

ISSUE No.5

**BRITISH BLUES**

DECEMBER 1988

# BB review

£1.20

**THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH BLUES NETWORK**



**CHRISTMAS BLUES!** with Chris Barber  
Spencer Davis and all the Blues News



# TALKIN' BLUES

We may be tempting fate, in endeavouring to take stock of this magazine's progress at the turn of the year, so we should perhaps avoid too much self-satisfaction. Yet, to have survived thus far, given the spontaneous way we went about this business at the start, shows that enthusiasm – combined with selective professionalism – can achieve much more than might be expected. Certainly, some people never expected us to last this long, nor indeed, did they expect us to be at this level so soon. Such progress as we have made, did not come about without certain questioning from each of us in turn.

This state of affairs may – and probably will – continue, but even the most anarchic among us (the editor, probably) must surely derive some satisfaction that the magazine and its production has remained paramount.

Decisions taken on the spur of the moment, without reference to others on the team, may not have been quite so necessary after all, but as long as the result gained is the one desired, then let us use the season of goodwill as reason to celebrate – rather than despair that we're not, yet, a sixty four page, full colour, glossy, news-agents' dream.

We decided on a launch date that seemed too hasty for some of us, and in retrospect, perhaps we could have waited until we were completely ready to go with a more finished first issue. Had we waited, however, we might have been waiting until Doomsday.

The response to the first issue was positive enough for us to bask in a little glory, though the comment, "Is this the dummy one?" at the launch party, merely reinforced the editor's cynicism, but did not deflate us. With issue two, we were able to realise our hopes of producing a more than plausible magazine, albeit far from how we see it in a year's time. The response was again encouraging, though many people were still adopting an understandable wait-and-see attitude. They continue to do so, but without any obvious hostility. For ourselves, we are happy to be approaching our second target, the sixth issue (the first target was issue number one), which will mean a full year at the business.

With BBR number three, came a change of printer, resulting in reproduction in a way more satisfactory for our present purposes. With issue number four, came more of those pertinent comments beloved of some of our team, as production schedules put the work burden upon a fewer number of us, with more spontaneous decision-making by our Bete Noir (the writer of this column, who foolishly implied criticism of the Post Office with the result that there was a postal strike – although others naively put that down to an Act of God). The current issue – surprise, surprise – again meant most of the work being done within difficult schedules... but here it is... and celebrate we shall....

We look confidently forward to 1989. Happy New Year! (There... that's got Christmas out of the way).

BRITISH BLUES

*BB  
review*

## CONTENTS

<i>Readers' Letters</i> .....	page 3
<i>Spencer Davis</i> .....	page 4
<i>Reviews</i> .....	page 6
<i>Hokum Hotshots</i> .....	page 7
<i>Yardbirds</i> .....	page 8
<i>Cyril Davies</i> .....	page 10
<i>Chris Barber</i> .....	page 12
<i>Manchester Blues</i> .....	page 15
<i>Bristol Country Blues</i> .....	page 15
<i>Belgian Blues</i> .....	page 18
<i>Bluesnews</i> .....	page 19
<i>More Bluesnews</i> .....	page 21
<i>Network</i> .....	page 22

**Publisher:** Robert Bravington  
**Editor:** Graham Vickery  
(Shakey Vick)

**Art/Production**  
**Editor:** Angela Morse  
**Assistant**  
**Editors:** Tony Topham  
Pete Moody

**Advertising**  
**Manager:** Tom Nolan

Front cover photo of Joe Louis Walker courtesy Ace Records

Contributions to B B Review are welcomed, phone Editor on 01 289 6394 initially.

© Copyright of all material remains with the author/contributor. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission.

All advertising enquiries to:  
Tom Nolan, 01 602 6351

Published at 41 Bramley Road,  
London W10 6SZ  
Tel: 01-727 4053

Typeset by Graphac Typesetting,  
Enterprise House, 181-191 Garth  
Road, Morden, Surrey.

British Library No: 0953 8769

BRITISH BLUES

*BB  
review*

## BACK ISSUES

Copies of back issues can be obtained from BBR, 41 Bramley Road, London W10 6SZ, while stocks last. Send £1.40 per issue (inc. UK postage), stating which back issues you require. Overseas orders; £2, including postage.



# Letters

**Dear BBR,**

As an American student studying here in London, I've had the opportunity to catch several blues shows in just a few short weeks. But first let me thank you for the excellent interviews of Kenny Neal and Eric Clapton in your August issue.

Despite lacklustre opening sets by Tabby Thomas and The Junkyard Angels, the Town & Country Club presented an intense evening of the blues with Joe Louis Walker and the Boss Talkers – his outstanding originals and energetic covers on slide, as well as great showmanship, prove why Walker and band are destined for greatness. An absolute must-see for all you novices (Who are you referring to? – Ed)

The legendary Lowell Fulson seemed ageless on the 100 Club stage, in fine form, both on guitar and voice, and he made the DeLuxe Blues Band sound better, too. My only criticisms are that he stuck to standards (I would have liked to hear a generous helping from his new Rounder LP) and that he gets his own band together so that he doesn't have to rely on the inexperience of pickup bands, something that Chuck Berry is still prone to doing.

Lastly, the Buddy Guy and Junior Wells show at Town & Country was simply a travesty, by far the worst blues show I have ever seen, which was even more disappointing because Stone Crazy and Hoodoo Man Blues are among my favourite blues LPs. The band, (especially at [sic] piano) and sound were awful, (Their own band? – Ed) and neither Buddy nor Junior seemed to be capable of anything but sloppy extended cover medleys, playing at the audience rather than with it. They didn't deserve the thunderous applause they got – rather than an evening of Southside Blues, it was two hours of pathetic Blues Brothers – style B.S. Entertained: no. Swindled: yes.

Anyway, I wish your fine magazine a great future. Could you possibly have an article devoted to JSP

Records? Also why is there so little blues on British radio? At my college in the States, I host my own blues show weekly.

Sincerely,  
**Fred Rudofsky,**  
London.

p.s. Absolutely go see The Kinsey Report with Big Daddy Kinsey when they play here – they are dynamite!

Unfortunately, we weren't able to assess the worth, or otherwise, of Fred's blues show, but he does seem a bit inconsistent (own backing bands and so on). However, everyone to their own opinions. We will get around to an article on JSP records in due time. – Ed.

**Dear BBR**

From 1978-81, I researched and wrote a manuscript – a biography of the late, great Graham Bond. In that time, I interviewed all the key people in his personal and music career including Jack Bruce, Pete Brown, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Ginger Baker, Alexis Korner and John McLaughlin. Everyone was complimentary about the end result, including Chris Welch who mentioned it in his liner notes for a Charly Records live Bond album. I also received some wonderful rejection letters from publishers along the lines of 'nice book, shame about the subject'. As in life, so in death Graham Bond is not bankable.

However, it did lead to other things – two books for Proteus including a biography of Eric Clapton and a recently published history of the role of drugs in popular music. I also worked on the Graham Bond chapter of Bob Brunning's book and I hope to be starting soon on a major biography of a famous guitarist who died 18 years ago (guess!).

Every so often, I get letters from complete strangers asking me about 'the Graham Bond book' (including one from North Dakota!) and where they can get a copy. To partly satisfy this 'huge' demand, I was wondering

whether you might be interested in publishing an extract or two from the manuscript. I'm an original 'baby blues boomer' from the Sixties, as you can probably guess – I saw the Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation at the Railway Hotel in Harrow and the Spirit of John Morgan at the Marquee (who?) – how more authentic can you get? Therefore I was well pleased to the advent of your magazine and long may it survive. My sub is also enclosed.

Yours sincerely  
**Harry Shapiro**

p.s. See vol 2 p.19 column 1 for a reference to the Graham Bond Experience – really? Tut tut.

Thanks for pointing out the error, Harry. I hope we can do something on Graham Bond, perhaps in the next issue, and we'll certainly include you and your manuscript in it, probably relying completely on you. The Bob Brunning book will also be featured, again probably in the next issue, as Bob has kindly offered us access to it. With an interview with Johnny Mars for the next issue already to hand, any other contributors had better pull their fingers out if they want to be included.  
Ed.

## RECORD FAIR

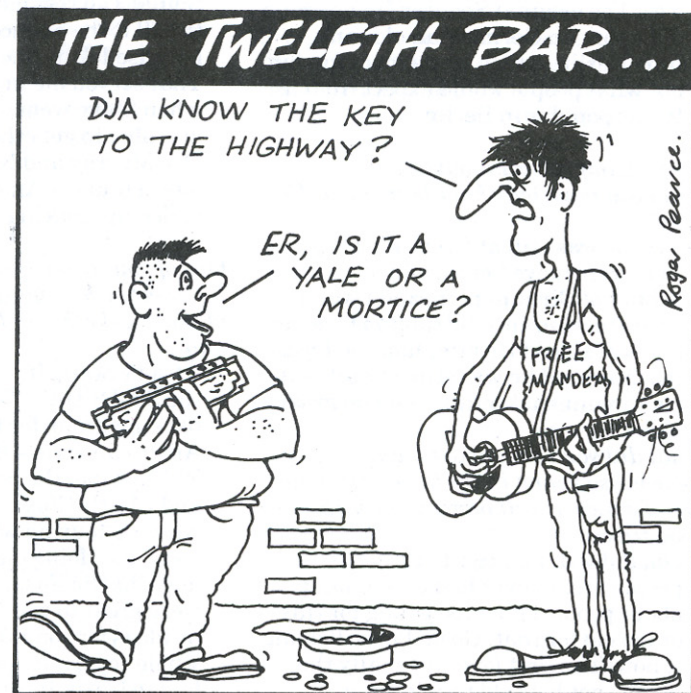
Starting Sunday 1st January, at the Hotel Russell, Russell Square, London, Mr. C Promotions will be presenting a regular monthly record fair with dealers offering records from the fifties to the present. Doors open at 10 a.m. and enquiries can be made on 0604 870191.

## KEVIN COYNE

David Cooper has asked if Kevin Coyne, or anyone in touch with him, could contact us about a possible gig in Belgium. We shall be pleased to pass the information on.

## HARMONICA VIRTUOSO and Blues

entertainer/vocalist seeks gigs throughout G.B. and Europe, short or long-term. Former student of James Cotton and Walter Horton. Have played professionally since early '60s in North America. Please write, with your address and phone number to: "Harpman" c/o Flat 11, Sarah Court, Lilliput Ave, Northolt, Middlesex UB5 5PY.





# KEEP ON RUNNING

## Spencer Leigh talks to Spencer Davis

*Spencer Leigh is a writer and music critic. His show "On The Beat", from BBC Radio Merseyside, is one of Liverpool's foremost "Rock" shows. Recent interviews on his Sunday show have included ones with Alan Price and Sleepy Le Beef. During June this year, Spencer Leigh caught up with Spencer Davis for an interview. Davis led the major R&B outfit, the Spencer Davis Group out of Birmingham in the early sixties.*

**S**pencer Davis now lives in America but he recently toured Britain with Pete York's All-Stars. I caught up with the tour at Southport Arts Centre and discovered that Zoot Money is still an excellent singer/pianist and Spencer Davis can match Stevie Winwood's vocals for 'Keep On Running'. The following interview was broadcast in 'On The Beat', my Sunday lunchtime programme on BBC Radio Merseyside, on June 26th 1988. Over the years I've interviewed many people, but this was the first time that one Spencer had interviewed another.

*I'm called Spencer and that's because of Churchill, how about you?*

My Mum was a big Spencer Tracy fan and so that's where mine came from.

*You got a degree in German and then you became a singer.*

Well, I was singing before I got a degree. While I was at Birmingham University, I got a degree in modern languages – German, French and I did Spanish for my subsid.

*Has it been of use to you on the Continent?*

Yes. The original Spencer Davis group did a song in German, an old song from Berlin, which was a lot of fun but not what people would expect from us. It was popular in Berlin.

*When 'Dimples' came out Stevie Winwood must only have been about 15 or 16?*

Yes, he was still at Great Barr Comprehensive School which is in a suburb of Birmingham, and I was a schoolteacher in Whittington Oval on the east side of Birmingham, so I was teaching and he was still a pupil so it was an unusual setup, sounded great.

*What did you think about having someone so young in the band? Half the fun of a rock 'n' roll band must be the good times.*

Oh, it doesn't matter to me what age people are. I never had this hangup about people being too young for this or too old for that. Gosh, I'm still doing it now! The first love was really the music, not how old people were.

*What did you think of his voice?*

I thought it was stunning as soon as I heard him playing in his brother's band, the Muff Woodie Jazz Band, which was a mainstream jazz band working from Birmingham. I needed to get a band together for the Golden Eagle which was a club that I played at in the centre of Birmingham. When I went along to catch the band, I was so impressed that I went up to Steve and asked him to join the group. He said, 'I'd love to but I'm too young to have a driving licence.' Muff stepped forward and said, 'I've got a driving licence and I'll bring him.' Muff switched from guitar to bass and so I got a bass player and a guitar player out of that meeting. I'd already been working with Peter York so there you have the complete original Spencer Davis band.

