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BB review

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Inside this issue:

Tom McGuinness ● Dave Peabody ●
Shakey Vick ● Burnley Festival

TALKIN' BLUES

With B B King in the charts – however briefly, however achieved – and a host of blues and R&B acts due in July, and with various European festivals coming up, we might be forgiven for believing that we're in some kind of time warp. Is blues really becoming so successful? Well, let's wait and see, and enjoy our good fortune while it lasts.

The temptation to compare the eighties with the sixties, remains. Should we be looking around for the next guitar hero yet, or is that unlikely to happen this time around?

It can be argued, and has been, that the success of mega stars emerging into the rock scene from the earlier blues boom, put the kiss of death onto the blues scene here. All the potential support crossed over into the serious money side of the business, yet the money was never the sole reason for playing blues, over here at least. For the blues to persist, it needs an active, club-going audience, which it certainly had for a period in the sixties and seventies. It seems likely that there is a new audience looking for some real music and the blues is capable of attracting that audience in the present climate, with or without guitar heroes.

There are other aspects to the comparison with the sixties and seventies and one of these is the competence of the musicians then and now. The level of playing is probably higher now than it was then (or the bands are getting younger). In addition, the knowledge of blues is easier to acquire through the greater availability of records now, thanks to the re-issue of American recordings under licence here. Television too, is playing a part with old blues films included in the programme schedules, and with the occasional current performance being recorded for transmission. Perhaps satellite television will augment any increase in the popularity of the blues – certainly there will be plenty of opportunity, given the amount of broadcasting that seems likely.

It looks like it could be quite a summer.

Dupree Illness



Champion Jack Dupree, pictured here at Burnley Blues Festival, was taken ill when he went to New Orleans to perform at the Heritage Festival. He went into hospital and was unable to do the gigs. We wish him a speedy recovery.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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BB
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Letters

Dear BBR

I have received the first six issues of your publication and have enjoyed them immensely, while I haven't received issue seven yet, I am sending off another year's subscription to ensure regular supply. Your magazine is valuable as a chronicle of the colourful past of blues in Britain and as reporter of the current scene, which seems similar to the Australian scene except more advanced than us.

I personally would love to see a detailed overview of John Mayall and Peter Green with interviews and discography if possible. Whatever you have printed in BBR so far I have found interesting, keep up the good work.

Yours

Malcolm (surname: unreadable)

Victoria, Australia 3424

Dear BBR,

I came across your excellent magazine (Dec. issue) in Decoy Records last week and was very interested in the Manchester article. You may be interested to know that there is now a weekly R&B show on Key103 called "Roots, Rocks and Branches" which runs from 9-11pm on Thursdays. (Yes I know - I'd like it changed too!) The programme started out on Piccadilly last October on Saturday evenings and didn't meet with much response. However since moving to our present spot we have had an amazing amount of feedback.

I'm delighted to say the programme is going from strength to strength and is generating a great deal of interest alongside the blues and R&B explosion that seems to be happening in and around Manchester. The area's main R&B shop, Decoy, have been inundated with enquiries about what we've been playing - so that I now give them a copy of our transmission PRS log after every show so that they can answer all the customer queries.

We have an ever increasing list of "What's Ons", and one venue has written to say their audiences have increased since being mentioned on the show. We have had albums and tapes from local bands and the number of phone calls and letters is very gratifying.

Our listenership seems evenly spread from teenagers to 40 year old teenagers. We are keen to get the balance between old issues, new product and local stuff just right.

Keep up the good work,
Best wishes

Pete Johnson

Producer and Presenter
"Roots, Rocks and Branches".

Dear 'British Blues Review',

I hope everything's going well with the magazine, here's some news from Scotland:

Central Scotland continues to be a hotbed of Blues activity, with The Powerhouse Boogie Band being particularly active on the scene. They are a six piece band (including a female singer), who play Blues standards and a lot of their own Blues originals. The band are on tour in May, playing many major Scottish towns; almost permanent members of the band are a tenor sax player and a trombonist (known as The Grievous Bodily Horns) and the augmented eight piece band will be touring in July. The band have recorded some demo tapes, and Scottish readers should try and check them out.

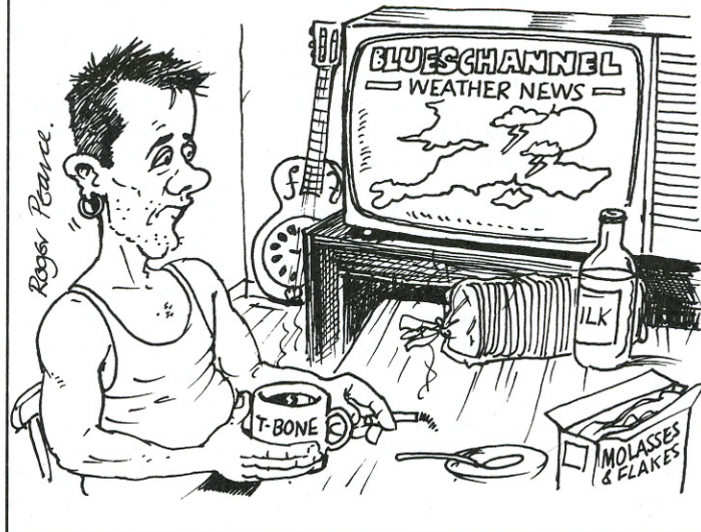
All the best,

Norman Darwin
Sidcup, Kent



Junior Wells, who will be at the WOMAD festival, see page 16. e

- AND - IN THE SOUTH EAST THE SKIES WILL BE CRYING AND TEARS WILL BE ROLLIN' DOWN THE STREETS !



Tom McGuinness

Part Two: Into The Eighties

by Pete Moody

Recording and Touring with the Manfreds, working with Arthur Crudup with McGuinness Flint, Tom McGuinness continues his story with British Blues Review's Pete Moody, concluding with the latest Blues Band activities since their reforming in 1985.



Tom with Paul Jones "The Blues Band". (Tom McGuinness Collection)

I don't remember my first experience in the recording studios with Manfred Mann. I'd done some demo's at R. G. Jones Studios with one of the early groups I was in. Apart from the singles we recorded we also did EP's. Mostly, these were from numbers from our live set. The first Album didn't take long to record, 3 or 4 numbers in 3 hours, and we would leave it to be mixed. EMI ran a tight ship, we'd discuss what we were going to record with our A and R man, John Burgess. He'd then say, "Right, we'll do that, that and that next Tuesday at 9.30." It was a 3 hour session. EMI ran sessions 10 - 1 o'clock, 2-5 o'clock and 6-9 o'clock. Like the BBC - fill in forms - if you went over the time you were in trouble! I recently looked back at a date sheet, a 1964 diary - I can't believe we worked like that - Monday, we would be at the BBC for 10 o'clock to do the Joe Loss Band Show, then go straight to EMI to record from 2-5 o'clock and then we'd go over to the Marquee for the gig. Get up on Tuesday morning to do a Television Programme in Birmingham and then drive down to Southampton to do a gig that night. On Wednesday, back in EMI recording Studios, then an interview, photo sessions, then we'd drive to Portsmouth! I look at the diary to see we were "fitting in" the recording sessions in between the work, and turning out hit singles.

Although we were having songs like "Hubble Bubble" in the charts, which were "lightweight" R&B numbers, we were still playing live 'Hootchie Coochie Man' and 'Mojo'. We were a schizophrenic band really in what we were putting out as singles and what we were doing live, and the schizophrenia became worse as we went along. Someone would want to do a little more jazz and I'd want to do more R&B. Paul would be in the middle. We all wanted to have hits. The buzz of having a hit record was so great. Like 5.4.3.2.1. came out and went straight into the Charts. "Hubble Bubble" wasn't quite as big a hit, "Do Wah Diddy Diddy" came out and goes to Number one all over the world. "Do Wah Diddy Diddy" had been in the live set before we ever recorded it. We thought it was a good number to make something out of it. It began to change after that, "Sha La La" had not been in the set. We thought it would make a follow-up. We learnt it from a Shirelles record; changed the 'feel'. They had a Stateside hit. We had this rule. We always waited for the American record to have a chance to be a hit, 6-9 months, whatever it was, then we would record our version. "Oh No, Not My Baby" we got from a Maxine Brown record. All these records were taking us further and further away from what we were playing live. We got trapped into the live thing as well.

People would want to hear the hits. We didn't 'hate' the hits, but it gets boring playing a number which has a formula that you have to follow, whereas, the numbers which were part of our live set could stretch out and could alter as we played.

We started to do Theatres - play on package tours, which were weird experiences. The first one we did was with Joe Brown, Johnny Kidd and the Pirates and the Crystals. We were actually booked as the Crystals backing group. '5.4.3.2.1.' became a hit after we got the booking, so we had our own spot - then the 5 of us would create the Phil Spector wall-of-sound for the Crystals. Paul would stay on stage playing tamborine and maracas. It was weird because people would scream for Paul in the Crystals set. With this Phil Spector thing you really needed the tamborine and maracas, so Paul stayed on.

As the Manfred Mann Band became more successful we became a lot less R&B. We did Dylan songs like 'If you got to go now!' We did 'With God On Our Side' on 'The One-In-The-Middle EP' all those EP's are about to be re-packaged by See For Miles on 'The EP Album'. We also did "Mighty Quinn." Paul left and Mike D'Abo came in and really any remnants of the R&B background had gone. It was an out and out Pop Group.

I had played bass for the first 18 months with Manfred. Mike Vickers left so I switched back to guitar. Jack Bruce came in for about 6-9 months. What I found when I was playing bass, I didn't want a guitar around - not because I didn't enjoy playing the guitar, but I felt I had to concentrate on getting the bass right. Bass was my main instrument from December 1963 to Autumn 1965 and when I got back to playing guitar I'd really "lost it." Took me years to get back to where I'd been in 1963 and if I have any regret it was giving up playing guitar for nearly two years. It took me years to feel comfortable as a guitarist again. I absolutely love the guitar. I read guitar books and magazines. I still walk down Denmark Street just to look at the guitars in the shop windows and if I don't have a guitar near me I'm lost. If I'm not doing a gig, I want to be playing the guitar at home. I don't feel the same about the bass at all. I played quite a bit of bass with McGuinness Flint, we swopped around a lot in that band. When Jack joined Manfred I stayed with the guitar ever since. By that time Eric Clapton had joined the Bluesbreakers and done the 'Bluesbreakers Album'. I was absolutely knocked out with it. "I'm a million years away from that - I've stopped playing for two years!" I'm not saying I would have been near it, if I'd played it for the two years, but it made a big difference to my playing.

