

## News release

### For immediate release

#### **WHANAU DEBUT EP LAUNCH ON THE BELFAST BARGE, SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2011**

*“WHANAU, n (pron. ‘Wa-NOO’) 1 Maori language word for extended family; 2 Group of people who share a common purpose; 3 Family unit linked by culture and language/dialect.”*

NORTHERN Ireland’s best new unsigned band is set to release their debut EP in just over a week’s time, but this isn’t your typical album launch.

Rather than yet another bar or club, it’s all aboard on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August, as Whanau launch their first CD on the famous Belfast Barge in Lanyon Quay.

As well as support from three of the country’s most talented up-and-coming singer songwriters - Aaron Shanley, Allie Bradley and John Marshall - there will be a live art display by creative collective Pretty Circus, with Belfast DJ Tomas Hughes hitting the decks to make sure the party ends with the boat a-rocking!

As well as tracks from the album, Whanau will also be showcasing some new material in their live performance on the barge, so it’s set to be a night to remember.

#### THE ALBUM

As well as their name, much of Whanau’s mellowed-out, rootsy sound has been inspired by vocalist Ashley Smith’s travels around New Zealand.

Produced by Mojo Fury frontman Michael Mormecha at his Millbank Studios, it’s a laidback, sunshine-days-and-campfire-nights record that is set to be the soundtrack to summer 2011 – no matter what the weather does.

‘A Good Strange’ was written about the quirky harbour town of Katikati, nestled in the Bay of Plenty on New Zealand’s north island. Listening to the warm, lazy rhythms of this track, it’s not difficult to believe Smith wrote it sitting on a beach in the New Zealand sunshine.

The catchy ‘Road Named Wrong’ doesn’t stray too far from the band’s sound but definitely brings a distinct folk pop flavour to the mix. Written by vocalist Polly McGarrigle, it’s a simple, yet infectious song about the twists and turns of a relationship, viewed in hindsight.

The stunning ‘It’ll All Roll Off’ has been known to draw a few tears from the audience at gigs, and is a beautifully crafted exploration of songwriter’s block. The band describes it as “a song about not being able to write a song”!

The EP contains seven tracks altogether and everyone attending the album launch will receive their own free copy.

#### THE BAND

Whanau are:

Ashley Smith (24)	vocals/acoustic guitar
Polly McGarrigle (23)	vocals
Nathan Miller (27)	lead guitar/backing vocals
Mark Heffer (25)	bass guitar
David Millen (34)	percussion

The five piece from Lisburn began life as 'Ash Smith and the Funkin' Headaches' when they formed in February of this year.

Friends for a number of years, the five have each pursued their own musical projects and ventures, with varying degrees of success.

Ashley decided late last year that the time was right to put a band together to explore the music that had been forming in his head since returning home from travelling.

A few jam sessions later and Ashley, Nathan, David, Polly and Mark became Ash Smith and the Funkin' Headaches.

Friendships grew stronger within the band over the next few months of seemingly non-stop gigs, with everyone contributing and the sound growing and evolving.

The decision was taken in late June to change their name to express the joint vision and effort of the group. Whanau lent itself perfectly to the concept.

Since the beginning of March, they have gigged solidly, particularly in Belfast where they have played Original Zeitgeist at The Front Page, several support slots in Auntie Annies and the Gaslight Sessions in The Spaniard, to name a few.

In their home city, they have been invited to play a number of SO:NI gigs and recently headlined a show in Lisburn's innovative new live music venue, Molly's Parlour.

ENDS

For further information, to order a free press pass to the launch, or to arrange an interview with the band, please contact Heather McGarrigle on 078 9098 7624 or email [heather.mcgarrigle@live.co.uk](mailto:heather.mcgarrigle@live.co.uk)

Please note, the launch itself is sold out and we have a VERY limited amount of passes, so we may have to limit these to one per publication, however this can be negotiated.

#### NOTES TO THE EDITOR

##### WHANAU:

A selection of tracks from the EP, as well as some tracks recorded live at Belfast's Oh Yeah Centre, are available for review from <http://www.soundcloud.com/whanau>

Also attached are a number of JPG pictures of the band.

##### PICCAPTIONS:

IMG\_2183: Left to right: Nathan Miller, Polly McGarrigle, David Millen, Mark Heffer, Ashley Smith.

IMG\_2217: Left to right: Mark Heffer, As Smith, Polly McGarrigle, Nathan Miller, David Millen.