*Did you decide to call it the Spencer Davis Group right from the beginning?*

A few names were thrust at us. Someone suggested try the Vipers and I said that they already existed. We called the band the RBQ, the Rhythm And Blues Quartet, for a little while. However, there is a band in the States called the NRBQ, sounds like the Spinal Tap resume here, but we opted to call it the Spencer Davis Group because I'd put the band together. That served me in good stead later on when Steve went off to do Traffic. I was able to get other members in like Dee Murray and Nigel Olsson, who did lots of tours of America and eventually ended up working with Elton John.

*One of your assets was your ability to find lesser-known songs and do great versions of them. Like 'Every Little Bit Hurts' and...*

'I Can't Stand It', we also toured with the Soul Sisters. We were used as the backing group for the visiting American artists like Sonny Boy Williamson, the Soul Sisters and Inez and Charlie Foxx. At the same time as we were touring with the Stones, we were also doing club dates with Inez and Charlie Foxx. Inez and Charlie were great to work with and they gave us ideas for songs because they had a whole repertoire of their own that we had to learn. It was all part of the

learning experience, more songs.

*Your first hit was with 'Keep On Running' which was written by Jackie Edwards, who was a reggae artist on the Island label.*

Jackie was a performer and a writer, but he was foremost a writer and we were looking for a song. We were with the fledgling Island company and Chris Blackwell called me up and said he had got this song by Jackie Edwards. He played it over the phone and I said, I like that, we'll do it, and that became our first No. 1 in the UK. It was not a difficult song but we wanted to use something that was in keeping with what was happening then and if you remember Keith Richard had used a fuzz guitar on 'Satisfaction' and nobody else had done it other than the Stones, and we thought we would use it while the idea's hot. So thank you Rolling Stones, we used a fuzz guitar on that intro for 'Keep On Running'. Muff and I came up with that bass riff at the front. A lot of the arrangement, even later when we did 'Gimme Some Lovin', which was written by Muff, Steve and myself, we came up with the arrangement for that as well.

*You toured with the Rolling Stones. Have you an anecdote from those days?*

Yes, in Leeds during our part of the show we used to feature Steve on 'Georgia On My Mind'. There's a little piano solo in the middle and I remember seeing, out of the corner of my eye, someone lurking by the piano. It turned out to be Mick Jagger, and he was laying cold chips on the keys of the piano so when it came to the piano solo, Steve's hands went right down in cold, greasy chips.

*And you had another No. 1 with 'Somebody Help Me'.*

Yes, 'Somebody Help Me' was our next No. 1 and that was written by Jackie Edwards also. Later on Jackie and Steve collaborated on a song called 'When I Come Home' which was also a chart song. 'Keep On Running' almost became the national anthem of Germany. That song was huge over there as well as being No. 1 here, and I do it in the States with a band there.





At the Twisted Wheel, Manchester 1964, Spencer and Stevie. (Photo: Brian Smith)

Eddie Hardin came into the group later on and we collaborated on 'Don't Want You No More' which the Allman Brothers covered and put on one of their albums. I think it was on the first album, 'Beginnings'.

*I had read that when 'Gimme Some Lovin' came out in America, the American DJs thought you were black.*

The story of thinking that the Spencer Davis Group was made up of black musicians came about when 'Keep On Running' was released in the States. No-one had seen a picture of the group and in '66, radio stations were generally split into black and white stations. 'Keep On Running' was played on black stations in the States and when a picture of us came out and they saw these four shining little white boys, the record was dropped from their playlists. The momentum was lost and it only got to about No. 70 in the US charts.

*'Gimme Some Lovin' was the first big hit in America.*

That's correct, and that was followed by 'I'm A Man', but there was no doubt in people's minds then that this was a white rock and roll band, or if you like a rock 'n' roll band that was influenced greatly by American R&B and old blues.

*'Gimme Some Lovin' still sounds very exciting. Did you all record it together in the studio?*

Absolutely. We did it at Pye's studios and we had just acquired a new record producer, Jimmy Miller who went on to become the Rolling Stones' record producer, so our histories are tied. But

most of those records that you hear by the Spencer Davis Group were done live in the studios. There weren't many overdubs, there wasn't the time and there weren't the tracks. We recorded on four-track machines, and we had to mix the bass and the drums to free a track for another vocal or guitar overdub. But essentially they were live recordings.

*'I'm A Man' was later done by Chicago. Did you like their version of it?*

An amusing story about that. Peter Cetera who is the bass player with Chicago sang the song but couldn't understand Steve's lyrics, so I wrote them out for him when Chicago played the Albert Hall. Jimmy Miller's lyrics were a little cosmic with a lot of words in each line. It's difficult to sing because you have to get them out in one go.

*Had you been expecting Steve Winwood to leave the group?*

I hadn't really been expecting it, but the normal evolution is for groups to disband and for people to go in other directions. We still stay in touch and Steve, brother Muff, Peter and myself got together for a reunion last year. We did consider doing something for our 25th anniversary.

*You got involved in the film 'Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush' which contains some very good music.*

Traffic had come into existence and the Spencer Davis Group was divided then, so we had this amoeba-like event with Traffic and the new members of the Spencer Davis Group playing in that. I think Dave Mason also did a

solo for that film.

*Had you then left England to go to America?*

No, still hadn't left. I didn't leave England until 1970, November 1970. I was offered an aeroplane ticket and a record contract and it was a deal I couldn't turn out. Two albums were released but a third album which never surfaced had some old blues guys on it, so Capitol in the States have got another album sitting there. 'It's Been So Long' and 'Mousetrap' went double lead in Albania.

*You made a single with Dusty Springfield, 'Private Number'?*

A very good friend of mine called Alan McDougall, who did PR for the Hollies and us, is now an executive for EMI in Los Angeles. He said, 'Wouldn't it be nice to team you and Dusty together on the William Bell and Judy Clay song?' and that was on an album I did in 1984 called 'Crossfire'. She has a fabulous voice but she's a very nervous, neurotic lady, although it was great fun to be working with her. They played it over here and it looked as though it was going to happen. However, the radio stations dug up the original version and then they started playing that.

*Spencer Davis, thank you very much.*

*Spencer Leigh, thank you very much.*



# Reviews

## JOHN LEE HOOKER

*Odeon, Hammersmith, 10 July 1988*

The show opened with Ted Hawkins who presented a good performance of varied songs that went down well with the audience, accompanying himself on acoustic guitar, in open tuning and chords played with a black leather glove on his left hand! His voice is sweet and deep. He's a great songster, very reminiscent, in phrasing and melody, of Sam Cooke – an unusual combination that works. Renditions included, Matchbox, Zippa de doo da, Dock of the Bay and Country Road. The finale of this last number ended with the seriously repeated lines "My mother was a country boy". We found this quite amusing and wondered if his father might be a country girl? However, this was a great set.

On to the great man himself: setting the scene were the Coast to Coast Blues Band with musicians Jimmy The Kid (Bass and vocals), Ted Richards (drums), Mike Osborn (guitar), Peter Jones (organ) and Dr Funkenstein (tenor sax).

The first number was a strong blues shuffle followed by 'It's All Over Now' introduced as a Bobby Womack song and sung by "The Kid". The band did not seem to hang together too well, but, they warmed up for "the great boogie man", who appeared in grey mohair and a white stetson.

Seated out front with his red Gibson 335, THAT VOICE began with "Lord Have Mercy", followed by "Crawling King Snake", "Boom, Boom", Stormy Monday" and "Boogie Children". The audience were beginning to stand and John Lee was in business. He was also now on his feet, boogying toward the grand finale of "Let's Boogie" which continued for many encores.

Born 22 August, 1917 in Clarksdale, Mississippi and now aged 71, John Lee Hooker showed us all, that he can still really do it!

To be honest, I would have preferred to hear him on his own, or maybe with bass and drums only, for the band was too much like a rock band for my taste (but I guess that's what brings in the punters?). But I would add that Peter Jones and Dr Funkenstein played some excellent solos throughout the set. They were first class. Thank you John Lee. May you continue in good health for many years to come.

**Top Topham**

## LUCKY LOPEZ EVANS – 100

*Club, London 28th October 1988*

The recent UK tour by Chicago's Lucky Lopez Evans has provided Blues fans with a chance to see a very different kind of performer from those normally seen in this country. BBR promoted him at the 100 Club and the turnout was excellent.

Regular visitors to Britain usually fall into one of two categories; firstly, those, like Lowell Fulson, Carey Bell, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells who are 'established', having been performing and recording for a number of years, and secondly, the newer artists, in the early stages of their careers – for example, Kenny Neal and Joe Louis Walker. One thing that these two types of Bluesmen have in common is that while many may have an often substantial black following, the younger white audiences provide most of their recording and performing opportunities.

For every Blues musician playing the 'college' circuit, however, there are countless others who work regularly in the black clubs and bars of America, where, as often as not, they are expected to play a wide variety of material. Lucky Lopez Evans' performance vividly illustrated this diversity, and his set ranged from songs by Howling Wolf (with whom he used to work) like 'Shake For Me' and 'I Walked To Dallas', B.B. King's 'How Blue Can You Get?' through to James Brown's 'There Was A Time', Bill Withers' 'Ain't No Sunshine' and the Brook Benton classic 'Rainy Night In Georgia'. The slow numbers really showed off his great voice, in particular, 'End Of The Rainbow', the big 1978 Southern hit for the late, great McKinley Mitchell, which was given an absolutely spine-tingling rendition. Beautiful! In addition to these and other covers, Lucky performed some good original songs, and his fine guitar playing was well to the fore during a packed 2½ hour set. He'll be returning for more dates around the country, and can be recommended to discerning Blues fans everywhere.

**Joe Louis**

## L.P. "THE LIVE ADVENTURES OF MIKE BLOOMFIELD & AL KOOPER."

*EDSEL DOUBLE ALBUM DED261*

I heard this album originally about 1970. Listening to it again, for the first time in some 16 years, my response to this album's merit is the same. Mike Bloomfield and Al Kooper, two respected and admired performers of the late '60's could have done so much more had they not jammed in this way.

Of the thirteen numbers, nine are over five minutes long, and in some of these longer performances, the album weaknesses show. You can sense the improvised experiments in the jamming, not coming over canned, but I guess, to the audience, the live atmosphere made it a good concert.

The album kicks off with a soul number, a Paul Simon composition "The 59th Street Bridge Song", not the right opener for this album, nevertheless it does have merit. Track 2 is the Ray Charles slow blues "I Wonder Who". This one lasts 6 minutes and is good money's-worth. B.B. King style guitar throughout at a standard that still sounds good today. "Her Holy Modal Highness" never really gets anywhere; after nine minutes of an improvised instrumental, the Robbie Robinson number "The Weight" is a refreshing start to side 2. Their second Ray Charles number "Mary Ann", another good blues, begins to inspire the listener. A soul-tinged "That's All Right" doesn't click, but gives way to a good version of "Green Onions".

Side 3 is devoted to Rice Miller. Paul Jones' "Sonny Boy Williamson" is six minutes of good music and then Sonny Boy's own "No More Lonely Nights" goes on for twelve, the longest number on the album, not losing its way.

Side 4 has eight minutes worth of Stevie Winwood's "Dear Mr. Fantasy". I flipped quickly into "Don't Throw your Love On Me So Strong" an eleven minute blueser with some nice guitar. Final jam "Refugee" is a solid instrumental that gives the album a reasonably strong ending.

If you are a Kooper and Bloomfield fan, get it. Although not a definitive album, the slow blues numbers do highlight Bloomfield's and Kooper's ability as musicians. It is a pity that the performance could not have been given more planning to capture this ability.



**M**y first encounter with Jim Murray and Pete Mason, collectively known as The Hokum Hotshots (sounds like a twelve-piece band, doesn't it?) came at Newcastle's legendary 'Broken Doll' many winters ago.

The effect of two seedy-looking males, dressed like escapees from a Sydney Greenstreet film, singing and playing a mixture of goodtime 'Hokum Blues' and 'Jive' in a decidedly moonstruck manner, left me a little 'wibbly wobbly'. I wanted to imbibe much, much, more (rather like the first taste of the alcoholic beverage).

Steeped in the tradition of 'thirties novelty blues – of which there are very few performers these days – they've recently celebrated two decades together. I went, cassette in hand, to Newcastle's home of the blues 'The Broken Doll', to see them play and chat to Jim (National, Dobro, steel guitars, mandolin, etc.) and Pete (acoustic guitars, ukelele, washboard, etc.). We talked about the last twenty years of the woefully neglected Hokum Hotshots' story. I asked them first, about the 'sixties blues scene in Newcastle, and how they began.

**Jim:** We first started in Folk Clubs, because they were the only places we were allowed to play – we would go in with just acoustic guitars, looking like folk singers.

**Pete:** The British Blues Boom didn't really happen up here – that was down in London. We used to fight just to get a floor spot, never mind a booking!

**J:** When we first began, we played straight, down-the-line blues and we got very little work. About ten years ago, we started to get into the hokum stuff. We would dress in silly clothes and, like Leadbelly said, "Act the fool and take the white folk's money". That was the only way anybody noticed us.

I then tentatively asked them how they got into this unpopular kind of music and what sort of influences did they have, if any.