With McGuinness Flint we were playing mostly numbers written by Benny Gallagher and Graham Lyle - the music had a little blues connection - "When I'm Dead and Gone," written by Benny Gallaher and Graham Lyle, was inspired by Robert Johnson. Graham was around

one day and I had a mandolin hanging on the wall – he got it down and I was playing the Robert Johnson CBS album and got talking about Johnson's life. The next day, Graham came back and said "I've got this song". The second verse actually says 'Hey there Ladies – Johnson's free. Who's got the love, who's got enough to keep a man like me'. We didn't make a big thing of it and say 'this is a song about Robert Johnson'. 98% of the people who we'd've said it to would never have heard of Robert Johnson!

We did an album with Arthur Crudup on Liberty. It was done in a day. He was staying at my house. A really nice man. Dignified – a gentleman. Very much a father figure – he reminded me of my own father. When he arrived at my house, he unpacked his case – picked up his suit. The back had been eaten out by rats. Wherever it was hanging up in whatever he lived in – he hadn't seen it – just put it in his suitcase. Arthur was living in abject poverty.

The album we recorded was arranged by Chris Trimming and Ron Watts who were running the National Blues Federation. Chris used to live in my house, that's how Arthur came to stay there. I don't think Arthur had any concept of what he'd missed out. I don't think he even knew Elvis Presley's real name actually, which seems weird when you think how big Elvis was. I'm sure he referred to him as Elmont Pressell! I don't think he was bitter – he'd made all these records probably for 50 dollars and a bottle of whiskey. I don't think he had any concept of the amount of money that had been made with his songs. I don't think that Arthur had any real money and he died in poverty which is a disgrace.

Everyone I know likes other music! B. B. King likes Nat King Cole, I do. Dave Kelly likes Country music. I don't mean Country blues, I mean Country music. He'd got together a band that was running in parallel with the Blues Band for a while, which I was in. When we played what we thought was our last Blues Band gig in 1982, the Dave Kelly band opened the show. I really didn't want to play the music he was playing. It was very amicable. It was a disappointment to me because we'd all been together in the Blues Band and we were to carry on as the Dave Kelly band and augment it with another couple of our friends on saxophone and keyboards. I quite like Country, but it wasn't what I wanted to play. I helped to produce an album for Dave and I enjoyed that.

Then all I used to do was play on Sundays locally with Mel Wright. Mel's a drummer and used to be in Dynaflo. He lives locally and he rang up as he had heard me on Capital Radio the last night the Blues Band were playing – a skiffle acoustic set. On the show, Sarah Ward asked me what I was going to do now it was all over. I don't have great plans, I never know what's going to happen and I said I would quite like to play for a bit of fun occasionally. Mel rang and said "We're playing on Sunday night would

you like to come along?" Then I started to write with Graham Lyle. I was presenting an Arts Programme on Capital Radio which became nearly a full time job, because I was producing it, going to see the films, reading the books and interviewing everyone. I'm making a film at the moment with Barnaby Thompson – a South Bank Show about Jimmie Hendrix. It's for showing next Autumn. I made a film with him about a year and a half ago for Irish television about a Busking Festival. I've always had interests that ran parallel with music, but in the end, if I'm not playing the guitar, I'm not very happy.

The Blues Band started up again in a funny way. We really did think we'd stopped in 1982, because it had become slightly routine. Most people who have success face a danger of being trapped in just to repeating what they've done that's made them successful. I'm not saying we weren't strong-willed – we thought we were trapped in a treadmill – we must get out! What happened was that Paul was asked to do 'Guys & Dolls' at the National Theatre and he really wanted to do it – it was a big chance for him. We planned a meeting. We'd already been fitting gigs around Paul's acting and Paul felt he had to knock it on the head and we all agreed. That was 1982 then, it was mid 1985 – we hadn't played together since, and Dave Kelly rang me up. Michael, the landlord at Putney's 'Half Moon', his wife had died of cancer and had discovered there was, 'thanks to this wonderful government' lots of equipment lying around for treating people with cancer and not enough money to pay Specialist Staff to use it, so Michael wanted to set up a week of Charity gigs at the pub, charging a lot to go in so he could raise enough money for 2 technicians wages for a year to use this equipment. So he rang up Dave – Dave rang me up and said, "would the Blues Band get together and do a benefit gig." He said everybody is 'up for it' so I asked who's going to play drums? Dave said he'd like Rob Townsend to do it and I said I'd really like Hughie Flint to do it! Dave had been working with Rob, who had replaced Hughie in the Blues Band in 1982. So we said we'll have 2 drummers then! So we did the gig, no rehearsals, straight on stage after 2½ years, with two drummers! It was fantastic, and then that was it. Up in the dressing room no one could say 'what's next' even if they had felt it. That was a Friday or Saturday night – the Monday Dave rings me up. He says 'how would you like to do another Blues Band gig?' I said I'd love to – where? He said "Top of the Bill-Glastonbury Festival"! Dave and I have the same conversation about drummers. We agreed to ask them both. We're on stage, that was the next thing we did with no rehearsals. The gigs started coming in – not a lot – we couldn't do a lot – everyone was involved with other things they were doing. 10 then 16 to 18 gigs a year, mostly festivals. Belgium, Holland – annual blues festivals. We did about 50 gigs in 1988, we also decided

we would like to do a new album. We have been doing this new album with all sorts of people. It's almost a full circle. One of the people who is on the Atlantic T. Bone Walker LP, which was a formative album for me, is Plas Johnson. Well, Plas is on our album, he's just a dream to work with. He is a real gentleman. Basically a Jazz musician, he performs over here with a trio in places like the Pizta Express. We do a number with him where he plays a solo which is a minute and a half long – it was in one take – the first take, and it was absolutely stupendous. We have Katy Webster on one track, we've got the Memphis Horns on it too. There are twelve songs finished for the album. We have written 9 of them. Dave Kelly's Bass player, Tex Comer – he's written one. We've done Howlin Wolf's 'Down In The Bottom' and one is a Gill Scott Heron song. I'm not sure if all will end up on the album. It will reflect, lets say, the way the blues has altered from 1982-1989. It's cooler! It owes a little to what Robert Cray is doing.

We haven't had an album out since the 'last gig' one in 1983. There are a lot of people who come to see us who didn't buy those records because they were too young. We are also getting people that came from the early 80's when we were gigging, and we are getting people coming who go right back to the British R&B days. We intend the Blues Band to work forever – until we die! literally. There may be a year, there may be four years when it doesn't work. Dave records separately. I'm wanting to do a solo album sometime. There is talk of doing a McGuinness Flint single. Benny, Graham, Hughie and myself did a benefit gig for Jo An Kelly with the Blues Band. We had such fun playing. Graham said it would be nice to write something for McGuinness Flint. Paul Jones, Mike Hugg and myself are planning to do a dance record. A real funky blacksound-ing dance record. Paul is always being offered work in the Theatre. He could easily go off and do a film or a play. I think the Blues Band will always try and get one, maybe two gigs in every year, but there might be periods when that's all we do, but as far as we are all concerned, we are going to keep the band going forever.

A flagship for the British Blues scene, the Blues Band have introduced a great many new fans to the blues scene. Through their own repertoire, they have given many the thrill of discovering Blues Artists new and old, from the current wealth of albums available. They are also producing new audiences for all the blues bands working in the Clubs up and down the country.

This year will see the new L.P. in the shops, hopefully along with their L.P. Back Catalogue – all long overdue to be available again. Keep watching our record review pages in future issues.

Pete Moody

In the summer of 1966, Ron Skinner, bass player/singer/friend, and I, placed an advert in *The Melody Maker* seeking musicians to form a 'Chicago style' blues group. We lived in the Kensal Rise and Bayswater areas of London and so were pleased when we received a reply from another 'local' Graham Vickery. Graham originated from Herefordshire and had a strong accent which I found difficult to understand on the phone. However he claimed to play blues harp and sing and so we arranged a session in a church hall in Brondesbury. The meeting went well and Graham's friend Chris Youlden (later of Savoy Brown) also sat-in on vocals.

From the start Graham was keen to lead the band and with more experience and contacts than Ron and I, we had no reservations. We also agreed on the band's name "*Shakey Vick's Big City Blues Band*". I was rather bemused by the title but at that time did not appreciate the Shakey Horton connection. My own playing experience had then been more associated with Jazz/R&B/Soul. Ron assured me of Graham's potential and we started rehearsing in earnest...well once a week!

Graham was older than us and we were impressed that he had played at a party with Brian Jones and perhaps more importantly he had a car for transporting the band's equipment.

Local church halls and The Safari Club in Westbourne Grove became our regular rehearsal venues. Graham drove us and the equipment in his four door 1940's Austin Eighteen with its old luxurious leather interior. Unfortunately though, the brakes were unreliable and one evening, driving along Portobello Road, on our way to a rehearsal they failed completely. In order to stop the car we careered into a lamppost. No one was physically hurt and Graham, knowing that the car was a write off, got out and just shrugged his shoulders. The following week he turned up in a Thames van.

To complete the band we needed a guitarist and a further advert in *The Melody Maker* produced a number of replies including the later founder member of Free, Paul Kossof. However a young player and Yardbirds fan from Chiswick, Rod Price was one of the first to attend and played some nice guitar. He also had access to his Mum's car. After a tete-a-tete with Graham, outside the rehearsal room, Rod was invited to join.

We developed into a comparatively purist blues band, taking our material direct from 'the originals' eg Muddy Waters, Junior Wells, Shakey Horton and Elmore James etc. Our interpretations were as close to their style as we could get it and, with a set list together, Graham began looking for gigs.

