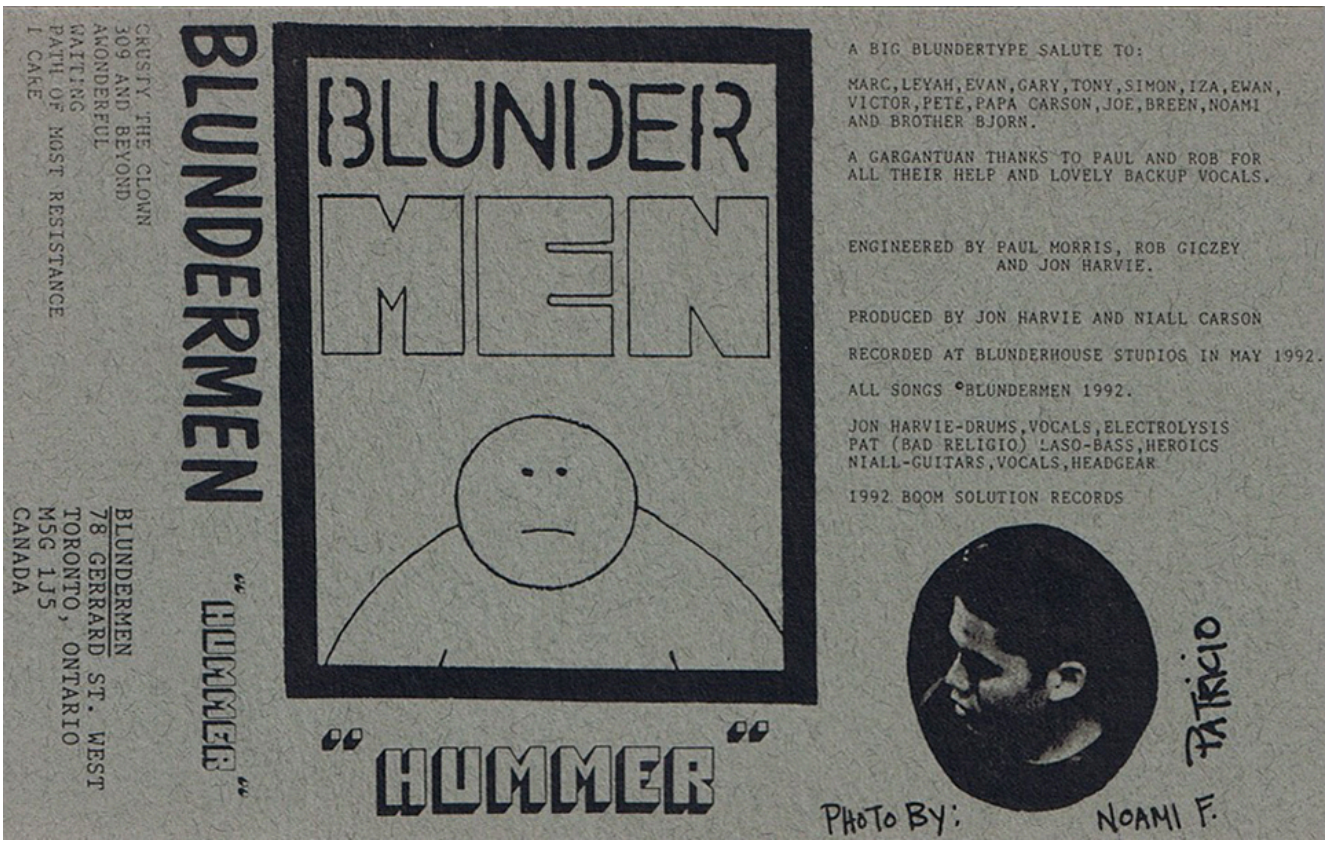


Blundermen, circa 1993

Blundermen was a punk band from the Toronto region active in the early 1990's. I touched up on them briefly when I did the Ragamuffin Soldier Records and Fans of Bad Production Records interviews, but it was time that this band get some proper documentation. Jon, Niall and Pat were amazing enough to help me put together this write up, so here it is!

Pat Laso, Pete Benda (the original guitarist who played their first few shows) and Jon Harvie met at an Ottawa 'Anarchist Youth' gathering/gig (Born Against is believed to have played). Through conversation, they figured out that Pat played bass, Jon played drums and Pete played guitar. They started practicing as a three-piece in the fall of 1991, with Jon singing, but with the plan of adding a vocalist to the fold. Blundermen played their first show in November 1991 at Niagara Cafe with Rabid Defiance, Twisted Cry and Crumble. Their mutual friend Ewan Exal introduced them to Niall Carson, and he quickly joined the band as singer, eventually becoming second guitarist as well. When they started recording some demo songs, Pete bowed out, as his guitar style was different than what Niall and Jon were developing in their songs, so they became a three-piece again.