**P:** I got into blues through Bob Dylan, Fleetwood Mac etc. The first record I ever bought was Johnny Duncan's, 'Last Train to San Fernando' and the first thing that ever moved me was Finbar and Eddie Furie's 'Skye Boat Song'! But I also obtained a scratched copy of Robert Johnson's vol 1 LP. Even today I still think it's Number One. If I can play half as good as that, then I'm getting it right. The three songs: 'A Blues' by Scrapper Blackwell, 'It's Hard To Be A Nigger' by Mabel Hillery and 'A-Z Blues' by Blind Willie McTell – the combination have truly influenced my guitar playing and my singing. They are the heights that I aspire to.

**J:** One of the first records that I ever bought, was a John Lee Hooker. Then when I was fifteen I bought the first Robert Johnson album and I could hear a slide guitarist on it. I was told that it was a bottleneck guitar and it was tuned to a chord, so the next four years I spent playing just the slide. Yank Rachell was an influence for my mandolin playing,

# FULL CIRCLE

The Hokum Hotshots  
interviewed by Shipcote.



Leroy Carr influenced me, and Frank Stokes influenced for blues playing, but the main influence was Casey Bill Weldon, he played the blues on a Hawaiian steel guitar.

*The Hokum Hotshots have verged on all sorts of acoustic roots blues music in their twenty years together, but the first choice for me, is their Hokum music. I asked them about this.*

**P:** There was a gap that we found, that was entertaining blues. We've always played a little hokum blues, but after Jim had been playing with Bob Mason (harmonica), we formed the Hotshots – strictly hokum. We were playing wild Hawaiian instrumentals, Butterbeans and Susie, Hokum Boys and even Leekan and Cooksie music. This was around 1980. We dressed in hats, 'Kipper' ties, 'co-respondant' shoes, Argyll socks, braces – the whole works – and what made us tick was: we were having such a great time.

**J:** It was also the first time that we were, musically, very very good.

*They have turned a full circle and are now playing straight Downhome Blues, just like when they started. I asked them about today's blues scene.*

**P:** There's a smell out there. People are listening to blues now. It's on adverts, slide guitar on television, films, etc. You think: Hang on, I can do that...

**J:** ...It should be me!.. and lately there

have been young lads coming up, picking our brains about the music we play and going away and playing blues, ripping off our material as well; but if someone rates us enough to copy us, it's wonderful.

**P:** It also makes us learn more material!

**J:** There's also more blues in Newcastle than there's been for the last ten years. When we first started, some people our age who were into blues and some old jazzers who'd, say, seen Big Bill Broonzy at 100 Club – they were our audience. Now we've got young kids who've never really heard the first generation of blues, as well as people our own age, listening to us.

*The Hotshots have an album out on Celtic Music (CM015) called: 'Maybe It's The Blues.' It was recorded back in 1983 but it's still the Hotshots' sound. There's one thing for sure: fads in the music business, come and go, but there will always be people like the Hotshots and their witty associate Brian Cookman and the like, to fly the flag. I can honestly say I've seen the Hotshots more times than I care to remember, and not once have I ceased to enjoy them. I'll leave the last word to Jim:*

**J:** I love the blues songs and I've always considered it a bit of a crusade to get every bastard to like it!

**Shipcote**



Playing the blues became first priority now for Tony, Chris and Dave Holt and together with a harmonica player called Tucker and drummer Robin Wayne they secured their first proper gig at The Crown public house in Kingston. For their first gig they played a mixture of Fats Domino type numbers as well as rawer songs like "Hoochie Coochie Man". Later, Tony and Chris got friendly with Perry Foster and his pal Jamie and these four started playing the interval spot at The Railway Tavern and Hotel in Norbiton near Kingston.

Also playing at this venue was a country blues outfit that were purely acoustic. They called themselves The Metropolis Blues Quartet which comprised of Keith Relf, vocals and harp, Paul Samwell-Smith on bass, Laurie Gains playing guitar and a drummer. They certainly did not impress Tony and Chris with their folk type of blues; blues to them meant the electric, harder hitting kind.

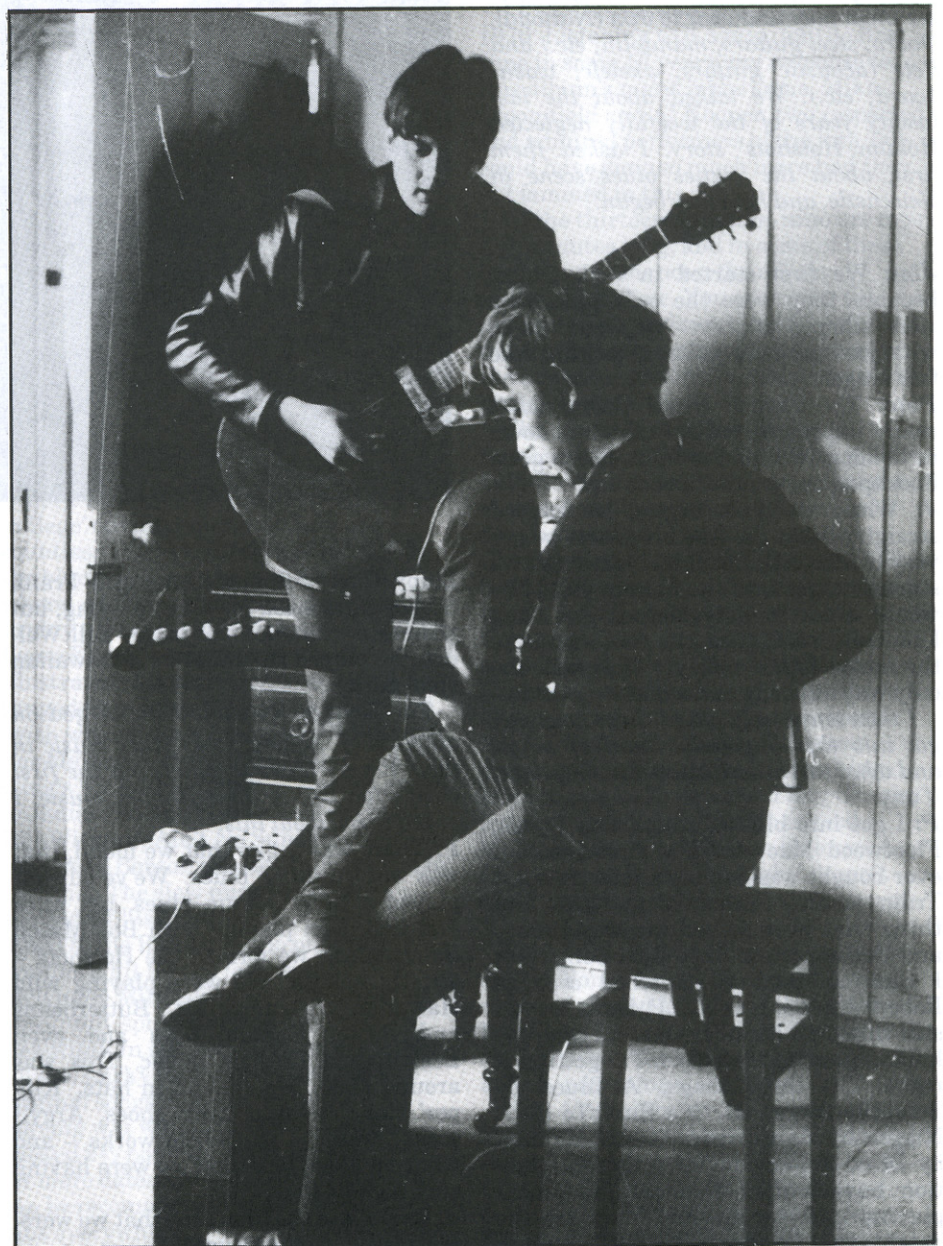
Keith Relf had been a student of Kingston Art College, where he had come into contact with Eric Clapton. There had been talk of them forming a band together. Keith also played guitar, but in his blues harp playing was where he really shone. Paul Samwell-Smith had played in rock bands, The Strollers and The Country Gentlemen, whilst he attended Hampton Grammar School with fellow student Jim McCarty, who played drums. Paul at this time played lead guitar, but eventually took up the bass.

Eric Clapton in early 1963 had purchased a Hohner Kay electric guitar for £99 and after just a few weeks was asked to join The Roosters, an R&B band. All Eric's budding musician friends were amazed by his guitar and jams were fairly frequent in those days. Eric used to sing quite a bit on Chuck Berry numbers and Howling Wolf's "Smokestack Lightning". Tony Topham joined him on a few occasions as they had become friends, Eric and his pal Clive would often pop round to Top's to play blues records. One such jam, on a particular Saturday afternoon, proved to be so successful that the musicians decided to form a band. They were: Tony Topham, now playing a Harmony electric guitar, Chris Dreja, Paul Samwell-Smith, Keith Relf and Jim McCarty. Perry and Jamie were also there, but didn't play. Just two weeks later The Yardbirds, a name given them by Keith Relf, were playing their very first gig at the infamous Eel Pie Island in Twickenham.

Cyril Davis And The Allstars were one of the legendary bands in the UK playing excellent R&B, and of course were much admired by The Yardbirds. After one of Cyril's gigs he was approached by Keith and Paul, Cyril agreed to the new band playing the interval spot for him at

# Yardbirds

by Richard MacKay



Top Topham and Jamie, circa 1963

the "Island". After going over very well with the audience, The Yardbirds were asked back; this time Cyril offered them a residency at The Woolsden Hotel in Harrow. The Yardbirds had their own cards and posters printed - Cyril even lent them his P.A. system, as they hadn't

yet got one of their own. This became a once-a-week event and was the start of their success.

At this time, Paul, who was also known as 'Sam' played bass while seated, following in the footsteps of his idol The Allstars' bassist Cliff Barton. More





Top Topham, 1988. (photo: Jon Frost)

and more gigs were arranged – which also meant more rehearsals as more material was called for – leaning more and more on Tony's blues records. Songs played around this time included Billy Boy Arnold's "I Wish You Would", "Smokestack Lightning", "Someone To Love", "Who Do You Love", "Louise" and "Too Much Monkey Business". These would be part of the Yardbirds set for a good two to three years or more.

Keith, Jim and Sam being that much older, had full-time day jobs. Top and Chris were still only fifteen! More and more gigs came along, including all-nighters at Studio 51 in Great Newport Street, playing often as not with The Downliners Sect. They also got involved with Giorgio Gomelsky (who would later become their manager) and were playing at his Crawdaddy Club at Richmond. The strain began to tell and the band started to talk about going professional.

Tony Topham found it hard to commit himself at that stage. Chris on the other hand was now keen to leave school and chance his arm with the band. On stage though, things were fine. They were sounding better and better. Their all-nighters forced them to stretch out certain numbers with long solos and this later became one of The Yardbirds trademarks.

Some of the band and their friends started to feel that if Top wasn't able to commit himself to becoming a full-time Yardbird, he should leave and let someone else fill his role. Although Top didn't say it, this music was the most important thing in his life – which, as far as he was concerned, meant continuing as a Yardbird. His parents though, were not so keen, because Top had secured a place in Art School and was due to start in the September '63 term. This was what they wanted but when Top told them that the music was more important, it didn't go down at all well.

One Sunday night, Eric Clapton was at a Yardbirds' gig and asked if he could get up and do a number. He sat in and did "Reeling And Rocking" using Top's guitar and amplifier. Everyone thought it was great and carried on and finished the evening, but Tony sensed that there was something not quite right. It was

now September and Tony had just started at Art School. The decision was taken out of Tony's hands.

One evening, the band turned up at Tony's home and said: "Look, we're awfully sorry, but in view of the situation, and wanting to go professional, you know, that's it. We want to have Eric in". Tony was devastated and to make matters worse, the band still had his Gibson amp. He managed to get the amp back about a month later.

The band though, went from strength to strength, having earlier signed up with the ex-Rolling Stones manager Gomelsky. R.G. Jones' studio was used to make demos and three songs out of these sessions: "Baby What's Wrong", "Boom Boom", and the group's song "Honey In Your Hips". These showed just what the group were all about at this time, Eric added more R&B numbers to the band's set, as he'd long been interested in the likes of Furry Lewis, Big Bill Broonzy and Muddy Waters. Eric had just left his last band Casey Jones & The Engineers when he was approached by Keith, it didn't take long for Eric to agree, in fact he jumped at the chance.

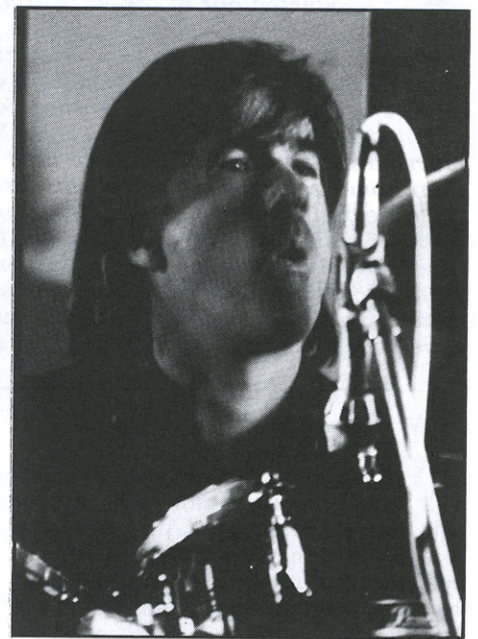
The R.G. Jones tapes were hawked around the various record companies until Columbia came up with a deal, resulting in the release of "A Certain Girl" and "I Wish You Would" in May 1964. "A Certain Girl" was to be the A side but was switched for "Would" as this was more like their stage sound. "Would" is an excellent record that still sounds terrific today, and remains one of their best-ever records. But now the band were working nearly seven nights a week, gathering huge followings at places like The Marquee, Crawdaddy Clubs, Ricky Tick etc. They'd backed US Blues legend Sonny Boy Williamson for a tour. Some of these gigs were recorded and the tapes released years later, on an album which included their own set.