The 'blues scene' in London during 1966/67 was overwhelmingly John Mayall, Cream, Jimi Hendrix, etc. Alongside the established clubs, there were a number of smaller venues springing up in the Capital. The Nags Head in

The things we used to do

Mel Wright recalls his 1960's apprenticeship as a blues drummer with Shakey Vick's Big City Blues Band.

York Road, Battersea was one such club; a small local south London pub with a winding staircase leading to an upstairs function room. On 1st February 1967 we played our first gig there supporting Cross Ties featuring 'Lonesome' Dave Peverett. A regular Wednesday night residency followed which helped us to get our set together. We each received 5/- (25p) for these gigs. This 'start up' period continued through the summer until we began getting gigs further afield. Even so, The Majestic Ballrooms, Woodford and "The Atmosphere" in Leytonstone, were not exactly highspots for us. At The Majestic palais de-danse, I recall that very few people danced. It was a 21st Birthday party and we were booked through an agency. The party clearly expected a "pop group" and their disappointment showed. When we played Muddy Waters' "Long Distance Call" it was accompanied by a background hiss of irate party goers. After the third song a disgruntled man approached the stage and angrily demanded we play something "more modern". Graham, as always was quietly assertive and uncompromising about what we played. "We're a blues band and that's what we're playing". We struggled on till 11PM and, I think, got paid, though we were not offered any vol-au-vents during the evening! Support gigs at Klooks Kleek, The Flamingo, and Ram Jam Club were better events. We also managed to secure a weekly gig at Les Enfants Terribles in Dean Street, Soho, a French student basement club where we proved very popular. This also helped us get a monthly residency at The Marquee supporting various acts, e.g. Jethro Tull, Ten Years After etc. This move to more established gigs was interesting because it highlighted how determined Graham was in his loyalty to the original style of the blues. With a few exceptions most British blues bands during this period seemed to be striving for a more progressive sound, we maintained a 'purist' approach which must have, at the time seemed quite eccentric. In fact it did prove difficult in attaining agency support as we failed to present a more popular Claptonesque approach and image.

In September 1967 we discovered a folk club venue which gave us a 'home' for our style of playing. "The Hole In The Ground" was a damp basement club beneath a Jewish cafe in Swiss Cottage, North West London. The owner, a large

older man who we just called Schneider was not too impressed by our music but was interested in the possible increase in custom over the weekend. We began a Saturday and Sunday evening residency.

The 'Hole' was an odd place to play. We had to hump the drums and amps through the cafe to a door by the kitchen that led to the steep stairs down to the club. Customers to the "Blues Thing" as we named it (very sixtyish!) had the same access. There was no separate fire escape and this potential danger was made apparent to me one evening during a band break, as I passed the kitchen to see a blazing stove. Schneider looked worried, but managed to get it under control.

The "Hole in the Ground" lived up to its name. A small room that reeked of dampness, but it had a great atmosphere. There was no licensed bar, so everyone bought drinks in from The Winchester pub next door. The Winchester became as much a part of the 'Blues Thing' as the music. Watney's Red Barrel beer (it seemed good at the time), cornish pasties and an early social gathering were always a prelude to a good evening. Audiences began to build as the club became more established. We quickly improved as a band with Ron also singing and a set based on Robert Johnson, Little Walter, Howling Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson material, amongst others.

Ron Watts, a promoter from High Wycombe came down to hear us. I remember him wearing a large white hat and being very enthusiastic about the band. He told Graham that he was opening The Blues Loft club in High Wycombe and wanted us to play the opening night in January (1968). The subsequent trip to High Wycombe along the A40 from London in the Thames van proved a rather precarious business. There was heavy snow, the van heater was not working and we were late! The eventual gig though, was tremendous, a really enthusiastic crowd who welcomed us as though they had never heard blues before. We immediately made many friends at the club and Ron quickly booked us to accompany Champion Jack Dupree. With our regular "Hole in the Ground" residency and The Blues Loft gigs we really felt that we were moving. The gig with Champion Jack went very well. He complimented us as "the best blues band in Europe". We were pleased



Despite the pose, not a 'pop' group l:r Shakey Vick, Rod Price, Mel Wright, & Ron Skinner.

with this endorsement even though he was pissed when he said it!

During this period, we settled into a regular pattern of gigs in London and the Thames valley; the band's earnings were on average £15 per night. In retrospect, the more long distance gigs were often interesting social events. Our constant adolescent struggle to get the front seat of the van; the fear of developing piles by sitting on the middle seat engine cover; the occasional mechanical breakdown (Rod and I had to hitch back to London from Maidenhead after a gig one night).

Like most bands we had our ups and downs. Apart from the usual disputes over whose round it was; disagreements on stage about the order of the songs; disbelief by us when Graham announced that he had placed and lost all our gig money on an outsider at Kempton Park; my humiliation on a gig when my drum stool collapsed through the stage and I disappeared behind my drum kit; our petty jealousy over Ron's stylish clothes; Graham's stand-up argument on stage with a club promoter which was graphically recorded on a live gig tape; the band's supportive attempts at keeping Rod's girlfriends apart when, unknowingly, they would turn up at the same gig; the feeble excuses we gave to each other in order not to have to be the one to help Ron carry his large bass speaker up endless flights of stairs to his council flat. These are a few of the hazy memories of the time which made playing such a social experience.

The sixties blues boom captured the imagination of many musicians. Blues became 'in' and competition between bands for gigs increased. A plethora of new blues bands appeared in Melody Maker's Club Calendar. In order to cash-in, blues was introduced at the most unlikely venues. For example the cavernous California Ballroom at Dunstable. (I recall supporting Wayne Fontana and The Mindbenders) and pop orientated Mecca ballrooms with big, heavy,

dark-suited bouncers. Overall there was quite a bizarre liaison between blues and main stream 'pop' venues.

As for Shakey Vick, it did not seem to bother Graham. The commercial market has always seemed less important to him than playing at good live venues. In the course of time he has been proved right. With the ever changing moods of the music scene, live blues has rolled on to a new cycle and another generation of enthusiasts.

In early 1968 Shakey Vick did finally attract management and record company interest. A demo tape was recorded of Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup's "**Death Valley Blues**" at a poky studio above a garage in Rickmansworth. In conjunction with the tape, publicity photos were taken in Kensal Green Cemetery, against a backcloth of the gasworks. Later a poorly attended, but oddly effective "audition" at The Iron Bridge Tavern in East London, eventually led to an album deal with Pye Records.

We all seemed set to 'go'. In a quest for stardom I had given up my day job as an Assistant Manager in a newsagents in order to become a full time blues drummer. Graham seemed impressed with this move and said, one evening in the van that he intended to pay me £5 per week wages. Unfortunately the band's meagre earnings never allowed this. Despite the optimism about the band's future, "musical differences" and conflicting ideas about direction, resulted in Ron, Rod and myself deciding to leave. It was an "amicable split" as they used to say in the music press and we did our final gig with Graham on 7th April 1968.

After leaving Shakey Vick we formed a new band 'Dynaflow Blues' which was a successful (although short-lived) live band. Later Rod went on to join Foghat, who became mega in the States where he now lives; Ron was in The (British) Nighthawks then left the music scene for a while to study economics. He has recently returned; I also joined Ron in

The Nighthawks and have since been drumming with folk rockers Traitors Gait. We all keep in touch with Graham and recently did a reunion spot at the Station Tavern. Shakey Vick has subsequently continued as a band for over 21 years and still going strong!

After our departure Graham recruited a new band and went on to record the Pye album "*Little Woman You're So Sweet*" with Bruce Langsman (guitar), Nigel Tickler (bass), Ned Balen (drums). As British blues took a dive during the early seventies Graham persevered around the dwindling clubs; later band members would be better placed to talk about this period.

In the eighties a new and enthusiastic blues scene has developed in London giving Graham the acknowledgement that he deserves. City Limits has used the terms "legendary" and "Veteran" to describe Shakey Vick and he holds an important role in encouraging younger blues players, as Alexis Korner once did.

Graham's current band is very good and, dare I say it, more professional than the sixties? Their ongoing successful six-year Sunday evening residency at The Carnarvon Castle, Camden Town, testifies to their popularity. The band's current line up is: Shakey Vick: vocals/Harmonica; Al Vincent: guitar; Jimmy Roche: guitar; Roger Sutton: bass/vocals; Tony Balch: drums. Hear their latest recording, a live set from The Carnarvon: "Sunday Night and Saturday Morning".

Discography:

1968: "Little Woman You're So Sweet" Album Pye. NPL 18276

1982: "On The Ball" Album Appaloosa AP0022

1989: "Sunday Night & Saturday Morning" Shakey Vick & Wolfie Witcher. Tape Album. Elefantztrunk Records ET 2004-C

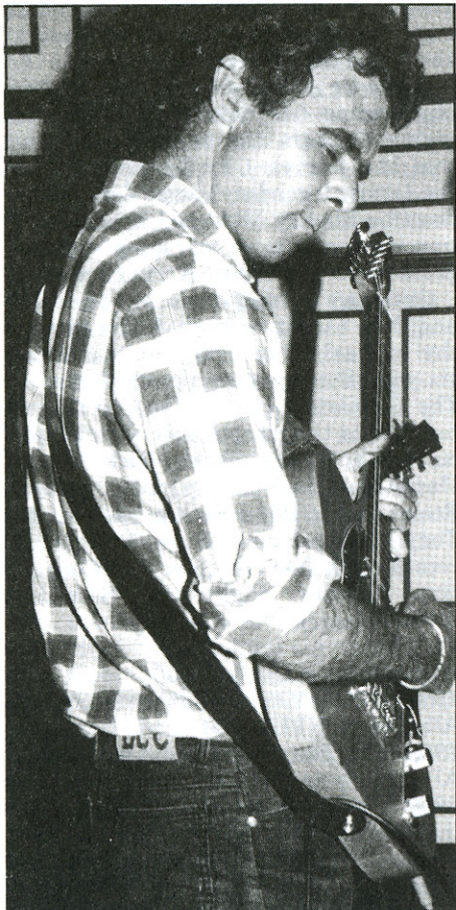
Mel Wright

BANKS 'BEST OF BLUES' 1989

First band on were the Launceston based 'Backdoormen', a four-piece Chicago style outfit fronted by vocalist, slide player and harp blower, Jeff Fuller. In the band's 40 minutes, they played seven numbers – a good varied selection from their repertoire. A rocking version of 'Flip Flop and Fly' opened the set, they then slowed down the pace with their own arrangement of Rice Miller's 'One Way Out'. The almost obligatory 'Dust My Broom' was followed by an exciting arrangement of 'Boogie Chillun'. Finishing on a souped-up version of Billy Boy Arnold's 'Wish You Would' they paid tribute to one of Jeff Fuller's influences from his blues apprenticeship. The Bands' line up is: Jeff Fuller (vcl: hca: slide gtr), Graham Sleeman (gtr), Kenny Hodge (el. bass) and Chris Pank (drums).