Regarding the band name, Pete and Jon initially came up with "SWAB" (Sensible Weird-Ass Blender). Someone suggested Blendermen, and somehow it mutated to Blundermen, and the band went with that. Niall's suggestion was to call the band "Rail", which, unbeknownst to them, was being used by a band that they would soon play with.



Blundermen's "Hummer" demo tape, Boom Sound Records, June 1992

A demo attempt garnered a few songs, but recording them 'live' on a two-track machine proved difficult. The Blundermen would record many different takes of their catalog of songs, but none of it would stick. Paul Morris (of Sons of Ishmael) and Rob Giczey helped them out by engineering a four-track cassette demo in May of 1992. This would be recorded in their basement rehearsal room (Blunderhouse Studio) at 78 Gerrard St, which is oddly now a restaurant… and Jon has eaten there! This seven song demo became the "Hummer" demo and came out in the summer of 1992 on their own label, Boom Solution Records.

They played a lot of shows through '92 and '93, many of them benefits, and mostly around Toronto. They played a few out of town shows, including Montreal, Ottawa, Sherbrooke, and Lindsay. They didn't have a vehicle and so they were reliant on borrowing cars from others. They were all 18-22 years old and weren't set up with credit cards (or even driver's licenses for a couple of them). They developed a relationship with some Quebec bands, including Shitfit (who played a show

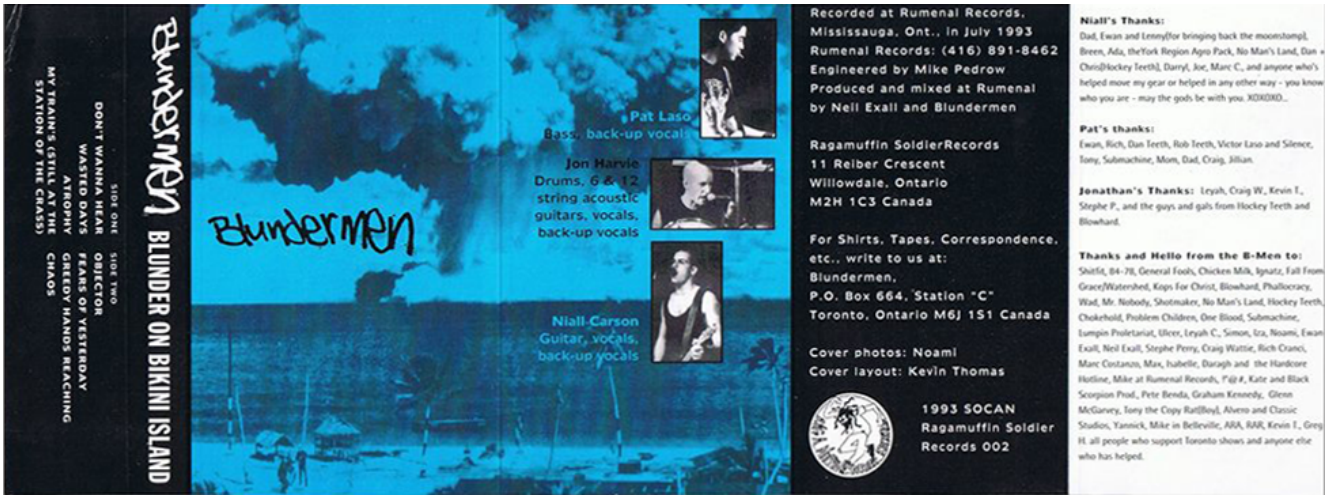
at the Blunderhouse), General Fools, Human Greed, and 84-78. Their Ontario partners-in-crime included: Hockey Teeth, Blowhard, Wad, Phallocracy, Mr. Nobody, No Man's Land, Chokehold, Crumble, Shotmaker and Watershed. They also played a couple of shows with Pittsburg's Submachine, with whom they developed a good 'drinking' relationship. The venues they played were often small local bars, including Classic Studios (Queen St & Ossington Ave), Niagara Cafe (Queen St & Niagara St) and Project X (an all-ages music collective at Adelaide St & Portland St).



Blundermen, circa 1993

The band would cover songs that influenced them, such as "Mid 20's Crisis" by One Blood, "Chaos" by 4 Skins, "I Won't Pay For Liberty" by Angelic Upstarts, "Work Together" by The Oppressed, "Dad" by Nomeansno, "Fly the Flag" and the crowd favourite, "Alternative Ulster" by SLF. They also did some folk songs like "Farewell to Nova Scotia" and "I Ain't