Lots of radio and T.V. was lined up, as "I Wish You Would" reached no.26 in the N.M.E. chart. Also in May Eric played his first ever studio session on Otis Spann's "Pretty Girls Everywhere" and "Stirs Me Up", playing with Muddy Waters, Ransome Knowling, Willie Smith and Jimmy Page. The Yardbirds started getting lots of press coverage, and later recorded their second single "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl"/"I Aint Got You". Apart from a brief bit of guitar magic on the b side, the single was a disappointment, as record sales showed.

In late December "Five Live Yardbirds" was released, a super album recorded in March at The Marquee. It was quite a landmark for British blues, on release, and still sums up the excitement, the real excitement, of being in a sweaty club and listening to one of the finest bands around. The playing from everybody is brilliant throughout, and I believe that the LP is still the one to be measured against, when live rock albums are released. Even so, the recording quality isn't very good (I've heard better recorded bootlegs), but for sheer

excitement "Five Live" takes some beating. Standout tracks are "Too Much Monkey Business", "Got Love If You Want It", "Smokestack Lightning", "Five Long Years", "Louise" and "I'm A Man".

Keith was certainly blowing some of the best blues harp around; Eric was playing as only Eric could; Sam, on this album, possibly comes off better than anyone – his pumping bass lines are terrific; Chris fills up all the holes in the sound; and Jim keeps the whole thing going at the back. Things could not last like this though, as the band, apart from Eric wanted a hit single, even if it meant recording something not in the R&B field. While appearing with The Beatles on their Christmas Show, a song came to their attention that was written by a new up-and-coming writer named Graham Gouldman. The song in question



Jim McCarty, 1988. (Photo: Jon Frost)

was "For Your Love", a commercial song that Eric hated. Indeed he only played a few seconds on it during the middle section. But the record was made and it became a hit, not only in the UK but worldwide. By now Eric had walked out of the band and ex-Tridents guitarist Jeff Beck had joined. The Tridents had been another big draw at Eel Pie Island.

The B side of "For Your Love" – which was recorded much earlier – "Got To Hurry", features Eric and is a very good instrumental. This record shows the old and new Yardbirds. They were still simply one of the best R&B bands around as "Hurry" shows and "Love" indicates the shapes of things to come. Yet for many people, the very best period for The Yardbirds was when they were just an R&B band who could play the blues as only a few white bands could.

*Thanks go to various people for their help, especially Tony Topham. For more Yardbirds info. read "Yardbirds World" each month (£1 inc. post) from Y.W., 22 West Street, Osney Town, Oxford OX2 0BQ, England.*



# CYRIL DAVIES: Preaching the Blues

Interview with Brian and Marie Knight  
by Graham Vickery

**C**yril Davies was one of the first generation of British Blues players and led the way in playing amplified Chicago styled blues. He'd started out in the Jazz and Folk fields, playing banjo and guitar before switching seriously to harmonica. With Alexis Korner, he had probably the first electric blues band in Blues Incorporated and later split with Alex to form the Cyril Davies All Stars. He died just when he was beginning to get recognition for his earlier efforts, with a number of younger bands ready to benefit from his pioneering. His widow, Marie, later married Brian Knight (see issue no 3 of BBR). This interview took place at their home, after the interview with Brian on his own beginnings.

*I especially remember the steaming Thursday nights at the Marquee in London with Blues Incorporated and also the first appearance of the new band, The All Stars, at Studio 51 in London's Great Newport Street, when my stomach felt battered by the heavily amplified bass. The drive and intensity of the band at this time was never really transposed to record, but Country Line Special and Chicago Calling, the first single, still sound good today.*

**G:** Marie, was Cyril playing when you met him?

**M:** Yes, he was playing in more or less a folk thing, playing guitar then he got into Steve Lane's band playing banjo and singing then he met Alex. I can't remember what that first band was now. He was playing with a washboard in the band...

**G:** Was he playing banjo still or had he taken up harmonica?

**M:** No, he was playing guitar.

**B:** That's the thing with Cyril Davies. He made his name as a harmonica player, but his forte was the twelve string guitar. It's a shame, because we've got just about the only recording of him playing twelve string and if I put them on for you - Marie won't have them on - but if I put them on for you, you wouldn't tell the difference between him and Leadbelly. It's quite phenomenal. That was what he was best at.

**G:** I remember once he came.. I think it was the Marquee and he was late... and he came storming in and said: "Why the fuck haven't you started." It was so funny. He got straight into it even though he had a go at them for waiting for him.

**B:** He was quite a character actually - hard, mind - but heart of gold.

**G:** Yeah... I talked to him a few times and he was always very helpful, showed how to make these contact mikes that he used, and so on, but obviously he could be heavy as well.

**B:** Yes he was a very nice person, but a lot of people didn't understand him and thought he was a hard bastard - which he was, he wouldn't be fucked about -

but he'd give you his last halfpenny. He used to be with Colin Kingwell as well, didn't he?

**M:** Yes, he used to do a lot with Traditional jazzbands.

**G:** Did he used to do interval spots as well?

**M:** Yes, he used to go down to Chris Barber's, with Lonnie Donegan, because he was sort of a beginner at that time. They used to do a little spot there.

**B:** He started off with skiffle technique.

**M:** That's how it started wasn't it?

**B:** Yeah he didn't actually get a twelve string until then.

**M:** No, he got one when he joined with Alexis. They started the blues from skiffle really. They used to go to the Roundhouse and it became packed, got so popular.

**B:** Alex wasn't there half the time. Cyril used to do it on his own. Alex was terrible for that, come to think of it. He even used to do it when he had bands. He'd get Geoff (Bradford) to dep for him. How can you do that with your own band? but he used to do it with Cyril. Months he didn't turn up sometimes. Yeah it used to be Alex on six string guitar and Cyril on twelve string and he'd play a bit of harmonica as well, and that's... Keith Scott used to play down there, on piano.

**G:** He used to play harmonica a bit, didn't he? I remember seeing him play it once, though most of the set he'd stick to piano.

**B:** That's right. He used to do My Babe, actually. He had a very English voice. That's when Geoff got involved with Cyril, around about fifty six. There were



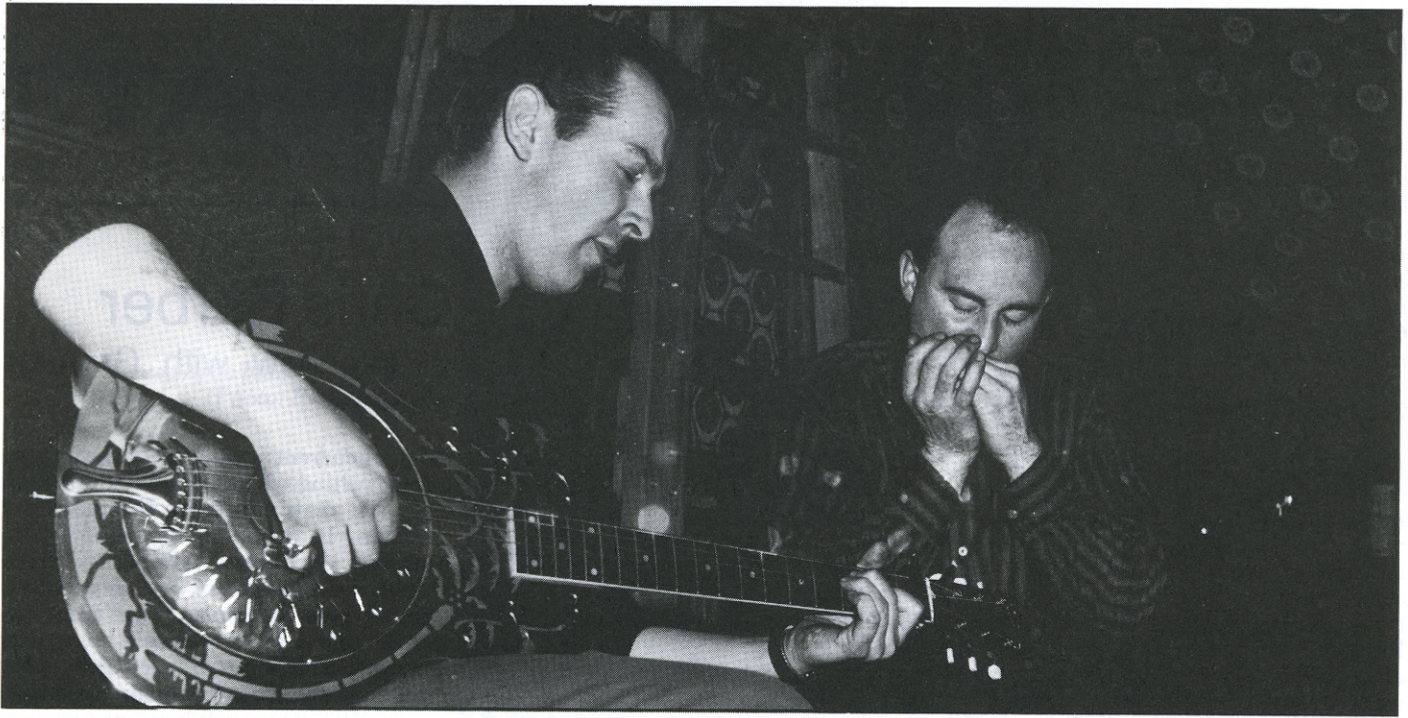
(Photo: A.B.C.)

other guitarists before Geoff. There was Davy Graham. There were lots of known guitarists who used to sit in. Who was that? Cyril threw him out - Alex Campbell - Cyril actually threw him down the stairs - I don't know how the row started, something about blues or something, Alex threatened Cyril and Cyril just picked him up and threw him down stairs.

**M:** That's how he started the band, though. It began to get popular.

**B:** Yeah that was instigated by Chris Barber again, wasn't it? Chris was playing the Marquee quite a lot and that's how Cyril got introduced to the Marquee, really. I never realised until some years later, that Chris was the instigator of quite a lot, with the help of Harold Pendleton. He paid for some people to come over and try and boost blues. So that's how Alex and Cyril actually formed Blues Incorporated and they had a residency at the Marquee on Thursday nights. They had quite an array of musicians. Alex used to use a different musicians every night, I reckon. I'm trying to think of some of them. Graham Bond on Alto, Dick Heckstall Smith on





Brian Knight and Cyril Davies

Tenor – that's really one of the reasons that Cyril left, because of the great big horn section and him trying to play harmonica all the way through it. There was Spike Heatley on bass. But Cyril basically didn't like the horn section – and there were differences between Alex and Cyril – so Cyril went rehearsing for a new band and he picked up Screaming Lord Sutch's band, which was Bernie Watson on guitar, Carlo Little on drums, Rick Brown, what was his stage name? – Ricky Fenton – on bass, no it wasn't Bernie Watson on guitar at that time, it was Jimmy Page, then Bernie Watson. Then he had a few changes in the band and cut a disc for Pye, Country Line Special, with Nicky Hopkins on piano, I think, who became ill and was replaced by Keith Scott. They became a very popular band working up and down the country and I think that was when Cyril became ill. He got pleurisy. When you're in that position, you've been struggling for years and suddenly you get a break, you don't want to miss the chance. Anyway, he went back to work too soon and as a result, weakened his heart.

**M:** Yes it was basically his heart that went, it wasn't leukaemia or cancer like people said.

**B:** So what happened – pleurisy weakens the heart anyway – and Cyril insisted on going back to gigging before he'd properly recovered, in the end his heart packed up. There were lots of stories going round that he was on this and taking that, but he wasn't. Mind, he liked a drink. Basically he drank a lot because he was ill and you can't get more ill than that.

**M:** On the death certificate they put Endocarditis, which is inflammation of the heart lining. People said that you don't actually die of that if you relax. But he wouldn't give up...

**G:** Just when he was breaking too...

Long John Baldry and Cyril Davies, (Photo: A.B.C.)





**T**his interview took place, hurriedly, at the 100 Club, London, just before Chris was due to go on stage. There were lots of background noises and the band was warming up, adding to the sense of urgency with which the interview took place. Despite this, Chris managed to convey forcefully, his views on the start of the British Blues scene – a start in which he was instrumental, forgive the pun. He still has a loyal following among fans and musicians, for his blend of Jazz and Blues. His band must be one of the longest running units in this country, with little change in its nucleus and though this can cause complacency and perhaps conservatism, with a small c, the fact that the band was prepared to experiment beyond the simple confines of Trad, has ensured that they cannot be labelled or pigeon-holed dogmatically. It was this very determination to try new ideas, that led to blues band music being performed over here in the early days. Chris himself seems to be ready to go on playing for years more and while he has every right to feel embittered by the rejection of the early blues fans, he has the ability to over-ride his feelings and continue doing what he wants to do on the music scene. That says it all, as far as I'm concerned.