The band work over a wide area in Devon and Cornwall. Looking at the map from Exeter to Cornwall you will see the country they cover to play to their fans, with residency spots such as the 'Bystock Hotel', Exeter, the 'Brew-house' in Plymouth and the Sporting Club in Bideford. Such travelling requires reliable wheels and, in true Blues tradition, nothing was so fitting as their van's breakdown on the journey to Bristol. Surely, such is qualification to help them in this Banks Competition.

If you're looking for a live act in the West Country call Jeff on (0566) 2642 – The van's mended now!



John Moreshead (Dr. Jim's Wonder Tonic). (Photo: Pete Moody)

Best of BLUES BANKS'S MILD ALE

This year we have seen a major boost to the British Blues scene by courtesy of Banks, The Brewers of Banks' Mild Ale.

Initially, Blues Acts were invited to send in Demo tapes, and hundreds of entrants were received, resulting in 92 acts qualifying for initial heats, to play live in Music Pubs associated with Banks Brewery's, throughout the country.

The first night was held at the 'Bristol Bridge' in Bristol, on 11th April. Three acts each gave forty minute spots for their performance.

Solo performer Mick Stuart followed in the evening's presentation. Though it's hard for any soloist to follow the energy a four piece can produce, Mick played his act right into the audience, with his first number winning strong applause. He represented the style of the soloist that was more abundant in the late sixties folk blues boom era, and it was probably most fitting for him to perform in Bristol – the country's foremost folk blues town in that period. Originally from Coventry, Mike now lives in Ilfracombe and is working mainly in the North Devon area. He tells stories, writes a lot of his own material and in a tongue-in-cheek fashion brings humour to his act. High spot for me was his rendering of Skip James' 'Cyprus Grove Blues'. Acoustic guitar and harmonica accompany his vocals throughout the act, with a big finish switching to an electric Epiphone, Mick closed his spot with Homesick James Williamson's 'Set A Date'. Small club organisers can 'set a date' with Mick. Not on the telephone, but drop him a line at 3, Highfield Villas, Ilfracombe, North Devon. A traditional entertainer.

Act 3 brought up from Dorset, Dr Jim's Wonder Tonic. An electric four piece who, for their night's performance paid their respects to the 'three ings' in their choice of numbers. Paul 'Shunter' Smith (vcls. and gtr), gave his everything in performing with light and shade in both his singing and guitar playing. Taking it high, and laying back, in full



Jeff Fuller (The Backdoormen). (Photo: Pete Moody)

confidence of the band's rhythm section, playing through a set well-rehearsed in both material and presentation. High spot for me was Freddie King's 'I Wonder Why'.

Line up is Shunter Smith (vcl. gtr), John Moreshead (gtr), Dog End Jones (el. bass) and Jimmy Jazz Chairs (drums). Good to see John Moreshead back on the scene after a spell abroad. John, as guitar player in the Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation (1) gave new standards to blues guitar playing in the late 1960's blues boom. Based in Dorset, the band has easy access to London, the South east and the South West for gigs. Call up Shunter on (0258) 72719 and book in for a dose of their Blues Tonic.

If the other 89 acts give a night's entertainment like this one, Banks have a real task on their hands to find a winner. Hopefully, we will give a good account of further nights' shows.

For further information on the Banks Best of Blues promotion, pull a pint at your nearest Banks drinking establishment. They should have a give-away leaflet that gives you all the details. The competition ends with the four chosen finalists at a Grand Final Night on Saturday July 8th at the Wolverhampton Civic Hall. Stakes are high for the winners. The Boogie Brothers will perform on the show while the judges decide the vote. Tickets are limited. Telephone Wolverhampton Civic Hall Box Office for further information (0902) 312030.

Pete Moody.

(1) See British Blues Review No. 3 for an appreciation by John Holmes on the Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation.

Best of BLUES BANKS'S MILD ALE

GRAND FINAL

The search is nearly over to find
the best new Blues talent of '89

Saturday 8th July Wolverhampton Civic Hall.

Come along and discover which band will become The 'Best of Blues '89' when our four finalists will be on stage at the Civic Hall, to bring you an unforgettable evening of Blues music.

Our superb support band, The Boogies will also be there, along with Jools Holland and a judging panel of well known Blues musicians.

Ticket availability is limited so take advantage of this application form or ring the Civic Hall Box office

on 0902 312030 for credit card bookings (Visa or Access). (Tickets £3.50 in advance, £4.00 on the door). Doors open 7.30pm.

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Name _____

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Fill in this form and send it together with cheque or postal order made payable to Wolverhampton Borough Council to Civic Hall Box Office, North Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1RQ.



FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCT

STEEL 'N THE BLUES



There are some musical instruments that people love to hate. Bagpipes, cinema organs and the Hawaiian Guitar spring to mind. But that's not stopping them in Honolulu this year where, at the urging of enthusiasts and musicologists, the Mayor of the City and County has proclaimed 1989 as 'The Year of the Steel Guitar'. Not before time. The instrument has rather dropped out of sight in Hawaii in recent years. Probably something to do with the rock/disco syndrome. In fact, they say you'll hear most things in the Islands - except steel guitar. However, things are changing. The instrument is receiving belated recognition in the land of its birth. But to begin at the beginning...

It all started with Joseph Kekuku in 1889. This young student at Kamehameha High School accidentally dropped a pocket comb down the strings of his guitar. Pleased at the sound, he

experimented with a pocket knife, then various bits of metal, and soon fashioned the first 'steel'. Kekuku perfected the new style of playing and demonstrated it to the public in 1896. Other musicians were attracted to the sound and in no time at all he had many imitators. They increased its popularity and over the next decade the sound of the 'Hawaiian Guitar' swept over the mainland. Much later, when the instrument was absorbed into non-Hawaiian forms, the term 'steel guitar' became more generally used.

The rest is history. And there are always experts ready to dispute history. Some say it wasn't Kekuku but another Hawaiian. Others point to earlier cultures in China, India and Central Europe where 'slide-string' instruments can be identified. All have a case. What is clear is that, after Kekuku, the whole world came to recognise the signature sound of Hawaii in the Hawaiian guitar: the instrument that was to lead to the Dobro, the electric Hawaiian guitar (in-

troduced by the Rickenbacker Company in 1936), the multi-neck models and finally the pedal steel guitar with its 10,12,14 and 16 strings, umpteen foot pedals, knee and wrist levers.

Country players always loved the steel guitar. So did the early bluesmen. Son House and Bukka White evolved their unique bottleneck or slide guitar sound in imitation of the popular Hawaiian music of the time. Muddy Waters knew Son House and remembered that sound. He wore a flat ring on his little finger to simulate the slide guitar lines he'd heard on House's National 'resophonic' guitar. The Hawaiians loved the blues too. Sol Hoopii (1902-53), arguably the greatest steel player, was known for his blueslike improvisation. A glance at the Hoopii discography reveals titles like: Hula Blues, Wang Wang Blues, Stack O'Lee Blues and many more.

There is no room here to discuss the many fascinating personalities associated with steel guitar. Space only to record the centennial of an instrument that is one year younger than the gramophone. Latest news is of a centennial steel scholarship at Kamehameha School. Pressure for similar recognition is being put on the University of Hawaii. This can only be good news. Who knows? One day there might be a Blues Chair at Oxbridge!

Barney Prendergast

Sunday Night & Saturday Morning

SHAKY VICK AND WOLFIE WITCHER



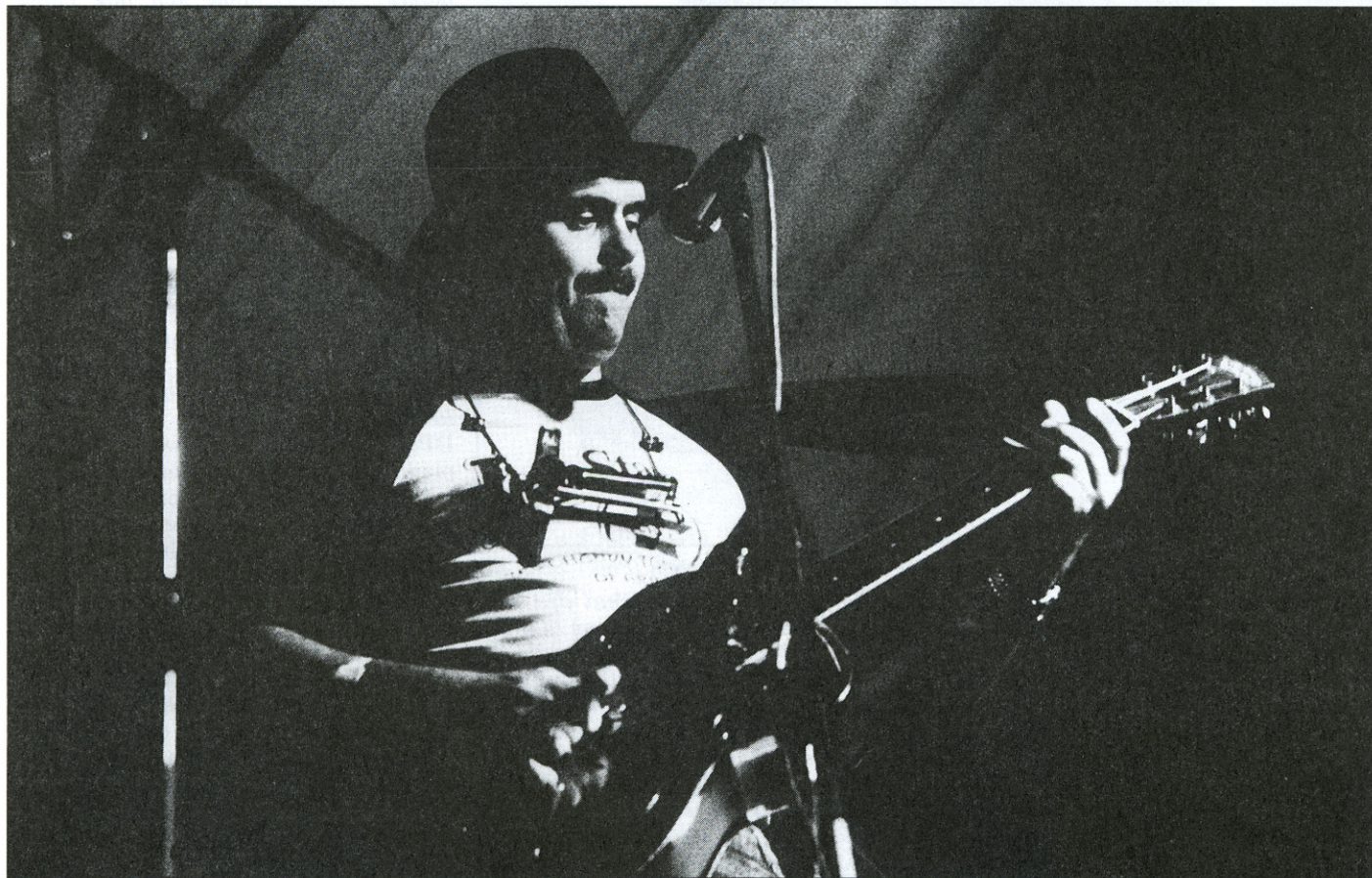
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DAVE PEABODY: Blues of the early style



