

GODHEADS!

"I've always had all these things I've been dying to send through the post to people I hate, but I've never had the bottle — I've got old Nescafe jars at home full of cigarette butts."

THE PALE SAINTS, illustrious new 4AD signings from Leeds, conduct their first Music Press interview perfectly. They chatter, take the mickey and trade their history for some of my salivating (but measured) praise. After all, they deserve a pat on the back from me, because their debut single — the charming 'Sight Of You' — has shaken me up into a *bright* old state for the past fortnight.

As detailed in the (controversial?) review of their nervously grand gig in London a couple of weeks ago, it was the usual string of coincidences that led us to them: a compilation LP track, then a tape, a gig and a Revelation.

Already letters are pouring in from particularly dull people claiming that we're hyping them up (We're not, but they deserve it anyway) so I know there's something glimmering here that people are jealous of.

In the middle of all this petty wrangling the band themselves are calmly unnerved, talking and joking in a South London pub, round the corner from the converted church where they're recording their debut LP.

The Pale Saints have been around (seriously) for a year. The overall title of the EP, from which 'Sight Of You' comes is 'Barging Into The Presence Of God' — EXCELLENT! — and also features the pop-feedback of 'She Rides The Waves' and its phased-guitar chaser 'Mother Might'.

It's a fierce, enchanting debut; as moody as hell but immediate with it. Ian declines in a roundabout way from explaining any more.

"I don't find it very easy writing lyrics so I try to get them out of the way as quickly as possible. We use the vocals like another instrument, if phrases become apparent to people, like a good bit of bass, that's fine."

And that's exactly what happens. You feel the swish, light, trembling murmur of the vocals and the odd line sticks like iron filings to a magnet.

Live, the band are a more desperate proposition. A non-stop 30 minutes of something between an autumnal Reid Bros and My Bloody Valentine.

"I hate describing what we sound like, it's pointless really," adds Graham. "We let people make their own minds up."

One of the healthiest things about the emergence of The Pale Saints is their signing to 4AD, who could have simply sat back contentedly with Pixies and Throwing Muses, but



PICTURE: JAYNE HOUGHTON

The Saints — with a little divine intervention

instead have grabbed the Saints and recent press-revered London band Lush.

"We sent out a few tapes and Ivo (4AD boss) kept ringing us up at strange hours of the day," explains Ian, "it was very flattering."

Any great rejection letters?

"Play Hard said 'Oh just go and sign to Sarah' and Sarah said 'You're too original for us'!

Final things you need to know are: the Saints have already recorded a devilishly good John Peel Session; Chris is also in that other touted Leeds band Edsel Auctioneer and Ian has his bass covered by a cut up poster of a gang of pigs. Why?

"Because they're pretty."

Pretty in pigs! Amongst the muck, there's something shining.

Steve Lamacq