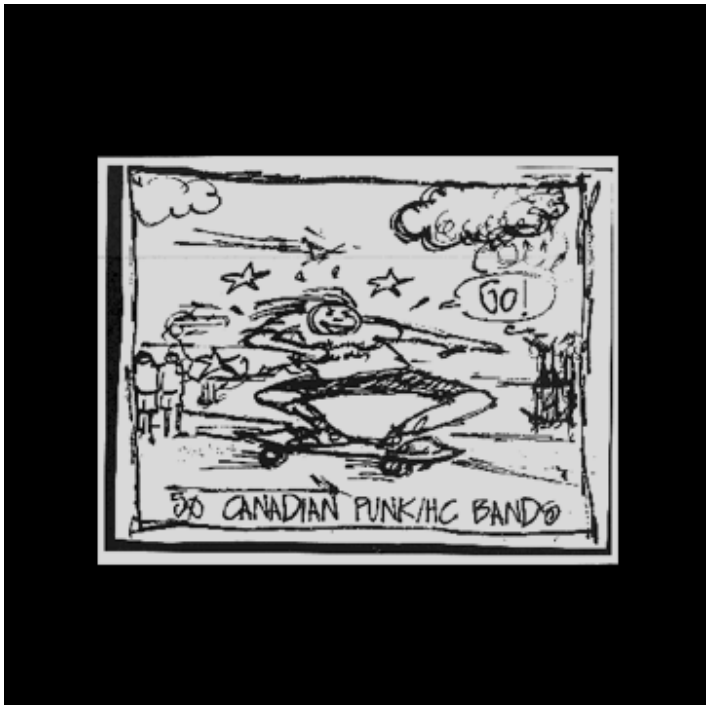
Marchin' Anymore" by Phil Ochs. Around the time when they started doing shows, the Heritage Front was forming, and in response, a large anti-racist scene began to come together. Pat was very involved with Anti-Racist Action, where Niall and Jon would go to demos, and became a band that would play ARA oriented events. The punk, anti-racist and leftist political scenes coalesced into a very positive environment during this time, which they were fortunate to be part of.



Blundermen's "Blunder on Bikini Island" tape edition, Ragamuffin Soldier Records, November 20th 1993.

Stephe Perry (of the band One Blood and Ragamuffin Soldier Records) was approached (or he approached them?) about doing a Blundermen record on his label. Stephe gave them the money to record, and they went into Rumenal Records Studio in July 1993 and recorded eight songs with Mike Pedrow. Stephe bankrolled the entire record, which was an expensive proposition. They all worked hard to sell the record, and it eventually sold out and the investment was, thankfully, recouped. Many of the records were sent abroad to distributors and bands, often in trade for other records (the trading of records was an indispensable method of distribution). Without Stephe, the record would never have happened, and they remain in his debt for his generosity. An album release show for "Blunder on Bikini Island" was set up on November 20th 1993 with Human Greed, Blowhard and Hockey Teeth. But as the vinyl covers

weren’t ready in time, the band quickly put together 19 pre-release record covers, each were different, for that night.



“GO!” compilation by Fans of Bad Productions Records. Released on LP in 1997, CD in 1998.

Meanwhile, Blundermen was asked to contribute a song to a new Fans of Bad Production compilation and felt that “309 and Beyond” was a good option. But they didn’t want to simply hand over a previous recording because they felt that would have been a little lame. Mostly though, it was a song that was near and dear to them and sort of represented an important point in the development of Toronto punk rock. The way they played “309” live was miles away from what was put down for the “Hummer” demo – it was more aggressive and intense and they all felt that this later version was true to the real spirit of the song and how they wanted people to hear it. The song was re-recorded in late 1993, before “Blunder on Bikini Island” came out, with Marc Constanzo in his parent’s basement. The new version of “309 & Beyond” would appear on Fans of Bad Productions Records’ compilation “Fuck the Commonwealth“. The vinyl and tape versions were released in

1994 followed by the CD edition in 1995. Their album “Blunder on Bikini Island” ended up coming out in late November 1993, on 10″ vinyl and cassette tape. The vinyl featured 7 songs, while the tape edition added their cover of 4 Skin’s “Chaos”. This mentioned cover would also be included on a later Fans of Bad Productions Records compilation, “GO!“, which was released in 1997 on vinyl and 1998 on CD. The version of “Chaos” on “GO!” somehow got slowed down during the mastering process for the compilation (apparently Eva from Wad said their song had the same problem). But the version on the tape version of “Blunder on Bikini Island” remains at the correct speed.



“Blunder on Bikini Island” release show on November 20th 1993.

During Blundermen’s existence, Pat sang with Kops For Christ and Niall played guitar in No Man’s Land. By 1994, the band had ran its course. They would have liked to tour Europe, but they didn’t feel a need to do much else. Jon was interested in switching to guitar, which was an idea that came up for the band near the end, but was never attempted. Dan Farr (from Hockey Teeth and Problem Children) was going to try playing drums, but it didn’t happen during Blundermen’s existence. Warface was sort of a continuation of Blundermen (sans Pat!), with Dan playing drums and Niall and Jon playing guitar. Then there was the idea of getting Gary from The Excretions to come in on second guitar; with his snake-skin cowboy boots, leather-fringe jacket and long hair, he would have been a smash hit! Their last show was at Classic Studios before Niall left the band and Pat and Jon stopped playing together.

Download the Blundermen discography