IMG\_2234: Left to right (back row): Nathan Miller, David Millen, Mark Heffer. Front row: Ashley Smith, Polly McGarrigle.

More press pictures, as well as a selection of photos from live performances are also available for free download by the press at the following links:

<http://www.box.net/shared/bv6votbx0audngb8njmi>

<http://www.box.net/shared/lsuksecitatkfppkyz38>

<http://www.box.net/shared/kev2bl7vilg0pvtlye7>

The band also have a Facebook and a Reverbnation page which they keep updated with news and music.

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/whanauofficial>

Reverbnation: <http://www.reverbnation.com/ashsmiththefunkinheadaches>

##### SUPPORT:

Singer songwriter Aaron Shanley has been compared to a young Bob Dylan and describes his music as 'countrycore'.

His records 'Let The Sun In' & 'The Nashville Sessions' have sold over 3000 CDs and 2000 downloads and he is currently in the Northern Ireland leg of a solid touring schedule which has seen him play in the US, UK and Ireland.

Aaron released the first of a four-part series called Tears on Elizabeth Street on 4<sup>th</sup> July, with the following installations to be released over the coming months of 2011.

It's available from all the usual major online stores as well as on the Love Gum Records store.

For the album launch, Aaron will be performing alongside regular collaborator Allie Bradley.

Allie's music is best described as acoustic pop rock. Having played guitar from a young age, the Belfast based artist began writing and performing her own music on the local circuit eight years ago.

She released her first EP in March of this year to coincide with her first Irish tour which has just seen her perform at the Glasgowbury festival.

John Marshall is a self produced, indie, singer and songwriter from Lisburn. His music is mostly acoustic, finger-picked and bluesy. He describes it as "laid back and up-beat in a down-beat kind of way".

<http://www.reverbnation.com/aaronshanley>

<http://www.reverbnation.com/alliebradleymusic>

<http://www.reverbnation.com/johnmarshall1978>



## All aboard for new Lisburn band's EP launch

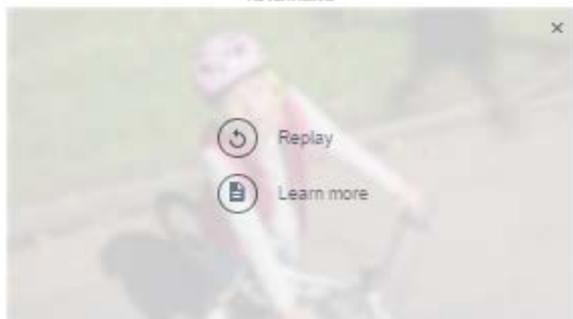


Published: 12:01 Thursday 04 August 2011



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ADVERTISING



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As well as support from three of the country's most talented up-and-coming singer songwriters - Aaron Shanley, Allie Bradley and John Marshall - there will be a live art display

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As well as support from three of the country's most talented up-and-coming singer songwriters - Aaron Shanley, Allie Bradley and John Marshall - there will be a live art display by creative collective Pretty Circus, with Belfast DJ Tomas Hughes hitting the decks to make sure the party ends with the boat a-rocking.

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The stunning 'It'll All Roll Off' has been known to draw a few tears from the audience at gigs, and is a beautifully crafted exploration of songwriter's block. The band describes it as "a song about not being able to write a song."

The EP contains seven tracks altogether and everyone attending the album launch will receive their own free copy.

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The World Is Taking Notice Of Russia's New Super Plane

History In Detail

by Iainna



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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **LISBURN BAND FLYING HIGH AFTER SUCCESSFUL ALBUM EVENTS**

After a hugely successful album launch on the Belfast barge, Lisburn five-piece Whanau are now looking to the skies as they gear up to perform at the Northern Ireland Hot Air Balloon Festival this weekend.

The band's mellowed-out funky beats will be taking over the stage on Sunday and Monday during the festival, which runs from this Saturday August 29<sup>th</sup>, to Monday August 29<sup>th</sup>.

The festival promises to be three days of fun and entertainment for all the family, with twice-daily hot air balloon flights, delicious artisan food, live music on stage throughout the day and a kids' corner to keep the young ones amused.

Whanau are looking forward to performing. They said: "A few members of the band took a well-deserved break last weekend to check out Sunflowerfest, which was a fabulous, weekend-long celebration of music.

"So we've recharged our batteries and can't wait to take part in yet another great event being held in Moira."

These gigs follow a special second album launch, hosted recently by the band for their loyal Lisburn fans.