Dave Peabody, Cambridge Folk Festival (1981)

Interviewed by Top Topham

TT: *I would like to start by asking you how long you've been playing and where did you start?*

DP: I've almost lost track. I started playing in public round about when I was 16.

TT: *Can I ask when that was?*

DP: I'll have to work it out – I'm 40 now. It was the mid 60's, 64. I was born in '48 – a good year. The year Muddy Waters made his first commercial recording.

TT: *But basically you started off playing what I would term as folk music as opposed to R&B.*

DP: I started off playing Jug Band Music and it got twisted into Country Blues later but my first love was pure Jug Band music and I had numerous Jug Bands which lasted probably a good part of eight years.

TT: *Can you tell us some of the names of those bands?*

DP: The first one was the 'Honest John Three' which won the one and only national Jug Band contest, in Twickenham.

TT: *So you probably played in and around Eel Pie Island at that time?*

DP: Yes. We were West London based.

TT: *So you remember bands like Spencer's Washboard Kings?*

DP: Oh Yeah. One of our washboard players in the main band we had, 'Tight Like That' – that was the longest line up – we had Bill Shortt. I think he was in Spencer's Washboard Kings.

TT: *If we could go back just a little bit further than that – can you remember the very first time you heard this kind of music or you got turned on by this kind of music?*

DP: There was an exact moment because from a very early age... I'm talking about 12, 13 years old... I was into Jazz and I used to buy Bix Beiderbeck, Johnny Dodds records as a young teenager and I suppose when I was 14, 15 years old my parents bought me a guitar and I learnt a few chords but never really got into it; then other friends started playing guitar at school together, listening to Woody Guthrie and people like that, and I was looking for a kind of music to play and hadn't heard anything yet. When I was 16, I started going to few folk clubs and befriended Don Partridge. Don Partridge was giving a concert, he was on folk bill, at Ealing Town Hall. I remember this as clear as daylight. So I went along supposedly to see him. At the top of the bill, unbeknown to me was Jessie Fuller. He was my first blues artist. I

saw this man and he was everything that I'd thought about but didn't know about.

TT: *I could have actually been at the same concert. I do remember seeing Jessie round about that time.*

DP: His energy, approach to the music, was just invigorating. I didn't really think that here was, like, a 75 year old negro blues performer. I just saw the music, heard the music and thought: wow I love it.

Because I knew Don we went backstage and I actually bought a single of San Francisco Bay Blues and got Jessie Fuller to show me the chords. A week later I went out and bought myself a 12-string and that was the first number I learnt.

TT: *Do you remember Corrina Corrina?*

DP: Yeah, although the other side of the single that I bought was New Midnight Special. But, you do have this problem that there was a very old black man you see, so there's the question of could a young middle-class white person do the same? Strangely enough as I lived in Southall, my local jazz club was Osterley Jazz Club and I saw people like Earl Hines and Henry Red Allen there. About



Charlie Musselwhite & Dave Peabody Belgium. (Photo: Bert Leh)

3 months later I saw John Hammond who was only a couple of years older than me, playing blues – a young white guy – and his approach was, and still is, to combine Country Blues and City Blues so I saw him and thought: right he's doing it, so I can do it; so I started going up to places like Dobell's and every Saturday searching out early Country Blues.

TT: So you spent many hours in smelly booths with "Bird Lives" on the walls?

DP: Listening to Blind Willie McTell and Blind Blake and people. At Osterley Jazz Club I first saw Brian Cookman and his Jug Band. He had a good Jug Band. I saw him and he played harmonica in a rack, that influenced me, and I got into Jug Band music and I started buying Jug Band records and we very quickly got a Jug Band together.

TT: Did you ever see Duster Bennett's Band – Jericho Jug Band?

DP: Yes this was about the same time, but we had a jug band before I saw that Jug Band. I think Brian Cookman's Jug Band was the only one that I'd seen previously to forming our own. The funny thing was we got the residency at Osterley Jazz Club which really pushed us into learning songs 'cause there was a group called The Friends of Old Timey Music and they'd had the residency, there was an overspill room in the Jazz Club that had folk music. We'd only been going a few weeks when this group capitulated and we got the residency which we held for well over a year and when we gave up or moved on, we gave it to Henry VIII and his Jug Band. Bill Shortt was in that band actually and we gave them the residency after we'd done it for a year and a half. In our first group Steve Simpson, who has gone on to play with Ronnie Lane, and lots of other bands, he was our first guitarist.

TT: So how long after that did you start actually going out as a solo performer?

DP: A long time because I then went to college in Plymouth and we had various bands down there. I was in Plymouth for three years.

TT: So we're talking about things based around art schools are we?

DP: Yes I was at art schools for a very long time – they couldn't get rid of me. I went to Hornsey College of Art, Plymouth College of Art and the Royal College of Art. In Plymouth we had a band called Pongo Flossy Good Time Merger and we used to run a club and we managed to bring down people like Arthur Big Boy Crudup and Juke Boy Bonner and then when we came back to London I brought the washboard player and the mandolin player from the Plymouth band with me and we formed Tight Like That and that was when I first started recording. We made two albums with the guys from the group although some of my solo albums featured the same musicians.

Tight Like That lasted probably the best part of three years and we were doing a lot of gigs. We were doing twenty-plus gigs a month. It was a very hardworking band.

TT: One could probably say that you are one of the very few people on the blues circuit who has actually managed to make a living out of it.

DP: I wouldn't call it making a living but I've survived. Up to three years ago I did nothing else but be a musician and then the photography started creeping up when Folk Roots started and they asked me to take photographs for them. Then I started diversifying and then working at Collett's started happening about the same time. Actually things were getting a bit thin musically around then but have picked up considerably

since.

TT: Yes there certainly seems to be a resurgence very much at the moment.

DP: I concentrated for a long time on playing blues in folk clubs as I've always played acoustic blues and folk clubs seemed to be the natural outlet for that but gradually the folk scene changed and I was like going round and round it and I decided to give that a break. Now I just work on tours with Bob Hall or visiting American artists. The variety is very nice, I actually enjoy the musical variety I have now.

TT: Talking with you earlier, you have obviously played with an impressive number of black blues performers and I wondered if you would tell us about some of them and perhaps we could go on to some stories and some of your impressions?

DP: Of course the main person that I'm playing with now is Big Joe Duskin who I always thought was wonderful. Now having toured with him extensively in the last couple of years I think he's even more wonderful because I never get bored playing with him. He's a truly inventive piano player and singer. I'm amazed that he's not better known in America but then that might have something to do with the fact that he was a policeman for 15 years, only recently retired. That partnership has worked and it's partly worked because I've worked with numerous pianists, mainly Diz Watson and Bob Hall, which I suppose was very good preparation for meeting with Big Joe. When I met Big Joe at the recording of The South Bank Boogie Woogie Show I just felt that I could play with him, so I invited him to play on one of my albums and when that was successful I then invited him to come on tour, which he agreed to do, and it's just grown from there.

TT: You are really in a very fortunate position to be able to play with Joe but also you have played with quite a few other people.

DP: Mostly it's just meeting and jamming with people, but Bob Hall and I have toured twice with Charlie Musselwhite, which was a great treat and we had a marvellous experience playing with Sonny Terry at the Philadelphia Folk Festival 1984 when we were on the same bill. Sonny was just sitting behind us waiting to go on and suddenly in the middle of our set he decided, well we hope he decided, he liked the music we were playing and just whipped out a harmonica and joined in and it just took off.

All over Europe and all the places we've played in America we've just met various blues people and started jamming with them. I've always been very happy and amazed at the acceptance we've had, both Bob and myself, with black artists. As I said earlier, I have a feeling it's because Bob and I have concentrated on playing an earlier style of blues that has dropped out of fashion.



Big Joe Duskin & Dave Peabody (Photo: Jim McPhee)

TT: *I think this is quite an important point if you could go into that.*

DP: Bob and I have lost track of when we met, it was a long time ago. Our partnership has lasted over ten years, twelve maybe. Neither of us can remember the date when we started. Of course we've gone off and done our own thing in between, but we always come back together. Although Bob has played with a lot of modern artists, we both have this love and the feeling for 20's and 30's blues of all the piano duets from Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, all the small band stuff. Bob and I love to play this kind of music. We made two albums, both Appaloosa records, one which reflects that more than the other. One was just a feeling for 20's 30's blues the other one we tried to make a more modern album which personally is one of my favourites. Bob prefers the first one. Nevertheless when other musicians realise that that is what we do then there's no threat, there's no jealousy but they appreciate what we do. They like to play with us in that style because it's their roots too.

