

the Sunday MUSIC



by **ANNA GAULT**

NINETIES favourites Ash are celebrating their 25th anniversary by playing Party at the Palace.

And the indie band might even exchange silver-themed gifts to mark the occasion as they hit the stage in Linlithgow, West Lothian, next month.

Bassist Mark Hamilton thinks the three-piece have gone the distance thanks to their strong

bond which started at school.

The Northern Irish group have managed to avoid the pitfalls of fame and stuck together through thick and thin.

The 40-year-old says: "The band feels like a second family because we've been together for so long and been through so much."

"We started off as schoolfriends at 12 years old."

"As far as longevity goes, when you start a band people can come in with egos or maybe they think they are hot s**t and they'll clash, but we were mates to start with so when the fame came later on any ego that crept in was very quickly crushed."

"You can't be acting like a prima donna all of a sudden."

We feel at home in Scotland

But he admits that they sometimes came close to letting stardom get the better of them.

Mark adds: "It is very easy for people to get carried away with fame and let that change your personality for the worse."

"I think when that happens bands have problems and split up but we've managed to avoid that so far."

"We've lasted 25 years so we are doing OK."

"We should be buying ourselves some silver bracelets and give them out on stage at Party At The Palace."

Mark and bandmates – singer and guitarist Tim Wheeler, *main picture*, and drummer Rick McMurray – got together in 1992, with guitarist Charlotte Hatherley joining from 1997 until 2006.

They have had two No1 albums over the years – 1977 and Free All Angels – and, despite Charlotte's exit, have continued to make music, with a new album planned for next year.

But at one point they were close

to bankruptcy due to a tour documentary narrated by Ewan McGregor, *right*. The band ploughed their own cash into the making of it – but the film was never released.

They bounced back with hit song *Shining Light* from their third album and have come a long way, but Mark admits they were idiots in the beginning.

He says: "We take a lot more in our stride now – back in the day we had to be babysat a lot."

"We were just dumb teenagers who didn't really know what they were doing and had to be looked after all the time. But now, we can

handle ourselves a lot better and are a lot more professional."

And after touring together for a quarter of a century, they've learned some manners too.

Mark said: "When you get that many people living in basically a tin can on wheels it does stink but we are not that bad."

"You end up living there and you don't want to be living in filth so we do our best to keep it clean."

The trio became friends with Scottish bands over the years – including The View, who turned their dressing room into a party venue at one gig.

He says: "We were good friends

with Mogwai in the early days and we've done a few shows with The View – they're a fun bunch."

"We've had a few eventful nights with them."

"The last time we played the Isle of Wight festival we had these dressing room Portakabins and they just turned into a rave with those guys."

Mark says Scotland is the band's home from home and they can't wait to get on stage at PATP.

He adds: "The best thing about this gig is that it is in Scotland – we

always love to play there. We feel at home there – firstly because it's so close geographically and then culturally it's really similar."

"There are so many strong ties. The Scottish crowd can be quite raucous so every time we play it is fun."

● Party At The Palace is on August 12 and 13 overlooking Linlithgow Palace. Tickets info at partyatthepalace.co.uk

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Back from the Ashes



THEN



NOW



NEW MUSIC
By Jim Gellatly

HOUSE OF HATCHETS

WHO: Chris Allison (vocals), Jamie Parker (guitar), David McIntyre (guitar), Pete Cook (bass), Frazer Parker (drums)

WHERE: Edinburgh

FOR FANS OF: Bring Me The Horizon, Deftones, Funeral For A Friend

JIM SAYS: The Edinburgh lads make a satisfying racket, but the alt-metal outfit don't make noise for the sake of it. The melodies shine through on their debut EP, *The Grind*. Explosive noise with monster riffs, but bursting with pop sensibility.

Cousins Jamie and Frazer Parker used to jam together. Frazer said: "A couple of years ago Jamie and I would meet up and play different tunes. I hadn't touched a drum kit for the best part of five years and Jamie hadn't played much on the electric guitar for a while."

"Once we got into a rhythm we started to hear things we liked and decided to take things up a notch. Jamie can take the credit for recruiting the band – he studied with Chris and David."

Jamie added: "The key moment was getting Chris involved. This is when we really became a 'band'. Developing a project from the ground up isn't easy. It was about getting people who are genuinely into the tunes and the idea of committing to something." Jamie reckons the



writing process has developed significantly. He said: "In the early days I think we were over-complicating everything."

"Through brutal honesty we have achieved a more open and raw sound."

Jamie lays down the initial song idea, Frazer then adds a beat and they start refining the sound as a band, with Chris working on the lyrics. That's not unusual but the process did result in a brush with the law.

Chris said: "When Jamie and I were demo-ing vocals he would come out to mine in the middle of nowhere and we'd work in his car."

One night a police car rolled up thinking we were up to something dodgy. They demanded proof we were writing music."

"Jamie hit play on the laptop and metal was blasted at them. They were apparently watching us for hours in the dark but seemed pretty satisfied they didn't have to arrest us after that."

Their debut single *Sleep*, which is on the EP, is the perfect introduction to House Of Hatches.

It's opened doors on both sides of the Atlantic. Jamie said: "Getting radio play in the UK and in the US has been really satisfying. Hearing *Sleep* played for the first time on radio made me feel proud of what we've achieved in such a small space of time. It also inspired us to go as far as we possibly can."

"We recently got added to the Holding Absence show at Opium in Edinburgh super-last-minute but still managed to sell a lot of tickets. It made me realise there are actually folk who are into us."

House Of Hatches are back at Opium on August 25 with *Sworn Amongst* and *Lotus Eater*.

MORE: houseofhatches.com

● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm.

amazingradio.com
jimgellatly.com

▶ Watch a video of the band playing at:
www.thescottishsun.co.uk