Those who were left disappointed after missing out on tickets for the Belfast barge EP launch on August 6th flocked to Molly's Parlour on Castle Street on August 18th for a second chance to hear the band perform the tracks from the album.

They also played two brand new songs, showcased for the first time at the Belfast launch.

The band said: "Lisburn is where Whanau was formed and grew and so many of our fans are from the city, so we always planned to have an event here to showcase the new album.

"Molly's Parlour was the natural choice; it's the best live music venue in Lisburn, has supported us right from the start and continues to be a champion for up-and-coming musicians and performers, hosting live music and entertainment week after week."

Vicki Miller of Molly's Parlour said: "We were delighted to host the Lisburn launch of Whanau's first album. Molly's is all about giving talented people a space to share their work and it's great to see one of our favourite bands doing so well. We really enjoyed welcoming them home to celebrate their success."

A capacity crowd of 100 filled the barge venue on August 6th, where Whanau treated them to all the songs from the new CD, plus a bonus of two new songs, performed for the first time on the night. The audience sang along to all the favourites they knew, cheered wildly for the new material and literally rocked the boat as they demanded an encore.

Support on the night came from bluesy rockers Miller and the Roots Collective and acoustic singer songwriter John Marshall. Their two very different styles were each warmly received by the crowd.

The gig itself took place below deck, with the space transformed by Pretty Circus, whose colourful artwork adorned the walls and featured on overhead projectors throughout the show.

After Whanau's encore, DJ Neill McCartney had everyone on their feet with his intoxicating dance beats - there were even a few energetic 'dance offs'!

Whanau said: "Belfast was a truly magical night and the Lisburn launch was just as much fun. We really enjoyed the chance to play the album and the new songs again and getting such a good reaction in our home town.

"The Hot Air Balloon Festival is another opportunity to play at a great event, close to home."

## THE ALBUM

Much of Whanau's sound has been inspired by vocalist Ashley Smith's travels around New Zealand.

Produced by Mojo Fury frontman Michael Mormecha at his Millbank Studios, it's a laidback, sunshine-days-and-campfire-nights record that is set to be the soundtrack to summer 2011 – no matter what the weather does.

The seven track album is out now, priced £5. Contact the band through [facebook.com/whanauofficial](https://www.facebook.com/whanauofficial) or email [whanau@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:whanau@hotmail.co.uk)

The album can also be purchased at Molly's Parlour on Castle Street in Lisburn or at Music Matters on Railway Street in Lisburn.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Whanau will be on stage at 8pm on Sunday August 28<sup>th</sup> and at 4pm on Monday August 29<sup>th</sup>.

Festival tickets are available now at [www.northernirelandballoonfestival.com](http://www.northernirelandballoonfestival.com)

News and music from the band can be found on [www.facebook.com/whanauofficial](https://www.facebook.com/whanauofficial)

Or check out [www.soundcloud.com/whanau](http://www.soundcloud.com/whanau) to listen to their music for free!

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## Lisburn band flying high after successful album launches

Published: 10:33 Friday 26 August 2011



AFTER a hugely successful album launch on the Belfast barge, Lisburn five-piece Whanau are now looking to the skies as they gear up to perform at the Northern Ireland Hot Air Balloon Festival this weekend.

The band's mellowed-out funky beats will be taking over the stage on Sunday and Monday during the festival, which runs from this Saturday August 27 to Monday August 29.

The festival promises to be three days of fun and entertainment for all the family, with twice-daily hot air balloon flights, delicious artisan food, live music on stage throughout the day and a kids' corner to keep the young ones amused.

Whanau are looking forward to performing. They said: "A few members of the band took a well-deserved break last weekend to check out Sunflowerfest, which was a fabulous, weekend-long celebration of music. So we've recharged our batteries and can't wait to take part in yet another great event being held in Moira."

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Whanau added: "Belfast was a truly magical night and the Lisburn launch was just as much fun. We really enjoyed the chance to play the album and the new songs again and getting such a good reaction in our home town."

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11.02.2017

## **Co. Antrim couple's Saturday sales raise £50k for "forgotten" sea heroes**



# **The Mission to Seafarers**

**Caring for seafarers around the world**

**Roger and Valerie Denny recently presented Northern Ireland's Mission to Seafarers with a cheque for £5,250, bringing their fundraising total for the charity to a staggering £48,500!**

It's been a vital source of income for the charity, as Belfast Mission to Seafarers Chaplain Rev Colin Hall-Thompson explains:

"We do not receive government or grant-aid support; all funds must be sourced by ourselves, so it helps us enormously to have generous volunteer fund-raisers and centre workers. It enables us to concentrate on the physical and spiritual care of seafarers, including visiting ships and having the centres open every day of the year".