We've been on stage with everybody from Champion Jack to Memphis Slim. Back-stage I've jammed with people like Jimmy Johnson, Willie Lyons, Big Moose Walker.

TT: *Is there a particular favourite story that you might like to tell?*

DP: Well the one that caused me a little consternation but did work out OK was... I spent many times going to Scandinavia with Diz Watson, we met quite a few people over there. There was one of the few times I went to Scandinavia solo and this restaurant was in Gothenberg and I was working six nights a week with one night off for a whole month. There are a lot of musicians who have done this trip so they all know what it's about. Come mid-week I see in the paper that there is a Chicago Blues package playing at the university. I asked the owners if I could have the night off and they said no because I was contracted. I thought oh Christ I'm gonna miss this. I get to the place I'm playing at and one of the waitresses comes up and says we've had a big booking for 11.30 so we want you to start later. I'm thinking it may be a party of people who have gone to the gig and are coming later. It comes around midnight, the door swings open, in walks Jimmy Johnson, Odie Payne Junior, Lefty Diz... the entire package practically. They had come here because this place was serving steaks and it's late night and they sit down right in front of me at the table right in front of the stage and I think,

'Oh my goodness what can I play. They play Chicago blues, if I play Country Blues it will be something different, they don't want to hear me playing Chicago Blues'. So I start giving them Blind Boy Fuller and Willie McTell and I'm looking at them and they're completely blank. I'm dying a death, they're not responding at all. This goes on for about 20 minutes after that and I think, 'I've gotta throw caution to the wind', so suddenly I launch into Sweet Home Chicago and immediately they're with me. I realise they do want to hear Chicago Blues so I wrack my brains and I do all the standards I can think of, stuff that I would not normally play, you know - Dust My Broom - the lot. When I had finished they invited me back to their hotel and we were pals all night. We had a jam session until about five o'clock in the morning which was really nice. The next night they were in Stockholm... they even sent me a message back. I recently met Lefty Diz and he remembers that.

TT: *Just to finish up on this point is there a worst memory?*

DP: Not really. I've had a good time with the blues, apart from the lack of money I don't regret any of it.

Aboard the Blues Train, with Victor Brox

by Michael Coogan

I am leaning on the mantelpiece in the back room of *The Black Horse on Manchester Road, Oldham. It is a Sunday lunchtime in March. I manage to cadge a lift across Manchester's northern suburbs in order to be here and I don't much care how I get back. After four nights of gigging in Lancashire my favourite way of unwinding is to spend the entire session with my feet tapping and my hands clapping to the Victor Brox Blues Train. Never mind the dirty weather outside - forget that job of re-nutting the old Telecaster, just relax to the sweet music.*

Whenever I come here I think of what it must be like at the Crawdaddy Club, the early Marquee and other places I am far too young to know in their heyday. I think of the late messrs Cyril Davis and Alexis Korner and I am not too wide of the mark at that, for Victor Brox is noted for playing with these types when they are alive and well. Moreover Alexis Korner is noted to say some most pleasing words about the driver of this blues train. Furthermore, the regulars in the audience are all greatly respectful of Victor for the quality of his music and the discipline of his many accompanists. But Victor is not only to be seen at this venue; he is here, there, and everywhere. At the Hardman House Hotel in

Liverpool his audiences are often restrained from dancing on the tables. In Manchester his foot stomping and soulful bellow are liable to cause structural damage to historic buildings such as the Band On The Wall.

He is a benevolent autocrat; his accompanying musicians play to the Brox beat which is hammered out by his left hand and right foot. (Victor has a formidable talent for the piano and can do a good deal also with his right hand on the keyboard). When he's really into it, Victor leaps up from his seat at the shaky piano, which is also used to support most of his public address system.

He is a proper blues singer, Victor, although he has the air of the Edwardian impresario towards the musicians who are fortunate enough to play with him. When it feels right for a guitar solo, he shouts out to whoever is on the guitar. It may be Chris "Dangerous" Jones (whom I consider to be his best guitarist) on his worse-for-wear Sunburst Strat. It may be "Sparky" Clarke, whose playing bears a striking resemblance to that of Albert King. It could be Nick Middleton whom I am afraid I have yet to hear although I am told his talents are formidable too. The harp player may be Graham Roberts, Clive Mellor, D J Kane, or Scotty Davis. Bass guitar may be Steve Ojay, Paul Brierley, or Steve

Drummond (apologies to those I don't know). I do not know the names of all the drummers I have seen playing with Victor; I believe one of them is named Bill, and I know there are others of equal brilliance. I use the term honestly, as all the drummers on Victor's squad play with accuracy and economy, allowing the soloists and backing musicians to play freely in plenty of space. Talking of soloists I am not forgetting Doc Holliday who provides help in the way of plumbing, nor am I forgetting Victor's own horn-playing on these strange-looking silver instruments he always has handy. I must include too the guy who sits on the side and plays African drums.

All these faces are well known on the Manchester/Lancs Blues circuit. In addition Victor is known to play with and features on recordings by John Mayall, Aynsley Dunbar, Johnny Mars and many others.

Victor chooses his material carefully and sings with a credibility that is sadly lacking in many otherwise extremely talented bluesmen. He may chill your spine with a medley comprising the Wolf's "Evil" and "Back Door Man", or he may rock the joint with a version of "Big Boss Man". A sentimental gospel-type hymn on a Sunday lunchtime often has me fighting back the tears, especially if I am hung over and wrapped in cotton wool from the fizzy drinks I take on the previous night. The stop-start, piano-board slap of a highly subjective "Framed" gets the PA speaker rocking and teetering on the edge of the piano top lid, as does a down-home version of "Southbound Train", which also features some excellent keyboard skills.

There are a lot of people who care more than a little for Victor. He is a man of courteous ways offstage and on, always willing to impart advice and demonstration that the music is still alive, kicking, and capable of modern as well as authentic treatment. He is a busy man around these parts and his fine reputation with one and all on the Manchester circuit is well deserved.

Michael Coogan

[with profuse apologies to Damon Runyon]



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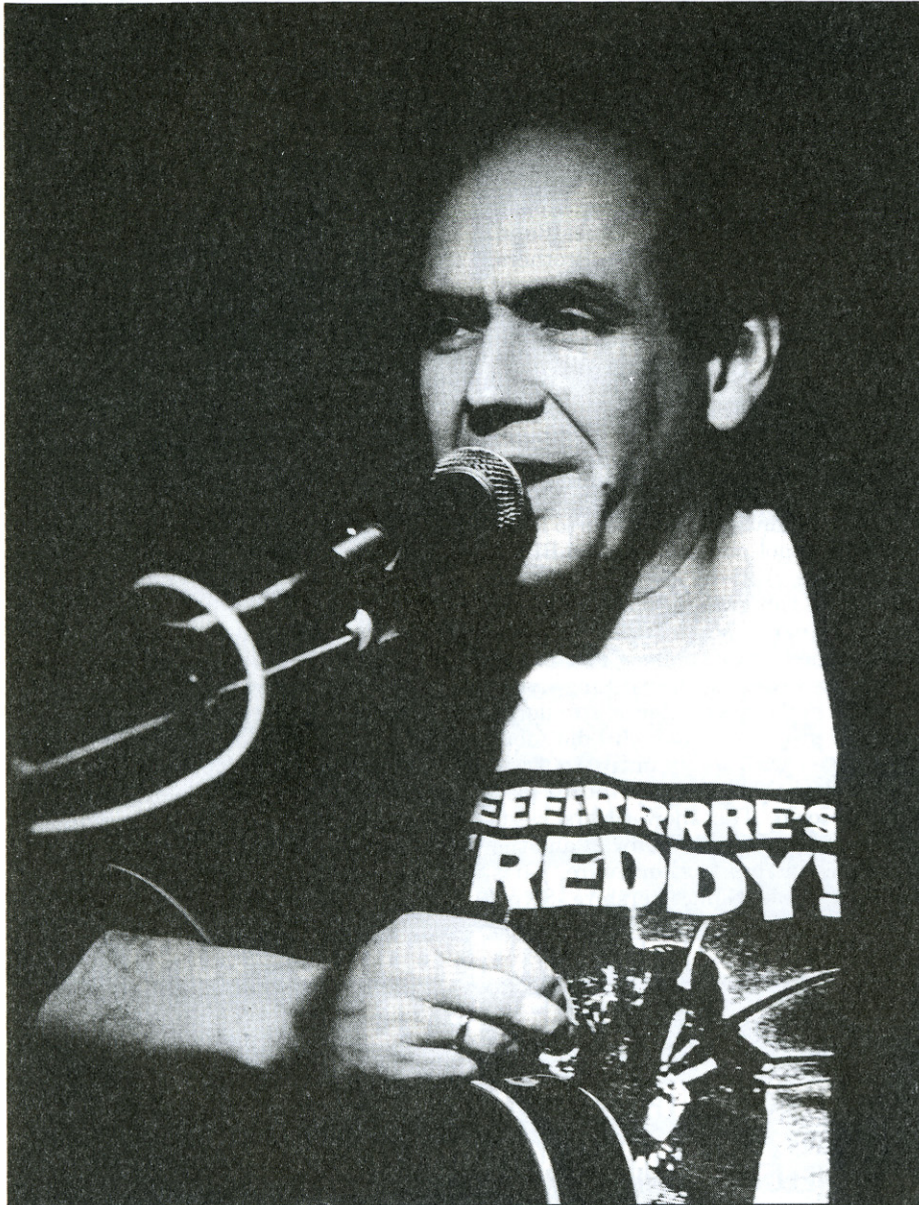
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Keith Warmington: Way Out West

Interviewed by Pete Moody



Keith Warmington performing in the 1980's. (Photo: Henry Heap)

Keith Warmington leads two lives (maybe more!). During the day he is a presenter and producer for BBC Radio Bristol and BBC Radio West, and by night he turns to his music – the blues. He enjoyed success playing in the Country Blues and Jug Duo, “Strange Fruit” and a member of two of Bristol’s blues bands, the Payne Killers and The Payrole Brothers. Still a celebrity in the Bristol music scene, Keith devotes time to presenting a weekly show on BBC Radio West “Folk Roots”.

