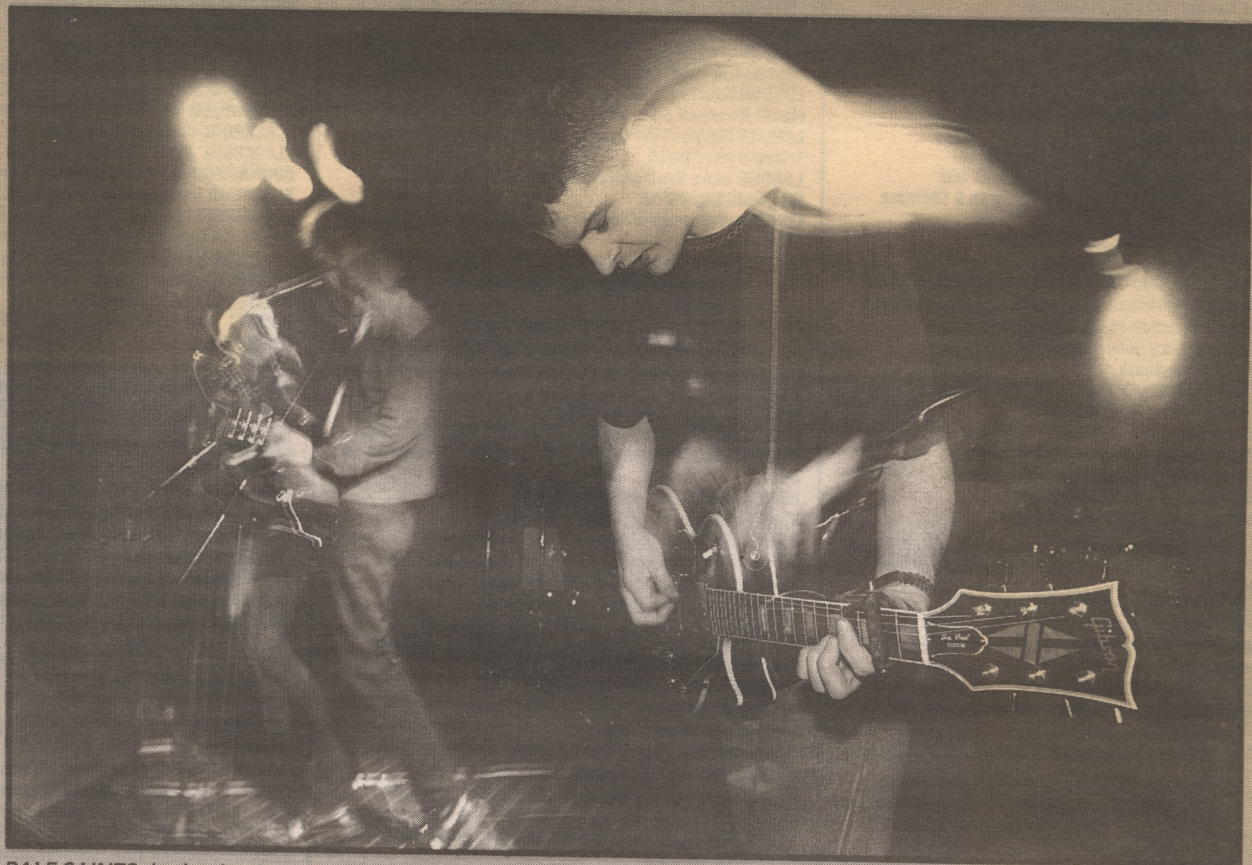
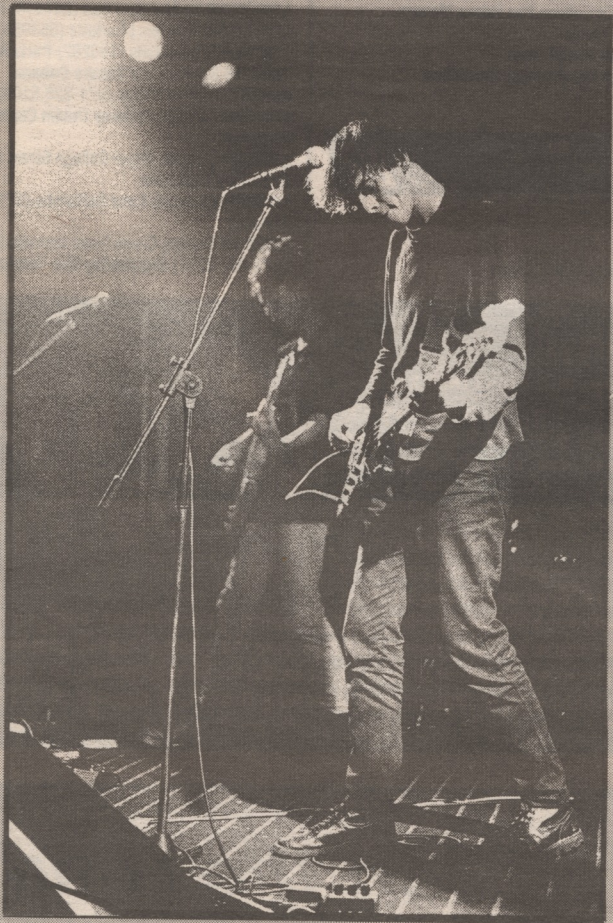


Beyond the pale



PALE SAINTS do the dead camel

Pics: Ian Lawton



PALE SAINTS/THE EDESL AUCTIONEER Buckley Tivoli Ballroom

HAVING LIT the blue touch paper with an impressive flourish via their 'Our New Skin' debut, the Edsel Auctioneer would already appear to be on the wane at this early stage of their career.

Certainly PA difficulties prevailed, but even making the required allowances you'll find little to suggest the Edsels lasting the pace much longer. 'Skin' is still their best shot, but here it lacked the sparkle of its vinyl counterpart and with guitarist Ashley Horner wearing the band's overt influence on his chest (a Buffalo Tom T-shirt), there seems scant hope of them rising above their self-styled plagiaristic morass.

The Pale Saints, meanwhile, are pulled every which way but loose by their influences. Beginning on the wrong foot with the stillborn dirge 'Two Sick Sisters', which stumbles beneath bassist Ian Masters' inchoate strum and weedy vocal, they proceed to career awkwardly between resolute indie jangling and token noise patches that are apparently inserted simply for the hell of it.

Don't misunderstand, there are plenty of good ideas skulking within the Saints melting pot - 'Time Thief' and the new 'Half-Life Remembered' being two of the more coherent highs - but all too often the execution is hopelessly cluttered. Consequently, a potential killer like 'The Way Of The World' is smothered by 20 unrelated changes when two would easily suffice.

Perversely 'Insubstantial' is a most inappropriate title, as it builds to a satisfying climax around Chris Cooper's cartwheeling drums and Graeme Naysmith's razor-sharp guitar. Sadly, though, Naysmith spends much of the time chopping and changing his library of axes and new rhythm guitarist Merial Barham is largely inaudible.

Eventually, they find the pulse again with 'She Rides The Waves', but this late triumph is scarcely enough to deflect what has already registered as a disconsolately patchy set.

Unfortunately, sporadic inspiration and the stage presence of a dead camel do not a great band make, and unless the Pale Saints can offer something more damn quick, they will merely pale into insignificance.

Tim Peacock