

# The Chronicle Interview

**HERMITAGE GREEN**

BY ALAN OWENS



## No masterplan, rather real potential

**T**HERE has never been a grand plan, they explain, seated as a trio on the terrace of the Curragower Bar; it has always been a case of 'take it as it comes'.

Lots of people have tried to advise Hermitage Green on what they should and shouldn't do, where they should play, what they should play. But for the time being, the band, who were formed in the back room of this very pub, are happy to allow their development to continue organically, as naturally as it has up to this point.

Brothers Dan and Barry Murphy and Darragh Griffin smile at the memory of the band's 'formation', a contrived word for what was essentially a bit of a lark, together with their friends Felix Jones and Darragh Graham, the other members.

"We just arranged to come in here (the Curragower) on a Tuesday night, the five of us in the back room sitting down, playing songs and trying to back each other and sing along with each other, it was just a bit of craic really," says Barry.

Older brother Brian Murphy, a co-proprietor of the Curragower, was key to coaxing the quintet out into the front of the bar, where a publican from Adare heard them and invited them to play a regular gig in his pub. And so the band began, without much fanfare.

"We must have played for two months out there before we had a name," laughs Darragh Griffin, the songwriter in the band, currently studying for an MA in Trad in the Irish World Academy, UL.

"People ask us why we decided to go for the bodhrán and djembe, such an unusual line-up, but that is who turned up, basically," laughs Dan, as the others chime in. "It could have been anything, we could have had a trumpet - it was



Hermitage Green - back row, from left, Daragh Griffin, Felix Jones and Daragh Graham - front, seated, brothers Barry and Dan Murphy: "If we could make a living from music, we would be the happiest men alive".

whoever turned up that night and it has worked for us, by complete chance, as most things have."

Darragh adds: "We never even planned to have a band, we were just messing around. A whole different group of people could have arrived but it was the five of us there that day and we went from there. People like to talk about the set-up and what we did a certain way - but it just fell into place that way".

Central to the band from the very start were pitch perfect harmonies, a nod to Fleet Foxes and Mumford and Sons, who they emulate without aping. They earned their spurs playing regular gigs in

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the 'Gower, anywhere that would have them - and the requests began to pile up quickly.

"We were an acoustic band for nearly six months and then we splashed out and bought a PA system. The first electric gig was in Thomond Park for ball, so it has been small steps from there. We have had some great gigs since then, a lot has happened in a year, but we could have made a lot more advances I suppose," says Dan.

The younger Murphy brother passes that comment with no hint of regret, and none should there be. This is a band all the better for their organic development, refusing to conform to an industry

standard.

"There are always people who will put you under pressure - you should be doing this, that, getting your CDs out there, striking while the iron's hot, but it is a natural thing, it has happened really naturally for us, we don't need to push it," agrees Barry. "I see us doing this for a long time, it can be whatever we want it to be, but I don't think there is any immediate rush to force it."

But the industry has begun to take notice, with Hermitage Green invited to support a high profile UK act in Dublin recently. They turned it down because of a prior commitment in Limerick - the sensible option. They have played at the Rose of Tralee, supported the Stunning in the Milk Market - and have developed their folk-rock style to the point where they have 11 songs developed as a band. They have invites to America and France in the new year, but won't plan beyond May.

They recently released the excellent Live On, a deliberate nod to John Martyn, a favourite of Griffin's. They will release two more songs, Gibson and Golden Rule, both also recorded as videos in the Franciscan Church, eschewing the more standard route of recording in studios or releasing downloads.

"They are essentially our demos," says Dan. "It has worked for us so far, so we decided to stick with the medium of YouTube and Facebook and just do videos for our songs."

"Whatever happens next probably depends on the songs, release them and see the reaction to them. I think both of them have more potential than Live On so I would judge it on that," he adds.

**Hermitage Green play the Curragower on New Year's Eve. See Facebook.com/HermitageGreen.**

### TOP 10s OF THE WEEK

#### albumschart

- 1) Christmas - Michael Buble
- 2) Up All Night - One Direction
- 3) Talk That Talk - Rihanna
- 4) Lioness - Amy Winehouse
- 5) 21 - Adele
- 6) Greatest Hits - Westlife
- 7) Mylo Xylto - Coldplay
- 8) Plus - Ed Sheeran
- 9) Ceremonials - Florence & The Machine
- 10) In Case You Didn't Know - Olly Murs



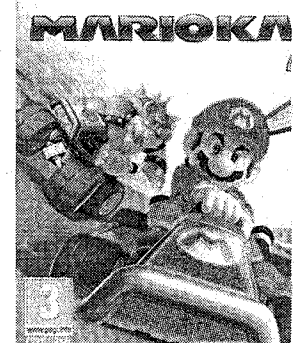
#### DVDs

- 1) Inbetweeners The Movie
- 2) The Guard
- 3) Harry Potter & The Deathly Hallows
- 4) The Hangover 2
- 5) Rise of The Planet of The Apes
- 6) Bridesmaids
- 7) Senna
- 8) The Smurfs
- 9) Super 8
- 10) The Lion King



#### games

- 1) Mario Kart 7 - 3DS
- 2) Uncharted 3 - PS3
- 3) Rage - Xbox 360
- 4) Now - Sing & Dance - Wii
- 5) Lego Harry Potter - DS
- 6) Need For Speed The Run - PS3
- 7) WWE 12 - Xbox 360
- 8) Just Dance 3 - Wii
- 9) Professor Layton - DS



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