British Blues Review’s Pete Moody caught up with him on one of his shows and, afterwards, Keith talked about his contribution to the blues scene.

I got into music when I was about 15. I went with my French pen-pal to Switzerland. He could play harmonica so I fancied learning. I had this image of myself, playing harmonica round the campfire entertaining the rest of the boys in the Scout troupe. This coincided with when the Rolling Stones first ‘were coming out’. I loved the Harmonica on their ‘Spider and the Fly’. I lived in Redruth, Cornwall and in 1965, I joined a group called the King Bees. We did two talent contests before my father made me leave because of failing my History ‘O’ levels.

What I couldn’t work out was which harmonica you had to buy to get the blues sound. I had this ‘sort of diatonic. I could play it but it wasn’t the right noise. Lo and behold, Hohner brought out something called the Rhythm and blues harmonica. I thought ‘that’s it’. What it was, was a big fat long thing and it had 3 big red plastic holes. There were two bluesy chords per hole, one suck and one blow. I bought one, but it wasn’t that at all. Somehow or another I got to obtain an Echo Super Vamper – which was it! Then I started going to this folk club at the Count House at Botallick run by Brenda Wooton and John the Fish. Everyone in the folk scene was playing there, Michael Chapman, Ralph McTell – Stephen Grossman used to play there. This is about 1966. I eventually thought I would really like to stand up on stage and play in this sort of atmosphere, so I learnt a train blues. It wasn’t Cyril Davies’s, but everyone said it was his ‘Country Line Special’. I’d never heard of it at that time. One night I went down to the Club and very nervously asked Brenda Wooton if I could do a floor spot. I got on stage, I couldn’t speak, my mouth was so dry, but I played my train blues. It went down well which made me want to do more.

I went to St. Paul’s College in Cheltenham to study French. I used to play harmonica in my room on my own, somebody heard me and said, “You must meet this guy Joe Solomans up the corridor, he plays blues guitar”. He had this collection of blues records. Ones I hadn’t heard of by Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, Muddy Waters and many more. Suddenly a whole world of music was open to me. Up to then the Rolling Stones had been my main influ-

ence. I started to play with Joe at the College Folk Club. This went on for a couple of years and I was gradually getting better and better.

In my last year of College I went to France. I spent the 1969 Autumn term in Tours, a town in the centre of France. Some French children knew I played harmonica and told me there was an English blues guitar player performing in the Theatre foyer. I met him, we got chatting, his name was Pete Keeley. I only had one harmonica, I needed three to accompany him. He said, "I'll buy you two more, meet me in the Cafe and I'll audition you". Well I guess the audition was after about drinking two bottles of wine, with me having to stand on a table playing the train blues!

I ended up playing with him for the whole three months of my trip totally forgetting my French studies. Pete Keeley and I became the duo partnership 'Strange Fruit'. In Cornwall we got a residency at The Room At The Top, a folk club in Redruth. Everybody played there, John Martyn, Cliff Aungier, Gerry Lockran - the whole Mafia used to pitch up and do a week at a time. The same summer, Andrew Means from the Melody Maker came down and he wrote an article about us. This was in 1970 and he mentioned in the article "we were going to Bristol and turn professional". We get to Bristol to find the blues boom has just ended! We arrive at the Troubadour and there was this "Oh, you play blues, you're two years too late!"

We did a mixture of blues and jug band music. Numbers like 'Trouble in Mind', 'How Long, How Long' and 'Keep On Truckin'. I used to play jug as well. We started to get gigs all over the Country with help especially from Ian A. Anderson and his Village Thing organisation. Certainly by January 1971 we were gigging constantly. Mostly we did folk clubs. Pete came from Wokingham and was involved in the folk blues scene in Reading with Mike Cooper. He went to France just to play when I met him.

We spent two years on the road playing nothing but blues and jug music. We wrote some of our own songs and Village Thing Records issued a single 'Cut Across Shorty' and 'Shake That Thing'. I got married - we came off the road and carried on semi-professionally for the next three years and then Pete left Bristol to live in Cornwall.

I then played with a succession of other guitarists, like Ian Hunt. Then I got into bands. I played in Brent Ford and the Nylons, this is in the punk era, 1976, Dr. Feelgood music, Brent Ford and the Nylons were like that. Me on harp with Steve Payne on guitar. We then became the Paynekillers. We had a wonderful piano player called Gerry Blyth. Paul Huggett on drums who joined us as we changed - he'd come from his own band Huggett. We played as support to B. B. King at the Colston Hall Bristol in September, 1981. I remember him giving us a name check at the close of the concert. We were support on several occasions to the Blues Band. We then became the Payrole Brothers. Gerry, Steve and me with a different rhythm section. The Payrole's were mostly blues, but we did five or six of our own tunes, but they were still blues influenced numbers. Every year we do a reunion gig.

I was teaching while all this was going on. Driving up and down the country. I was teaching French up to five years ago to kids who didn't actually want to learn French. So I got out and into the BBC I got into the BBC by doing the Radio Bristol Blues programme with John Turner for a year. I started to do various tasks for news programmes and ended up where I am now, working as a journalist and news producer, still doing my music programme, which I did "double headed" with John until we went Regional last October. From then, I took it on my own. The show covers westwards down to Devon, Cornwall and the Scilly Isles, across to Hampshire, parts of Sussex, up to Gloucestershire, Swin-

don and, I understand, France.

Today I play with guitarist Kit Morgan. He is a jazz player, but he loves to play blues. We mix the styles. I play guitar as well as harmonica. I've been doing some television music and some advert work as well. I enjoy playing as much as I ever did. I "sit in" with other performers - I just love to play the blues. The latest record I bought is a Chess Masters Album of Muddy Waters with Little Walter. To hear Little Walter play still sends as big a shiver down my spine as it did when I first heard him.

Keith Warmington's folk roots show goes out on the air on BBC West 6.05 to 7.15 every Thursday evening playing a varied selection of roots music, giving Club and Gig information, and frequently brings guests into the studio to "sit in" on the programme. In March, I was invited in for the Magazine to give Keith's listeners the latest news on British Blues Review. We played records by Jo Ann Kelly, Sonny Terry with Johnny Winter, Willie Egans and Rory McLeod in between Irish, Scottish and English folk music, which mixed together exceedingly well. Keith Warmington's love for the blues can be shared - tune in and give his show a listen, he may well have missed that 1960's blues boom when first arriving in Bristol, but staying, he is sure making up for it now.

Pete Moody

CONTRIBUTORS PLEASE NOTE:

The deadline for material submitted for publication in June's B.B. Review is 20th June. Unsolicited material must be accompanied by a S.A.E. The editor's decision on copy is final.

W O M A D

BLUES AND RHYTHMS



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JUNE

- 1 The Diplomats
- 2 Shout Sister Shout
- 3 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 4 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 5 Eddie Martin Combo (evening)
- 6 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 7 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 8 The Blues Connection
- 9 Shout Sister Shout
- 10 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 11 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 11 Big Road Blues Band (Evening)
- 12 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 13 Blues PLC
- 14 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 15 T Model Slim
- 16 Shout Sister Shout
- 17 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 18 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 18 The Diplomats (Evening)
- 19 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 20 Blues PLC
- 21 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 22 Giles Hedley & Really The Blues
- 23 Shout Sister Shout
- 24 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 25 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 25 Big Road Blues Band (Evening)
- 26 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 27 Blues PLC
- 28 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 29 The Diplomats
- 30 Shout Sister Shout

JULY

- 1 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 2 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 2 The Cuspidors (Evening)
- 3 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 4 Blues PLC
- 5 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 6 The Diplomats
- 7 Shout Sister Shout
- 8 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 9 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 9 Big Road Blues Band (Evening)
- 10 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 11 Blues PLC
- 12 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 13 T Model Slim
- 14 Shout Sister Shout
- 15 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 16 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 16 Mike Messer Band (Evening)
- 17 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 18 Blues PLC
- 19 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 20 A M Blues Band
- 21 Shout Sister Shout
- 22 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 23 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 23 Hot Licks Cookies (Evening)
- 24 B B Review Blues Jam Session
- 25 Blues PLC
- 26 Top Topham/Jim McCarty Band
- 27 Big Road Blues Band
- 28 Shout Sister Shout
- 29 Big Joe Louis & his Blueskings
- 30 Shakey Vick's Sunday Joint (Noon)
- 30 Between Two Rivers (Evening)
- 31 B B Review Blues Jam Session

First, we didn't make it to the second night of the festival, but more on that later.

On this little trip to sample some European Blues were your editor, Graham Vickery, Assistant Editor Top Topham and his lady Emma, Editorial Assistant Hilary Rowland and her old man Joe, and me. Publisher Bob took a different flight and a different hotel but, as chance would have it, we all ended up in the same street anyway.

As the flights were so early in the morning, we had plenty of time to book in to the hotel, meet up with Bob and go to the Meervaart to pick up the two free tickets reserved for BBR. Mistake number one.

By the time Graham, Joe and Bob got to the venue, via some of Amsterdam's notoriously welcoming bars, the tickets could not be found.

"Where are your Press Cards?" they were asked, somewhat snottily.

Mistake number two.

Eventually, the missing tickets were discovered, five more were bought (at approx £20.00 each to cover the two days) and honour was restored.

The venue itself is an arts centre with a good stage, more than adequate sound system and not a lot of seating. Blues aficionados are used to standing up all their lives but this Art Editor often indulges in unseemly shuffling to get a seat and this was no exception.

First confusion of the evening came when we slowly realised that the first band on were not Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials as listed. I watched with some dismay as the lead singer/guitarist/harp player posed badly to the video camera throughout the set, including such embarrassing lightweight tricks as 'playing' the fret with his left elbow, ditto with a beer bottle and sinking down onto his knee for extra effect. The (mostly) youthful audience took it all in their stride and I tried to conserve the film in the camera for other acts. My sense of fair play forces me to point out that it must have been difficult to find a band at the last minute, and we all know how hard it is to be the first band on. That said, I'll now go on to say that the band's name was *Mojo Blues* and that they come from Austria.