**Chris Barber:** "Yeah well, you'd think that most of the people who made blues in Britain what it is, got interested in blues – having not been interested in it before – when they came to a trad concert of ours and heard Muddy Waters... Eric Burdon for a start... Alan Price too and a lot of other people, although you wouldn't say Eric was involved in part of the blues movement, because he got into a kind of blues/rock and roll thing, but he's still not a bad blues player. All the people like Alexis and myself started out in 1949. My first band – Alexis played – we had what we called a race section, a race group, because on records they were called race records, which was guitar, piano, bass and drums and vocal. And Alexis and I both sang and my piano player always tends to do Maceo numbers and solos and we did also Tampa Red numbers. Not Muddy Waters; Muddy Waters hadn't quite got through to us then in '49 really, I mean people who think that's a bit odd... I don't think they'd have heard Muddy by then either. In fact half of them hadn't been born then. I always regarded blues as a very essential thing that goes hand in hand with jazz... I don't like to do one without the other. Which applies both ways you know, when the blues movement came it got taken over in the sixties; people were saying: blues is the thing, forget jazz, but you know likewise, quite apart that without the jazz bands like myself bringing the blues people in to get them started there wouldn't be any blues in Britain anyway, that it's the same musicians who played it all in the first place anyhow. Roosevelt Sykes, Little Brother Montgomery, they all played all kinds of music... blues and jazz. To tell you the truth, I don't think there's a lot of difference anyway, it's just a matter of method, a matter of the way you play within certain pieces in style and that's all there is to it. So simple anyway. I've always been a great... Alexis and I used to vie with each other for the chance of getting rare old records, I'd try and get ones he hadn't got and whatever and sadly enough Bobby is still collecting them, so I don't get the chance. I phoned her up and said to her: 'if you want to sell them'. 'No I collect them; you may remember that I had Big Bill records before Alexis ever heard of him' so I said 'Yes so you did, I remember' because I

knew Bobby before I knew Alexis. I wouldn't mind having his Charlie Patton records, I've only got one Charlie Patton original and that's pretty worn, but it's not bad having only one Charlie Patton original is it? I've got about five thousand 78's, serious 78's, and about twenty thousand other 78's. So I've got a good collection I would say and I enjoy it."

**G:** "Well you certainly must have turned a lot of people on, it turned me on. I was interested in jazz and I discovered blues by going back through jazz books and things. But then when I heard Jimmy Cotton, I decided... I'd heard Broonzy on Jazz Club on the radio and so on."

**C:** "Yeah you hear and see the real thing it's a bit like experiencing actual jazz for the first time. Jazz on record is very often not at all convincing because the records aren't engineered and honed down like pop records are and blues on record, tends to get across better because they've got less to try and get together. There's less going on. You hear jazz for the first time live... my first live jazz I ever heard was the George Webb Dixielanders, a pretty awful band to be honest really but my God I was speechless for hours."

**G:** "Where was that?"

**C:** "That was The King George's Hall, Adeline Place, 1946."

**G:** "And why did you actually go along there? I mean you were just curious about jazz...?"

**C:** "I liked jazz, I'd been buying jazz records since I was twelve. I liked classical records when I was a kid and my father was an amateur violinist and viola player and I liked classical music but I used to break their dance records, whether that was Freudian jealousy at them dancing together, hugging each other while dancing or just I didn't like them, I couldn't say. I'm not that fond of Lew Stone and Ambrose even now to be honest... Geraldo and so on... but then one never heard live music, you could ignore live music altogether on the radio. We used to not listen to it... it wasn't there. But once the war came along you had the 'Music While You Work' syndrome, music keeping people going all the time and just to keep you listening to music in the background all the time and then every now and then news of our boys at the front. They had to fill it with something so you got this

# IN AT TH

## Chris Barber

in Interview with Graham Vickery

thing of current popular records, so you got this thing of 'Run Rabbit Run' over and over again; that was the record in the '40s. In 1942 I was listening at boarding school, and I heard the disc-jockey or the presenter, as they call him I think, announcer, say 'Here is a jazz record', and they played this record. In fact it wasn't even a very good jazz record... it was Eric Winstone playing a piece called 'Oasis'. Which was as you might imagine, a pastiche of 'Caravan', quite a nice pastiche of 'Caravan' but I mean the guys in the band obviously needed a style... it sounded a bit like a minor Ellington type record, it had the elements and something else there as well. I thought, well that's interesting. I wrote to my father saying: 'what about this jazz? I'd like to have some'. He brought a gramophone, very sensible man, and a record review by Eddie Jackson. Two records had five stars and he bought them both. Coleman Hawkins' 'Body And Soul' a marvellous record, Harry James' 'Old Man River', with a good sort of would-be Cootie Williams type trumpet on it. I've still got them. I started collecting records and I was buying 78's on a stall – I used to get my bus fare from my parents, to go to Cambridge – I was in Royston during the war, and I had to go to Cambridge for violin lessons. So what I did was: violin in one hand, riding a bike, other hand hanging on the back of lorries... not easy... fourteen miles and mostly very fast. And of course the bus fare brought the 78 every week from Miller's in Cambridge, and they had a lot of – the jazz records on 78 included... a lot of companies in England used to issue jazz records on their export labels. They've all got these record numbers JF and JK on the HMV Jelly Roll Morton's and Fats Waller's and so on and were meant for export to France and such place, because there were jazz fans there, asking for them. Not for England. You had to order them specially and had a hard time. Millers kept them in stock so when the war broke out they had a good stock, so you could go in there and say... 'have you got The Missourians on JF' and so on, they had them in stock. And when you went to the universities, they were the seat of jazz, just as they were the seat of blues at one time in the early sixties... and the Trad thing at one time... anyway, by the time the war



# E START

*"...Alexis wanted to do blues all night..."*  
(Photo: Rediffusion)

ended and we came back to London, I had about seventy 78's, which is not bad when you think about it. I suppose the equivalent price for a single nowadays would be about two pounds fifty. There were no records, even after the war, for a long time in England because of the shortage of shellac and of course they used to melt down old ones. Many shops would pay about sixpence for an old record or not sell a new record unless an old one came in. So the ones that they couldn't melt down were left in the box and you could buy them for twopence or whatever... I bought quite a few records that way. I got quite a few good jazz records which were on the laminated 78's. Anyway there were no records to be had and we knew there were lots going in America because they hadn't had this deprivation and it happened that our next door neighbours, a Jewish family, were going back and forwards to New York regularly. It horrified me, I mean how could anyone afford to do that... it was so dear in those days and I asked them 'would you order these records for me?' and they did and I got all the Bluenotes and lots of records on Mercury. I didn't really intend them to go to Harlem, but I did get all the Bluebird, the last Bluebird, the thirty four dash oh seven hundred series of Bluebirds, I got all of those brand new through them, just ordered them like that - they were one dollar and five cents each, which was five bob. So I got quite a lot of records by then at this time - it was '46. I'd got a couple of hundred records or two hundred and fifty many of which are still rare, then and now. Once the records shops had come back in London, the jazz record shops Tempo Records shop which was then in South Kensington... and Dobell's... one met people in there and sat there talking... I was at school but during the holidays, I'd be getting in there chatting away to jazz fans and collectors and I was told about a Jazz concert and asked if I wanted to go along to hear it. So I went to Adeline Place to this concert, that was in 1946 and there it was - and on I went from there, you see - and I met other people who were listening as well and we got together in a band and Alexis had been at school with me...

**G:** I see, you met Alexis at school?

**C:** Well actually I didn't meet him at school - you didn't mix, him being two





years older than me... at public schools you don't find very much mixing between people with two year's difference in age... it's not on, is it?

G: How did you actually get to meet him?

C: I met him afterwards, I met him through Bobby I think. There were so few jazz fans anyway, you knew all the ones there were. There were two or three hundred... that was it. It was like a sort of secret society almost, you know... if you walked past a house and heard a jazz tune coming out of the window, you knocked on the door... It was like meeting the only other Buddhist in Aberdeen. G: The only other Martian on the planet...

C: The only other Martian, that's right. So we got this amateur band started and it had a blues section in it. We don't call it a blues section now, we just do some blues numbers, we just managed to integrate it so that our music contains elements of it all the time.

G: What year would that have been, when Alexis joined you?

C: Alexis joined us in '49.

G: So your first band was in '49?

C: Yes... well we played for the first time in public in '49. It was a King Oliver type band, with two trumpets and a piano, a banjo and a guitar. I've no significant memory of what Alexis sounded like and I found out why because I got a picture of the band out and I realised he was playing a semi-acoustic guitar and he had no amp. I think it was a Hofner... looking a bit like a Gibson, not unlike the Gibson Stereo our guitarist is using now, looking a bit like that... anyway he played that, he slashed away at it. He never really was a musician-type guitarist, he was a style... a feel-type guitarist - he could create a feeling atmosphere, but he couldn't really play very much so it was difficult when he played with the band. When he joined the band in 1960 after Muddy Waters and so on we finally said: 'listen, we've got to get this wretched blues going, it's got to be done somehow or other'... he was ostracised by the blues clubs, they wouldn't let him play with his amp, you know... he and Cyril were going around all fed up so we said 'come and join with us' so we brought Keith Scott and did a half an hour's blues set with the show with Otilie singing, because let's face it, that was what she was singing already and that was great, but in the end, the boys in... the brass players, the wind players weren't really prepared to play what you've got to do on those numbers all night and Alexis wanted to do blues all night... as a guitar player and singer... very reasonable, so it made it more difficult. You know one of the hardest things... it takes a very mature jazz trumpeter... to say to him you're going to stand there for two hours going la doodle dah, lad daddle da deh over and over again...

G: They're enthusiasts too. They want to be getting on with their music.

C: Yes but it's all part of the same music... if you segue the right lines... it

doesn't bother you. As far as I'm concerned, the things you play in every Dixieland number are just as trivial, they just sounded more fiddly, but they're no more mindblowingly urgent. They didn't want to do both, so when Alexis formed the Blues Incorporated, it took us four years to find a guitar player then John Slaughter joined us in 1964. He'd almost joined John Mayall... failed the audition, mind you, his audition... he was nineteen years old, his first pressure gig... John Mayall said come play on the gig and I'll see how you get on... he had tonsillitis, his amp was where John Mayall couldn't hear it... it was under the piano facing the wrong way and they're backing John Lee Hooker... which is difficult because he's so erratic and nerve racking, so naturally he failed the audition... he didn't actually fail it... I don't think John even noticed him. I actually rang up John Mayall and said I'd tried a couple of guitar players out... I'd wanted to get Bernie who had played with Long John Baldry but he'd decided to go and take up something else and John Mayall said 'I've tried half a million and this guy seemed all right to me, he's nothing special but there's his phone number', so I did and he came along and sat in, and played great right away and we've mostly had him ever since. He left the band in '78 to try and sort his personal life. He got that sorted out to the point where he wanted to come back and play in 1986. Roger Hill played in the meantime but got a bad back and couldn't stand touring anymore, so back came John.

That's great.

Talking about Sunnyland Slim and Jimmy Cotton just now... we just did another LP... with Doctor John, or half an LP with Doctor John. He was over last week playing at a festival and played with us, then he came down and we did a studio session with him and he was telling me he just produced an LP for Jimmy Cotton for Antone's with Hubert Sumlin, who he found wandering about in a club and a bass player who used to work with Jimmy Reed called Luther something... and I forget who the drummer was. Mack got them together and he went down there with Cotton and they said well find the musicians, so they went round all the Blues clubs in town, picked them out and it was a very good session, very nice album, so it's not part of Jimmy Cotton's normal thing... he's got his own band anyway... he's dropped that not very good soul band he had about ten years ago... thank goodness and he's got more of the blues band... apparently it's very good. Mack was very impressed by him. He hadn't really heard him much before. Mack's very critical of blues, well he knows a lot about it and he's contributed enough to the blues to have a say about it. He produced the best of those Sonny Boy Williamson on Ace and they're the most interestingly produced... the most dramatically produced so he knows something about blues. I'd like to hear that. I'd like to get Jimmy Cotton over here

again but the last message I got from his manager was that he wouldn't come without his band. I think his manager was more worried about getting his share of a big amount of money, but I don't blame him for that.

