



crystal antlers

Words: John Doran

It just goes to show that you can never judge a book by its cover or a CD – even when it features a felt tip-drawn Eye Of Sauron dropped haphazardly into a churning, psychedelic sea of colours. Because what happens then is you get a stony-faced psych band saying things like “Yes, we do actually drive a vegetable oil powered tour bus”; “Yes, we are actually chimney sweeps”; “Yes, we do have a percussionist called Sexual Chocolate” and “No, we don’t smoke weed.”

So Long Beach’s Crystal Antlers may well sound like a Pineapple Espresso-powered Comets On Fire with glazed THC grooves and Wooden Shijps neo-Doorsian freakociusness but that doesn’t mean

‘We really do know how to sweep chimneys’

they’re just sat round marinating in their own bong water. Not a bit of it. Artefacts like ‘EP’, out this month on Touch And Go, don’t record themselves.

Here, briefly, is the ethos of the Crystal Antler, straight from the mouth of morally upstanding, redoubtable, early-to-bed/early-to-rise sort, Johnny Bell (bass/vocals).

Do you really drive round in a vegetable-powered school bus?

“Yes. And as we speak, our new van is being converted to run on veggie. If you own a diesel vehicle you can take it to someone who knows what they’re doing and they will add a separate 100 gallon tank to the car. The separate tank filters the used vegetable grease and heats it up separately from the diesel fuel. Once the tank is hot, you flip a switch and drive on donuts and French fries. As far

as the carbon footprint goes, we believe that ours is much less than it would be if we were solely running on gas or diesel. We are basically recycling used cooking oil, so we aren’t involved as much with the oil drilling and transporting. Vegetable oil is used for cooking either way, so when we heard of this concept and actually toured on the bus that ran off it we knew we had to get our own van functioning the same way. Plus, it’s very inexpensive. A full 100 gallon tank of vegetable oil can get you from Los Angeles to Portland, Oregon without stopping.”

Do you really have a percussionist called Sexual Chocolate?

“Yes. People just started calling him that. He’s been in countless bands around the area. He also plays keyboards and melodica in addition to percussion.”

How do Mr and Mrs Chocolate feel about their son’s calling?

“They are actually kind of upset that he might lose his job working for Disneyland.”

Are you really chimney sweeps?

“Yes, we all have worked for this guy who calls himself Mr Kincade after the manager of The Partridge Family. He thinks he’s our manager, but his name is really just Steve. I also own my own chimney sweep company, but haven’t done much lately. We really do know how to sweep chimneys. I don’t smoke weed.”

What is the Fuck Yeah Fest that you’re involved with? Does the UK need one?

“Fuck Yeah Fest is really different than most other festivals. Bands of all sizes play the fest and lots of bands get noticed there and go on to bigger and better things. Throughout the night there are over 60 bands and comedians in four different venues, and you can go in and out of with one wristband. The fest only costs 15 dollars, so it is affordable to many. It was great playing it this year even though it was a total mess. I think everybody needs one. If you or any other country needs their contact info, let me know.”

www.myspace.com/crystalantlers