Described by patron Mary Peters as "Belfast's best-kept secret", the Belfast Mission to Seafarers operates from the iconic Flying Angel Centre in Princes Docks.

Open seven days a week, the centre is a vital lifeline for the thousands of seafarers who arrive in Belfast every year, some having spent weeks or even months at sea – some facing grave danger on treacherous seas and threatened by piracy.

Roger and Valerie have thrown open the doors of their home, on the Whitepark Road in Dunseverick, every Saturday for nearly a decade, selling everything from crafts to small furniture in order to raise money for the Sailortown charity. In addition to this, they have organised countless car boot sales and auctions, as well as donating from their own pockets.

Interviewed recently about her phenomenal fundraising efforts, Valerie explained: "Seafarers are responsible for transporting so many of the world's goods, and – particularly as we live in Northern Ireland – we depend on them so much, yet they can very easily be forgotten about and overlooked."

Roger and Valerie have been passionate charity fundraisers for 24 years but nine years ago they decided to focus their hard work and generosity on raising money for the Mission to Seafarers.

Their experiences, witnessed on holiday, of the conditions of crews on cruise ships galvanised them to care for seafarers visiting our shores, away from their families for up to a year in some cases, and too often poorly resourced and cared for.

The couple felt the best thing they could do for seafarers was support the local Mission to Seafarers branch with its centres in Belfast, Warrenpoint, and Lisahally in Co Londonderry.

Rev. Hall-Thompson wants to publicly thank the couple for their generosity and recognise their achievement: "It is invaluable and affirming that Val and Roger are such an encouragement and support to us, and help us - we believe - make a big impact in the care of seafarers from all over the world visiting our ports."

For press enquiries and interviews, contact Rev. Colin Hall-Thompson by telephoning 028 9075 1131.

### **Editor's notes**

The Mission To Seafarers was established in 1856. It began life as The Mission to Seamen, inspired by the work of John Ashley, a young Anglican clergyman who volunteered as chaplain to seafarers in Bristol for 15 years. It was renamed The Mission to Seafarers in 2000.

A Christian charity, it prides itself on caring for all who work at sea, regardless of religion, gender, nationality or rank. It continues to evolve, to rise to the challenge of supporting the myriad of cultures and faiths, facing increasing physical, cultural and social isolation as a result of their hard and dangerous work.

Its name inspired by a Bible verse, the Flying Angel Centre is a beautifully maintained building on Princes Dock Street; a well-known landmark of 'Sailortown', with its distinctive ship-shaped frontage and flying angel sculpture. It offers a home-from-home for seafarers, as well as a wealth of business and leisure facilities for the local community.

Sea crews and workers can come ashore to enjoy a game of pool, or a drink at the bar, as well as a restaurant, gift shop, internet and phone facilities, a chapel and a library.

The restaurant is open to the public every Thursday and Friday from 10am to 3pm, and fully catered conference facilities are available for hire.

For enquiries, email [admin@missiontoseafarers-ni.org](mailto:admin@missiontoseafarers-ni.org) or telephone 0289075 1131.

Rev Colin Hall Thompson  
Senior Chaplain  
Mission To Seafarers  
Princes Dock Street  
Belfast BT1 3AA

# Co Antrim couple's Saturday sales raise £50k for "forgotten" sea heroes

Roger and Valerie Denny fundraising total for Northern Ireland's Mission to Seafarers to a staggering £48,500

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COMMENTS

BY CHRIS SHERRARD  
13:39, 11 FEB 2017

NEWS



Val and Roger handing over their latest cheque

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A big-hearted [Co Antrim](#) couple have raised almost £50,000 for heroes of the sea.

The hard weekend work of Roger and Valerie Denny has been a vital source of income for Northern Ireland's Mission to Seafarers.

The charity's chaplain Rev Colin Hall-Thompson hailed their support.

He added: "We do not receive government or grant-aid support; all funds must be sourced by ourselves, so it helps us enormously to have generous volunteer fund-raisers and centre workers.

"It enables us to concentrate on the physical and spiritual care of seafarers, including visiting ships and having the centres open every day of the year."



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Alan Wilson in court charged with murder of Colin Horner



Volunteer Marie Caulfield with Dame Mary Peters

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