I couldn't live with having a band and not having blues in it. We toured with Big Bill in 54 and 56, 57 and then we decided to have it again and some of the people were not so sure, Monty was a bit negative and then finally we said 'why not' and we rang an agent and we brought someone over and then next time we brought Sonny (Terry) and Brownie (McGhee) and then we just went on from there. We got Muddy and it was good, apart from playing guitar through the piano solo, playing the wrong chords but it was a marvellous chance to work with them and then again to meet them in the States. We stayed in Muddy's house in Chicago and it was very good indeed. The blues scene was very different from what one imagined it was, the whole thing. I seriously think that if we hadn't bust a gut, spent our own money - because we never got a penny of the money for the artistes back, from anybody - if we hadn't concentrated on spending our money, there wouldn't have been a blues scene, there wouldn't have been anyone to listen to. The agents then figured that they would get, say, John Lee himself, put him in with a tuppenny halfpenny blues band, and get double what John Lee got, for themselves, which of course, in the end, killed the golden goose anyway. It devalues the product totally. A black blues player, a seriously good one, wouldn't get a damned thing - I mean it's a shame - I remember it was a very hurtful thing. My office was the National Jazz Federation and we used to put on the Folk Blues festivals, for Lippman and Rau, in Britain and in 64, we put on a thing at Fairfield Halls and we finished a tour in Germany the day before so I flew back and was asked to announce the concert as they were my mates, so I announced the concert and then got hate mail to the NJF saying how could you allow this know-nothing Trad person on the same stage as their beloved blues? I didn't mind, well I did mind but I didn't really mind, because I knew they were stupid people. I mean... does that mean that the taxi driver who fetched them to the concert had to be a blues man too? I mean, what have we got to do. I announced the concert. All I did was lay out bread, take a risk, to ensure that these people could come and play in England so that these fans could go and hear them at the Fairfield Halls.

*We had to end the interview here, as Chris was due on stage. He promised to continue later and we will bring the story up to date then.*



# BLUES LIKE SHOWERS OF RAIN... IN MANCHESTER

It has been argued in this column that the blues in the UK is alive and well, but generally ignored by the media. No-where has this been truer than in the North West, where the local listings magazine still treats the music as a subsidiary of Jazz. However, due to the continuing enthusiasm of a number of blues players and fans the music is still drawing in the punters as ever it was.

We have already briefly touched on the lengthy career of Victor Brox and will in due course return to Victor's contribution to the British Blues scene. However, when a few years back some of the leading lights of the Manchester blues aficionados collaborated and produced a worthy tape which brought to the fans' ears a good cross section of just what is available up north, it became apparent that Victor was not alone in his enduring love affair with the blues.

Step right up the underrated guitarist, songwriter and producer Norman Beaker. Along with his bass player Kevin Hill, Bare Wires' guitarist Paul Gilchrist and Lynne Bamford from the Bamford Band, Norman and Co formed the Manchester Rhythm and Blues Co-operative.

The ideas of a few years earlier have borne fruit with the production of the 'Up Jumped The Blues' album. With the financial assistance of North West Arts and the involvement of some 36 musicians, the North West has come up with a sound organisation to match the talent that undoubtedly exists in the region.

Contributions range from Norman Beaker's laid back slow blues 'That's Unnatural' to the second version I have

heard of 'Manchester Evening News' by Bare Wires. The fact that Beaker also wrote that tune and produced the album gives you some idea of the man's standing in these parts.

However, despite the notable absences of other fine outfits like Gags and Victor Brox himself, the project gives me the impression of a bunch of admirable devotees who have decided to do something about the music they love.

Five of the seven bands on the album have now made an appearance on the Paul Jones radio programme, whilst Beaker has gone on to play with the likes of B.B. King, Phil Guy, Rocking Sidney and Lowell Fulson. Bare Wires have also built up a fine reputation in their own right after sessions with Albert King and Robert Cray. The Marauders in turn have toured the country and established themselves outside of Manchester.

Possibly the most encouraging aspect of all this blues-related activity is the fact that the album has been produced with a financial helping hand of the North West Arts, who look set to put the blues on the map up here as much as Julian Piper and friends did in the South West.

With excellent local clubs like the Band on the Wall showing a consistent willingness to promote the local blues bands and smaller clubs like the Kite Club out in Blackpool showing a similar commitment to giving regional bands a break, the future of contemporary blues in the region looks healthy.

'Up Jumped The Blues' is available from the Manchester R&B Co-operative;

## CONTRIBUTORS PLEASE NOTE:

The deadline for material submitted for publication in February's B.B. Review is 12th December. Unsolicited material must be accompanied by a S.A.E. The editor's decision on copy is final. Copyright remains with the author. Send material to The Editor, 15 Chippenham Road, London, W9 2AH.

## ADVERTISERS PLEASE NOTE:

Advert's for the October Issue should be booked by 19th December.

Artwork should be in by 9th January.

B.B. Review is published on the 1st February/April/June/August/October/December. Please call Tom Nolan, 01-602 6351 to book.

1 Fairmead Road, Manchester M23 0DS.  
The album is also available through JSP, the catalogue no. is MRBC 1817, at £5.50.

Pete Feenstra

## RED LICK RECORDS

THE BEST BLUES MAIL ORDER COMPANY IN THE WORLD!  
SEND 26p STAMP FOR OUR 24 PAGE CATALOGUE FULL OF  
THOUSANDS OF BLUES RECORDS - WE ALSO STOCK  
BOOKS, MAGAZINES, VIDEOS, CDs, POSTERS,  
T-SHIRTS Etc.

WRITE TO -  
RED LICK RECORDS · P.O. BOX 3 · PORTHMADOG  
GWYNEDD · WALES · U.K.

YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID !





# MATCHBOX DAYS

PETE MOODY recalls his Bristol Country Blues, 1966-1970.

**T**he Bristol Country Blues Boom was something special for me. Deserting the embryonic John Dummer Blues Band in the Spring of 1966 and "emigrating" to Bristol, I found myself amongst a completely fresh scene. Here I found a bunch of bluesers who had gone further back into the history of the music and were performing with authority, the country blues of an earlier era.

This was another first for me. I hadn't hoped for much musical inspiration in moving to the West Country. I was lucky enough to be part of 1963 Rhythm & Blues explosion in London, and was involved in this music crossing to the Blues Boom of 1965, and now here in Bristol I was witnessing another chapter of the Blues in Britain.

Within a matter of weeks I recall spotting an ad in the Bristol Press for "The Broadside Folk and Blues Club", also known as 'Mirandas', this was a small club in Frederick Place, Clifton. The club didn't last long but, without doubt, it was a "toe-in-the-water" for things to come. I turned up on the night advertised, admittedly 'not too early', apprehensive of my findings, I walked in to the strains of 'Mississippi Heavy Water Blues', a 1930's Barbeque Bob number. There was this performer sporting horn rimmed spectacles, wapping his guitar like a southern picker and singing all about Mississippi and stuff only really heard of on a handful of imported albums or original 78's! After finishing a number later in the set, our bespectacled bluesman asked his audience "Is there a harmonica player in the house?", and without too much hesitation, this tall dark haired enthusiast joined in on a duo with some fine country harp playing. After a couple of numbers as a duo, our blues singer, yet again, appealed to the audience for any guitar players in the club, and yet another aficionado appeared with a 12-string. The trio played on into the night with a very proficient repertoire of country blues.

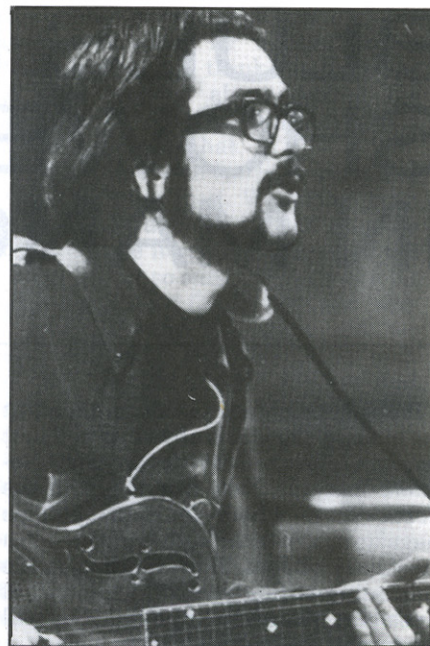
After the gig, I acquainted myself with the trio and then realised the act was all arranged. I had been listening to Anderson, Jones and Jackson. Ian A. Anderson (vcl and gtr), Al Jones (vcl and 12 string gtr) and Elliott Jackson (harmonica). This night, along with others alike, were the first steps to the development of the Bristol Country Blues Boom.

The trio performed as Anderson, Jones and Jackson. Ian and Elliot were both carving their way into the world of accountancy, and met "in the classroom". Ian, more engrossed in his latest copy of Blues Unlimited than the lecturer's subject, happened to glance across his desk to see, to his amazement, another copy of Blues Unlimited spread on the desk of another! Friendship was struck up on

this mutual interest and to each others' benefit. Al Jones met this duo under far more traditional circumstances. Al had not long been in Bristol; he had travelled west from Cambridge with his work in electronics. Living a 'Bedsitter' existence, Al began to take his guitar into town. One night, a jam session in The Somerset, in Park Row developed and as Ian Anderson put it "I wasn't having this amazing guitar player in any other band than my own!"

The main step was the brainchild of this Ian A. Anderson, who took the whole concept of promoting country blues. He professionally developed, promoted and presented the music in his club which was to be the most successful country blues venue in England. The Bristol Troubadour, a folk club in Waterloo Street, Clifton, had been featuring blues acts and had become a popular venue in the mid sixties for many fans of folk and roots music; the club offered a great atmosphere and was a spawning ground for talent.

Ray Wilmot, who ran the Troubadour, had never really pursued the blues for his club, but allowed Ian Anderson to run his own night for the music. Promoting local floor singers, the blues audiences soon grew in numbers to afford



Ian Anderson, 1968

guests from "Out of Town". Soon the bluesnight had no alternative but to move. Ian had promoted music to a point where the Troubadour Club was too small. Taking the whole show across town to an upstairs function room in the Old Duke, a Quayside pub that was a major west country trad jazz haunt, amazing scenes were experienced, with masses of trad jazzers downstairs, country bluesers upstairs, and one thing in common (apart from the bar!) - live



**OLD DUKE BLUES**

**GUESTS INCLUDE**  
DAVE & IO-ANNI  
KELLY  
Mike Cooper & co.

**RESIDENTS**  
Ian Anderson  
alun jones  
elliot jackson  
& numerous others

**1st Sunday — every month at — 8pm**  
**the OLDDUKE King Street BRISTOL.1.**

60's poster for the Old Duke Nights





Al Jones

music.

Running the club, the first Sunday in every month, as "Folk Blues - Bristol and West", Ian booked "Stars" to head each monthly bill. Dave Kelly, one of the first, already had a reputation in Bristol playing at the Troubadour. From London, he was a master in performing the Mississippi blues and his performance confirmed his position.

Along with Dave Kelly, regular guests to appear were Mike Cooper, Steve Rye and Simon Prager, (as Simon and Steve), Mike Chapman and Jo Ann Kelly, who I recall, was the very first guest to be booked.

Another clever move by Mr. Anderson was to get the music documented. He published a monthly club newsletter, which covered all aspects of club activity, a weekly column "The Flowerpot" appeared in the Bristol Press, but most important of all, he got the music on record. Bristol record company Saydisc, run by Gef Lucena, was encircled by Ian's enthusiasm and soon some limited edition E.P.'s were available. This developed, with Saydisc issuing a series of Blues Albums on the Matchbox label (Saydisc were later to produce "The Village Thing" label, a major series of Albums, again, under the guidance of Ian A. Anderson, documenting blues and folk music as it progressed into the

1970's).

An electric Houseband was formed. Along with Mike Blann on 2nd guitar I completed a trio, on electric bass, with Adrian "Putty" Peitryga, a fine Fender Stratocaster player. He was a member of Bristol's only authentic blues band, The Deep, that produced Ken Pustelnik for the Groundhogs and Pete Emery who, like "Putty", moved to London to join Dave Kelly in the ranks of John Dummer's Band.

The club's membership got beyond the capacity of the clubroom at the Old Duke. The Full Moon at Stokes Croft catered for larger numbers and the club very successfully continued, but sadly, never captured the atmosphere of the early days at the Old Duke.

All this happened in really a short space of time in terms of Britain's Blues History, some 22 years ago. If you take another 22 years back again from these halcyon Bristol days you arrive at 1945, when blues in Chicago was formulating the patterns to come. To today's newcomer to the Blues, these dates landmark a period of "some time ago". Talk to Ian Anderson, Al Jones or Dave Kelly today and they will remember those days as affectionately and eagerly as anyone who was lucky enough to have been around to experience these times.

Of the Anderson, Jones, Jackson trio,

Ian A. Anderson went on to carve himself a creditable slice in the blues scene both in the U.K. and Europe. His 1969 Liberty Album "Stereo Death Breakdown" now is a sought after collector's item. In the 1970's he developed many musical styles, most of them documented on Albums. Now, amongst many activities, devoted to music, he is responsible for publishing the monthly Folk Roots magazine. Al Jones, earning the title "West Country guitar wizard", released a long player on Parlophone (the Beatles label!). Titled "Alun Ashworth Jones" this was well overshadowed by his second album, simply titled "Jonesville". Al, now living in Cornwall, is the man behind Ashworth Transducers, acoustic guitar pickups used by all and sundry. Harmonica player Elliot Jackson was one of the few harp players who could blow in the country jook styles unaided by the electric microphone and performed mainly as a sidesman for Ian. Sadly he has disappeared from the music scene and was last heard of living in Richmond, Surrey.

These few short lines cover a little of what happened. The subject justifies a fully documented history and hopefully, one day, a definitive work, "Bristol - The Avon Delta", will appear. But in the meantime...

