**Lol Goodman Band**

**SCRUDDY AND THE HEALING SUN**

**RIGHT TRACK RECORDS**

Southern rock from a northern town, with one man’s fight against depression replacing sweet home Alabama as the principal lyrical subject matter; it’s fair to say that the fourth studio album from the Manchester-based Lol Goodman Band stands out on several fronts. Of the 15 all original tracks, Scruddy And The Healing Sun’s obvious high point is Grind Me Down, which runs to nine minutes of Allman Brothers-inspired mixolydian riffing, with vocalist/guitarist Goodman making known his defiant determination not to let the you-know-who’s achieve the mission implied in the title. The extended interplay between guitar, piano, organ and female backing vocals is right up there with anything I’ve heard from a British band in recent decades. Other songs of note include Utopia, built on a chord progression that Pete Townshend would have been proud to have devised, and words that a happy bunny would not have written. Still Got A Place In My Heart is a straight ahead my-woman-left-me rocker that almost qualifies as light relief, while If I Agreed With You We’d Both Be Wrong is a mock 1920s ditty along the lines of Ain’t Nobody’s Business, on which Goodman duets vocally with Jessie Galante. Healing Sun closes the CD by making it clear that Goodman has won his mental health battle, at least for now. Kudos to LGB for exploring a theme that still carries a stigma, and doing so with much musical aplomb.

**DAVID OSLER**