*Pete Moody*



# THE BLUE WELLIE BRIGADE?

## a look back at the BELGIUM RHYTHM AND BLUES FESTIVAL PEER 16 & 17 July 1988

by David Cooper

**I**f you've been before, Peer is enough to make you read on. If you haven't, why should you be interested? Peer is without peer! Quite simply it is THE European Blues Festival, and unfortunately that includes Britain. This year, it was fourteen bands over two days for thirteen quid. Beer is forty five pence and most of the food is around the pound mark.

But on with the show:

Openers were Belgium's highly competent SULTANS who gave LOUISIANA RED a nicely-warmed-up crowd: Red was, I suppose, this year's token Black with Acoustic guitar and I found him derivative, but very good at what he does – well, have you ever seen an acoustic played behind the head? Next up was our own JO ANN KELLY. Her bittersweet voice gets me every time. The attendance each day was about 7,500 people – not Knebworth, but not bad! The first day's crowd puller was STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN, who, en route to Finland, came on early. It was very good, slick, self-assured Rock; quite a coup for the organisers and doubtless worth every franc. Unless you like Hammersmith Odeon, you probably won't get to see him again, at least not in a small festival.

MELVIN TAYLOR was next up, but I missed most of his set, but what I saw and heard – a long, lean, hungry looking black guy doing bluesy, Hendrix-y, things to his guitar, was impressive. Penultimate band of the day was TOM PRINCIPATO. I've seen him twice now, and both times he failed to hold my attention, but the crowd seemed to like him.

It had been a long day, so I decided to miss JOE LOUIS WALKER – not because he isn't good, but because I've seen him twice now and the next day promised to be a long one too. I expected the usual set – which to a degree it was – with the inevitable comparisons with Robert Cray (although Joe doesn't project that clean-cut image which Cray does). Towards the end of his set, which I could hear clearly from a half-mile away (some PA) Joe launched into a string of standards and really boogied. I almost went back!

Bad point of the day? Rain and Mud! A real wellie job!

Oddly named bands – such as the second day's openers, MAGIC FRANKIE AND THE BLUES DISEASE from Holland – are a feature of the Euro Scene.

They were good, but with a name like that, I find them hard to take. They were followed by the Belgian duo TWO OF US who were efficient, with an interesting repertoire, including Singing The Blues – a long overlooked number.

OTIS GRAND AND THE DANCE KINGS continued their Blitzkrieg of Europe – their fifth or sixth festival date this year, with two more lined up afterwards. They used the big stage to full advantage and were as impressive as ever. They would have stolen the show had it not been for the next band – an unadvertised replacement for Doug Sahm. Unfortunately, this put together the only two brass sections of the festival.

THE BOOGIE BROTHERS. I can hear you say: Oh No! BUT, despite being



*"It's Dan Ackroyd who looks like me"*

blatantly unoriginal, despite lacking any virtuosity, despite being corny – pretty girl in short skirt – Blues Brothers copyists: despite all these things, they fulfilled the prime criteria for a band on a crowded bill – they were different, memorable and popular. They had the crowd singing and clapping along (significantly, when they tried two of their originals, early on in the set, they almost lost the crowd). And they looked like they were having fun. Every band took an encore, but this was the only time that the roadies were booed.

Next, and new to me, DOUG McLEOD. I took an instant dislike to his manner – American tourist with guitar, too many "Y'all" and "Thank you SO very much" and "Albert Collins recorded this song of mine" – Missouri hick, self-proclaimed Superstar, strutting around the stage BEFORE he played. He played OK, but nothing more than that,



*Boogie! Sister! (Photos: David Cooper)*

(and only if you closed your eyes). He did, though, have a superb jazz oriented pianist. Not my cup of tea. Now for the real star of show, one of the last surviving old masters, JOHN LEE HOOKER. What can I say? He was great and even if he'd been awful, he'd still have been great. Despite his age and health, he got up and boogied. His Coast To Coast Blues Band fully complemented his sparse guitar style as they ran through the range of his songs that we all know at a subliminal level. Yeah Boogie Chillun!

Then the last band and it really was feeling like it had been twenty four hours of music with comatose Belgians lying in the mud, drowning in a sea of Stella; nearly a quarter of a million plastic beer glasses underfoot – the crowd now a mere two or three thousand. How do you wind down an event like that? Not with your star, but with the perfect closing band.

And this particular lady did it to perfection. Her music made you want to grab a partner – to suit your sexual proclivity – and dance. Have you ever seen three thousand knackered Belgians dancing in wellies? And between the fast songs, enough slow sensual ones to make you want to go to bed, if not necessarily to sleep. The title track from her first album, 'Hot Tamale Baby', played live, was like Willy the Pimp on speed... The lady's name? MARCIA BALL – a perfect end.

In conclusion: Stevie Ray and John Lee were expectedly great, but the unexpected stars of the show were the Boogie Brothers and Marcia Ball and – a lot of people said – Melvin Taylor. The festival organisation impressed me as ever (my third visit in four years), but I really think that a man of Misjel Daniels' calibre could book better weather for '89. I'll certainly be going, and hell, I might even arrange a minibus to take some of you, too.

**David Cooper**



# BLUESNEWS

Chicago harpman Carey Bell is here for a brief visit in December, an appropriate end to the year as far as this magazine is concerned, because he was touring just about the time we brought out the first issue. The various American blues artistes who have toured here since then, have certainly helped the British Blues scene to flourish, so Carey can expect to reap some of the benefit from the work put in by those other visitors, which will surely enhance his own determined efforts here over the years. He deserves more success.

The visits of overseas bluesmen seems to be easing up as the year ends, but will certainly pick up again in the new year, with plenty of return visits to be expected. One such, is Phil Guy's proposed tour here in February, details of which, we hope to have in the next issue.

Now that so much positive touring has been done here, let's hope a number of first-time tours can be arranged, as well as the repeats. Of course, positive doesn't necessarily mean profitable, but perhaps that will change too. Certainly, there have been very profitable visits by the likes of Robert Cray; and Buddy Guy and Junior Wells had a sell out gig at the Town and Country.

Lucky Evans, made his first visit in October and November, and improved with each performance, with a great gig at the 100 Club, London, for this magazine. Expect him back. Other first-timers were Tabby Thomas and, earlier in the year, Kenny Neal, who won lots of friends.

Joe Louis Walker returned successfully, and Luther Allison, after a long gap, came back, this time for more than a flying visit. Joe also found time to produce and play on the album for Otis Grand. Otis certainly did a lot of gigging

*Robert Cray (Photo: Brian Smith)*



*Tabby Thomas (Photo: G. Vickery)*

around, in addition to getting the album out.

The credit for extended tours must surely pass from Flaco Jimenez to Big Joe Duskin, who must be wondering how he ever found time for anything else. It seems that life begins at sixty plus, so there is hope for all of us.

Or in the case of John Lee Hooker, seventy plus. It can't be such a bad life after all, can it? Certainly for bluesfans anywhere, being able to hear John Lee once again, must mean there's something right with the world. Robert Cray seems to be heading for Wembley Arena, I suppose, considering how much 'sudden' progress he's made.

At a more down-to-earth level, Lowell Fulson continues to do the business, with another professional tour. Otis Rush didn't please the diehards when he played at the Town & Country - too little of himself in it, by all accounts - which is crazy, when you consider that other people seem to be getting their acts together over here. Still, it's his life, I guess - he's still done enough on record

to compensate.

Jimmy Cotton never materialised (oops) at the Town & Country, but this time there is an explanation in that the tentative dates available didn't coincide. I've no doubt they will, and when it happens, I for one, will be there. He was the first American bluesman that I actually got bowled over by, when I saw him live at the Beaulieu Jazz festival, playing with the Chris Barber Band - this was during my 'Beat' days, so we won't go any further into that.

For Town & Country regulars, don't forget the New Year's Eve Party, with Dr. Feelgood and Eddie & The Hotrods.

Look out too, for the February visit to the same venue, of Johnny Winters, who was on the recent Muddy Waters belated charting, "I'm a Man". Johnny worked with Muddy after the motor accident which slowed the old man down a bit, but never stopped his blues power. Now if only Muddy was still around, we would have come almost full circle as far as the British Blues scene is concerned, but would he fill Wembley Arena? Am I getting morbid, or is my glass empty? Merry Christmas.

My God, I almost forgot! BBR will be having a Post-Christmas Blues Party at the 100 Club, Oxford Street, London, on 27th of December. Why not come down and show us what Santa gave you? (If it's a guitar, forget it, I've seen one before.) You can wish us a happy new year, as well. Same to you too!

**Andy's**  
Guitar Workshop

27 Denmark Street,  
LONDON WC2 H8NJ  
Tel: 01-836 0899

**MARTIN GUITAR STOCKISTS  
HAVE YOU ALWAYS  
WANTED THAT OLD  
ORIGINAL BLUES  
GUITAR?**

**WE CAN HELP YOU FIND IT.**

**ACOUSTICS : SEMIS : ARCHTOPS**

**MANDOLINS : BANJOS : BASSES**

**ELECTRICS : AMPLIFIERS**

Selection of new & secondhand guitars in stock. J.40M,  
00028, D.18, D.28

Genuinely lowest prices in the UK  
FULLY GUARANTEED

All guitars set up to your taste.

1960s GRETSCH TENNESSEAN - £850

1960s GRETSCH NEW YORKER - £550

1955 GRETSCH ELECTROMATIC - £750

OLD USA TENOR GUITAR, 'F' holes - £495

OLD USA TENOR GUITAR, round holes - £250

1971 MARTIN D28/12 12 string & case - £875

Strats - Teles - 335s - in stock plus 'Old Dogs' for  
bottleneck

★ 10% reduction to all BBR readers on production of  
this ad

(★ This excludes new Martins)

**WE OPERATE A SERVICE TO FIND ANY  
GUITAR YOU MAY BE LOOKING FOR. OUR  
FIRST CLASS TEAM OF REPAIRERS WILL  
BACK UP WITH RESTORATION AND  
MAXIMUM PLAYING POTENTIAL TO YOUR  
TASTE. PLUS ONE YEAR'S GUARANTEE ON  
WORK AND MATERIALS. WE ALSO BUY  
AND PART EXCHANGE GUITARS**

**CALL IN AND SEE US**







BRITISH BLUES

*BB*  
*review*

presents at the  
**100 CLUB**  
100 OXFORD ST, LONDON W1

**A "Post-Christmas  
-Blues" Party!**

**SHAKEY VICK BLUES BAND**

with special guest

**BIG JOE LOUIS**

plus

**Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit**

**John Blues Band**

plus

**T.Model Slim**

**Tuesday 27th December, 1988**  
**8pm-Midnight. £5 (Concessions £4)**





# MORE BLUES NEWS

## JO ANN KELLY

Jo Ann Kelly is undergoing radiation treatment after hospitalisation for a brain tumour operation. She is making a determined fight and is very well, as far as one can be in such circumstances. She obviously cannot work during this time and we urge our readers to support benefit gigs for her. One took place in November at the Half Moon, Putney, and the next one will be at the **100 Club, Oxford St. London**. This will be on **January 9th** and will feature **The DeLuxe Blues Band, Brett Marvin and the Thunderbolts**, and a top name on the scene, soon to be confirmed. Details should be available by the time this magazine is published. We wish Jo Ann a speedy recovery.

## OTIS GRAND AND THE DANCE KINGS

'Otis Grand', former resident of Oakland California, (where he spent time working the black clubs with fellow guitarist Joe Louis Walker) is now resident in Sunny Croydon, from where he plans his forays with the big band which he formed after teaming up with vocalist **Earl Green**. The band, with a five piece horn section, is rooted in danceable, goodtime, Big Band R&B and is certainly succeeding. After extensive tours of Britain and Europe, they took time out in the studio to record their first album, produced by **Joe Louis Walker**. They are back on the road again to promote the album "Always Hot" released on the Special Delivery label. Their December dates are as follows: 1st, Liverpool, Hardman House Hotel; 2nd, Llandudno, The Grand Hotel; 3rd, Hebden Bridge, Trades Club (t.b.c.); 9th, Roehampton, Froebel College; 10th, Uxbridge, Brunel University; 15th, Surrey, The University; 16th, London, Royal School of Mines, Imperial College. (t.b.c.); 17th, London, Thames Polytechnic; 18th, London, Weavers Arms, Islington; 24th, Reading, After Dark Club, (t.b.c.); 31st, London, Mean Fiddler.

## CAREY BELL

Carey Bell's tour dates for December, are: 5th, Cardiff, Four Bars; 6th, London, 100 Club (to be confirmed); 7th, Colchester, Arts Centre; 9th, Burnley, Mechanics' Art Centre; 10th, Aldershot, West End Centre; 11th, Sheffield, Leadmill Theatre. This last gig is a lunchtime one.

**The Blues Band** finished a recent tour and spent time in the studios working with the **Memphis Horns** and a new album, which will be out in the new year. They are at the Bal Tabarin, Bromley on the 10th December, London's Mean Fiddler on 13th and 14th and at the Town & Country Club, London on 26th January.

**The DeLuxe Blues Band** will be at the Half Moon, Putney on December 9th, and will be at the **Jo Ann Kelly benefit gig** at 100 Club on January 9th.

**Bob Hall** will be gigging with **Dave Peabody** at the Pizza Express, Swindon, on January 21st.

**The Jumpin' and Hot Club** in Newcastle host a **Blues Festival** on December 6th at the Bridge Hotel. Headliners are **The Hokum Hotshots** (see interview, this issue).

*Otis Grand & the Dance Kings (Photo: courtesy Special Delivery)*

Also on the bill are **Hot Licks Cookies, No Time For Jive** and **Gypsy Dave Smith**.

Incidentally – though not to him – **Gypsy Dave** is getting married (is nothing sacred?) in Newcastle on 27th December. I'm not sure whether congratulations or commiserations are in order, but we'll wish him and his bride all the best. Should stop some of his roving, at least. The **Jumpin' and Hot Club** also feature **The Smokehouse Boys** and **Bat Swing** on 20th December. **The Mighty Houserockers** are gigging at the following venues; Dec 2nd, Newcastle under Lyme, Bridge Street Arts Centre; 10th, Blackpool Wintergardens; 13th, Dudley, The Courthouse Club; 22nd, Droitwich, The Copcut; 23th, Worcester, Brewery Tap, and on January 21st, Weymouth, Verdi's.

**Big Joe Louis and his Blues King**: Dec 1st, London, 100 Club; 4th, High Wycombe, Nag's Head (lunchtime); 15th, London, Gaz's Rocking Blues, 69 Dean Street, W1; 16th, London, 100 Club, this last supporting Blues 'n Trouble. Joe also continues his highly

successful Saturday night residency at the Station Tavern, London, W10. **Shakey Vick** (well we had to mention him at least once in this issue) ventured out on one of his occasional forays into the countryside for a gig at the Nag's Head, High Wycombe in November. Shakey has two Sunday residencies. Lunchtimes are spent at The Station Tavern with his Sunday Joint. This band usually features Blues Burglars' **John Whitehill**, guitar, Strawbs' **Rod Demick**, bass and vocals, and Yardbirds founder members, **Top Topham**, guitar and **Jim McCarty** on drums. The evening residency is with his other blues band, featuring Rocket '88's **Jimmy Roche**, guitar and **Roger Sutton**, bass, in addition to **Al Vincent**, guitar and **Tony Balch** drums, at the Carnarvon, Camden.

Also resident at the Carnarvon (Saturday lunchtimes) is **Wolfie Witcher**. Wolfie and Shakey are recording tracks for a "Live at the Carnarvon" cassette, due out in mid December – entitled: Sunday Night and Saturday Morning.





# BB network

## EAST MIDLANDS

**The Beneficial Blues Band** based in Milton Keynes have the following December dates: 2nd, Stamford, Lincs, Scotgate; 6th, Stoney Stratford, The Vaults Bar; 8th, Tadmarton, nr. Banbury, Lampitt Arms; 10th Oakham, Rutland, Leics, The Rutland Angler.

## LANCASHIRE

Norman Darwen writes: The most visible entertainment in **Blackpool** may be of the Les Dawson/Linda Nolan/The Grumbleweeds variety, but the Blues also has a toe-hold. **The Kite Club** at **Blackpool Airport** hosts regular Blues gatherings, run by Mick Scholfield, a local record shop owner. In September, the club had an

appearance by guitarist **Steve Phillips**, which was a great success. Unfortunately the club has only an "occasional" licence. Also in September, **The Kite Club** had a fund-raising concert for a local hospice. Headliners were local favourites **The Norman Beaker Band** and the show took place at **The Baronial Hall**, a larger venue which is part of The Winter Gardens complex. A few miles further up the coast, **The Fleetwood Blues Club** can be found on Mondays at Fleetwood Catholic Club; The club has record sessions and live bands. Details of both clubs can be found in the 'What's On' section of the local paper, The Evening Gazette, on Saturdays.

## SCOTLAND

Norman adds: "Further to my news in Issue 2 of BBR regarding **The Best**

**Dressed Blues Band**, harpman Davy MacFarlane informs me that the band has recently undergone a major personnel re-shuffle. Only Davy and the bass guitarist remain of the original band, but new members have been drafted in on guitar and drums, together with an occasional keyboards player. The band are still gigging around Central Scotland with a repertoire solidly rooted in the classic sound of Chicago Blues.

## NORTH WEST

**Rochdale's Fabulous Marauders'** December dates: 3rd, Newcastle under Lyme, Bridge Street Arts Centre; 7th, Huddersfield, White Lion; 10th, Manchester, Band on the Wall; 15th, Oldham, Kirkstyle; 17th, Rochdale, The Bridge Inn; 24th, Bolton, 'Bottom' Bull's Head. Don't forget they have a cassette available as well as

being on Manchester's Co-op's "Up Jumped The Blues" anthology album. Andy Schemet of the Marauders (0706 345291) also informs me that BBR may soon be available, if not already, from **Decoy Records, Deansgate, Manchester.**

## SHROPSHIRE

**Shrewsbury's Roadhouse Blues Band** are at the **Drum & Monkey, Minsterley, nr. Shrewsbury.** BBR should soon be on sale in Shrewsbury too. Contact Trevor Povey, 0743 245498. Trevor also informs us that there is a regular Wednesday Blues gig at the **Swan, Ironbridge.**

## BIRMINGHAM

Rick Lambe (0527 29804) of **Redditch's Smokehouse Brown** band sends details of **Birmingham's Bredon Bar** dates which may interest readers: Dec. 1st, **Steve Gibbons Band**; 2nd, **Mr 'C'**; 3rd, A Gene Vincent memorial night with ex Matchbox guitarist **Graham Fenton**; 4th, **Wilko Johnson**; 24th, **Smokehouse Brown**; 27th, **Steve Phillips.**

## WALES

**Swansea's Blues Bunch** are busy in December with the following gigs in addition to their **Tuesday night residency** at the **Singleton Hotel Swansea**: 1st, Swansea, Patti Pavilion (Benefit for ANC); Swansea, Clyne Hall; 3rd, Tafarn Glanabar, nr. Portmadoc; 5th Swansea, Dolphin Hotel; 7th, Swansea, Marina Nightspot (Supporting **Dr. Feelgood**); 8th, Ammanford, Py Coch Country Club; 9th, Aberystwyth University; 12th, Swansea, Monday's Wine Bar; 15th, RAF Coltishall, Norfolk; 17th, Carmarthen, Three Salmons.

## SOUTH WEST

The blues nights continue on Thursdays at **Exeter's Barts Tavern.** **Yeovil College** has a night of six films by **Les Blanc**, for bluesfans on December 3rd. **The Bell, Ash**, will be selling more copies of BBR,



Joe Louis Walker (Photo: Ace Records)



in addition to continuing their music nights as follows: Dec. 4th, Elisha Blue; 9th, Stan Tracey; 11th, Balham Alligators; 18th, Alias Ron Kavana; and on Boxing Day, a surprise get together by local bands. The Bell continues into January with: 1st Chapati Brothers; 8th, Steve Horley and the Shakers; 15th, Amazing Hotshots; 22nd, Juice on the Loose; 26th, Dean Kennedy All Stars; 29th, a Jazz evening. **Dorset village Rampsham**, hosts The Balham Alligators on December 10th, at the Village Hall. We thought you'd like to know that! Cheers, Colin.



Newcastle's Hot Licks Cookies

**THE SOUTH**

**Southampton.** Bob Pearce reminds me that **BBC Radio Solent** continues with their hour long blues and R&B programme, "Blues In The South" on the first Saturday of each month, and may well present the programme weekly, if present trends continue. The programme features imported US 45's as well as the obvious current album releases. Also included are local sessions and listings. Bob also continues his residency at the **Onslow** on Friday Nights. On Saturday nights, there are visiting Blues bands, and the Onslow may soon start a regular Sunday night gig, too. A Sunday night residency is already in progress at the **Joiner's Arms**, with **Blue Sunday** and guests. Every Saturday, **Mr. Smith's** wine bar has blues, and every Tuesday, **Goblets Wine Bar** also promotes blues. To revert to the Onslow, this must have one of the best Blues orientated Juke boxes around. Last month there were at least fifteen imported Blues 45's on the box. **Salisbury.** The **Bishops Mill** features Blues ever Monday. There are also monthly sessions at **Wickham's Boar's Head** and the last Thursday of each month has blues at **Wilton's Saddle Rooms**. **Poole.** Blues every Friday at the **Lord Nelson**.

**BRITISH BLUES**  
*BB*  
*Review*

**JOIN NOW!**

1 YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION: £10 (inc. p&p)  
 (OVERSEAS: International Money Order £14 sterling)

The British Blues Network aims to put blues people in touch with one another – all over Britain! To do this, we need you to join us in disseminating and receiving information, through the pages of the official journal – British Blues Review. Whether you're an enthusiast, promoter, performer, writer, commentator or whatever we want to hear from you. Just fill in the application form and enclose a cheque/postal order for £10 (or I.M.O. £14 sterling for overseas) made payable to: British Blues Review and post it to: British Blues Review, 41 Bramley Road, London W10 6SZ. (British Blues Review is published bi-monthly).

*Note: 1 years subscription covers 7 issues*

**Subscription Order Form**

Please send me, for one year, British Blues Review. I enclose cheque/postal order for £10 inc p&p (or I.M.O. £14 sterling) payable to: British Blues Review

Name .....

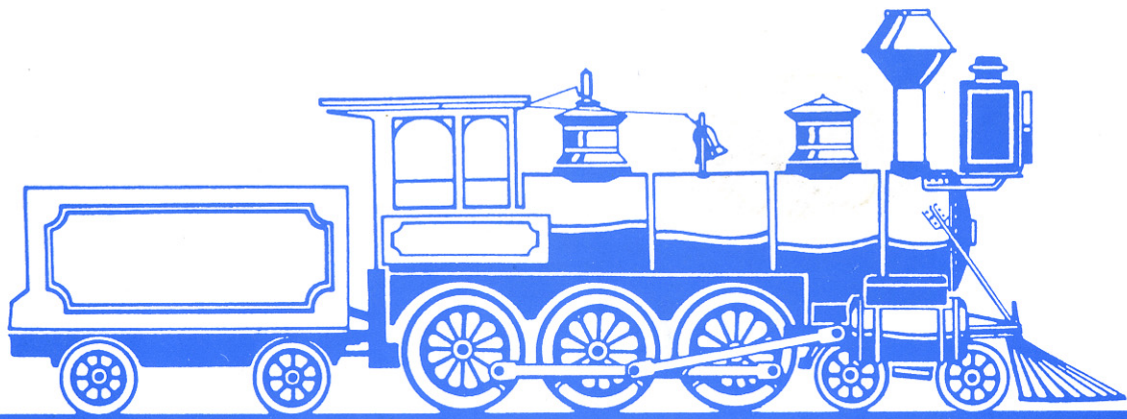
Address .....

.....

..... Post code .....

Signed ..... Date .....





# STATION TAVERN

## DECEMBER

- 1 Mighty Houserockers
- 2 Poorboys
- 3 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 4 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 4 Blues Burglars (evening)
- 5 Radio 5
- 6 Zumzeaux
- 7 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 8 Innocent Bystanders
- 9 T Model Slim
- 10 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 11 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 11 Blues Burglars (Evening)
- 12 A M Blues Band
- 13 The Lizards
- 14 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 15 Blow The Fuse
- 16 Blue Stew
- 17 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 18 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 18 Tom Nolan's Bluescasters (Evening)
- 19 Mean Red Spiders

- 20 Zumzeaux
- 21 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 22 Serious Hangovers
- 23 Big Road Blues Band
- 24 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 26 "Blue Monday" BBR Blues Jam
- 27 The Lizards
- 28 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 29 to be confirmed
- 30 Mick Clarke Band
- 31 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings

## JANUARY

- 1 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 1 Diplomats (Evening)
- 2 "Blue Monday" BBR Blues Jam
- 3 Zumzeaux
- 4 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 5 Roma Pierre & her Backdoormen
- 6 Giles Hedley & Really The Blues
- 7 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 8 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 8 Big Road Blues Band (Evening)
- 9 "Blue Monday" BBR Blues Jam
- 10 The Lizards

- 11 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 12 T Model Slim
- 13 Wolfie's Occasionals
- 14 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 15 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 15 Impossibles (Evening)
- 16 Turkey Leg Johnson
- 17 Zumzeaux
- 18 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 19 Bue Rhythm Methodists
- 20 Shout Sister Shout
- 21 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 22 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 22 Roma Pierre & her Backdoormen (Evening)
- 23 "Blue Monday" BBR Blues Jam
- 24 The Lizards
- 25 Top Topham/Jim McCarty/Detroit John
- 26 to be confirmed
- 27 Wolfie's Occasionals
- 28 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 29 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Midday)
- 29 Giles Hedley & Really The Blues
- 30 T Model Slim
- 31 Zumzeaux

41 Bramley Road, North Kensington (opposite Latimer Road tube)  
**LONDONS ONLY RYTHM'N BLUES VENUE**

# CHARRINGTON



**PURVEYORS OF FINE ALES, LAGERS, WINES & SPIRITS SINCE 1757.**  
 IPA, BASS, WORTHINGTON, TOBY, TENNENTS PILSNER, STONES, M&B MILD, CARLING, TENNENTS EXTRA.