Review

AMSTERDAM'S BLUES FESTIVAL 1989

The Meervaart, Amsterdam
Friday, 17 March-Saturday, 18 March

The Maurice John Vaughn Blues Band were next and here was a band with much more going for them – if only they'd played more blues. They seemed to move rather quickly into Soul sounds where they stayed for some while – returning now and then to the reason for the gig. Nevertheless, this was a good, professional band who, by the sound of them, have been around for some time. The line-up was: Maurice John Vaughn – guitar/sax/vocals; Detroit Junior – piano/vocals; Freddie Dixon – bass; Bill Leathers – drums.

Then it was on to *The Paladins*. This band really took our collective breath away. What a performance! The range of sound knocked out by this Blues/Rockabilly trio was astounding and the crowd showed their justifiable appreciation with every number. The line-up of Dave Gonzales – guitar/vocals, Thomas Yearsley – acoustic/bass/vocals and Scott Campbell – drums, all hail from California. Watch out for this trio. If you ever get a chance to see this band (and I sincerely hope that some enterprising British promoter

makes this possible) then go see them. You'll not be disappointed.

The final act was Koko Taylor and her Blues Machine.

The Blues Machine, consisting of James Johnson – guitar; Eddie King – guitar; Jerry Murphy – bass; Frank Alexander – drums, started the set with some great sounds. Both James Johnson and Eddie King did the vocals here and, for me, though Eddie had the edge in the scalding-hot chocolate resonance, James's voice had an extra dollop of cream melting down. Both men are superb guitarists and, although it was now gone one o'clock in the morning, the waiting was worth it to hear these two. The rhythm section was absolutely as it should be, and the audience, nicely warmed up by the Paladins, were enjoying every second. Unfortunately, as is the way with these events, many of the audience had left, it being so late and buses are hard to find after midnight. But it did make it easier for me to elbow my way to the front with the camera.

And then it was time for the lady herself. *Koko Taylor* made a magnificent entrance – resplendent in lilac and sequins – and guess what?

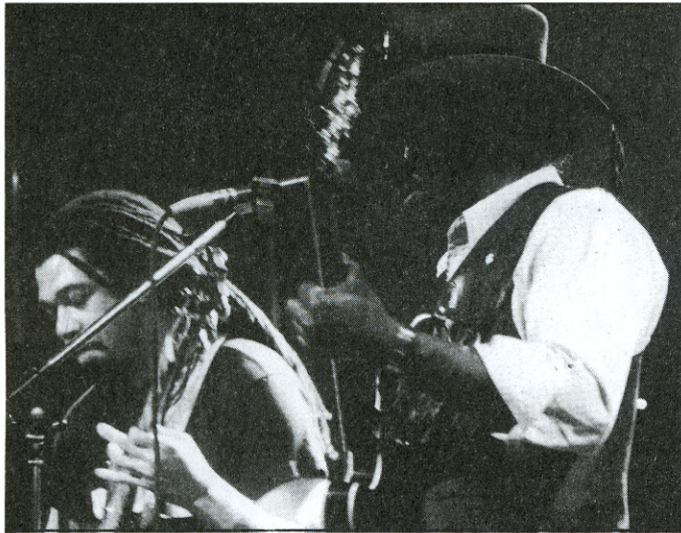
The momentum built up by her Blues Machine slowly, slowly evaporated. The guys in the band let her take centre stage, as they should, and somehow the atmosphere dropped a couple of gears.

Koko sang great songs and she sang them well. Her own version of Muddy Waters 'I'm A Man', re-titled 'I'm A Woman' was, for me, better than anything. But, before the end of the set, we were looking to go; we'd had enough.

Looking at the programme for the next day we realised that one of the bands was the same line-up as the Maurice John Vaughn Band, but for the Saturday session it was called Detroit Junior and His Blues Show. We also realised over the breakfast table next morning that the main band, Lonnie Brooks Blues Band would probably get on stage at around the same time as Koko Taylor the previous night. With a crack-of-dawn flight to catch on Sunday morning to get Graham and Top back in London for their lunch-time gig, we decided to give it a



The Paladins



James Johnson and Eddie King fronting The Blues Machine

miss.

And why did I write this and not Graham, I hear you ask? Well, you remember I

mentioned those welcoming Amsterdam bars....

Angela Morse



Koko Taylor

NOT SO QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

**BELGIAN RHYTHM & BLUES FESTIVAL
PEER: 15 & 16 JULY 1989**

Previewed by **DAVID COOPER**

For me Belgium is famous for 3 things. Beer; as a convenient and flat battlefield; and for the **BRBF**. Well, Stella helps to sponsor the BRBF, and when it rains there, as it did last year I have a deeper understanding of the hell

that our grandfathers went through in the mud of the trenches.

I've been planning this Preview of the BRBF for a while; it had been my original intention to make witty remarks on each artiste. However when I

received the listing I realised I was not able to do so as I had only seen two of them previously. But of those two I can set a puzzle, with a prize for the most original answer. Q. When this guy toured here last, was the thing wrapped around his leg real? If not what was it? And his name?

Answers on a postcard to the Editor.

As you can see from the listing it contains a good mix of Superstars/Legends/Young Turks & Young (and not so young) hopefuls. **But where are the British bands this year?**

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ON-SITE (ISH) CAMPING: ±£3 for weekend including parking

BEER: ± 50p CCTV in Bars

FOOD: from ± £1

THE LINE UP

SATURDAY
Hideaway (B)
Rory Block
Paladins
Champion Jack Dupree
Little Charlie & Nightcats
Otis Clay Chicago Blues Band
Johnny Winter Band
SUNDAY
Risky Blues (B)
John Campbell
Tailgators
Eddy Kirkland/Energy Band
Lonnie Mack
Zuzu Bollin/Juke Jumpers
B.B. King/Blues Orchestra

TIMES: 13:00 Thru to 02:00

TRAVEL: A car is essential. P&O Dover to Ostende. E40 via Brussels to E314 to junction 28 then N72 which becomes N73 via Leopoldsburg - Hechtel to Peer. (± 2 hours drive) Aim to arrive Friday Night and leave Monday morning. Personally I'd recommend camping or a camper as you'll be far too pissed to drive back to a hotel.

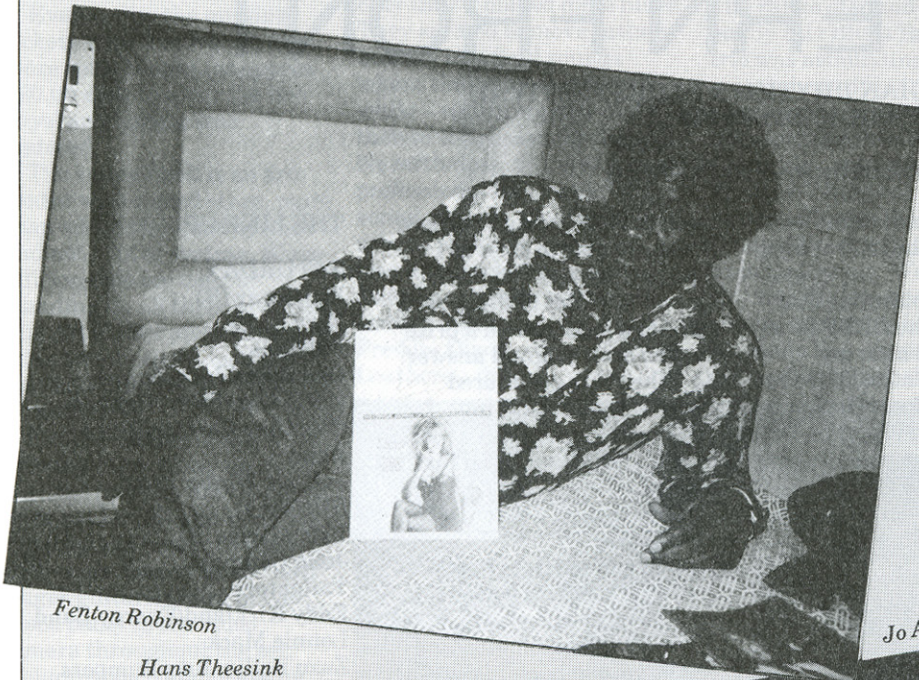
SEE YOU ALL THERE!



B.B. King (Photo: Brian Smith)

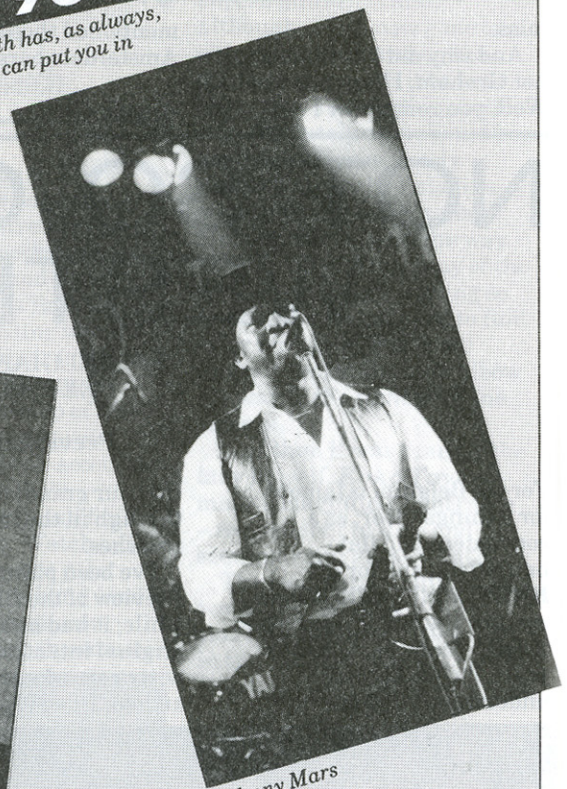
The First Burnley National BLUES FESTIVAL 23rd - 27th MARCH 1989

We were unable to get to Burnley, but fortunately the indefatigable Brian Smith has, as always, heaped photographs upon us. These are just a few. If anyone wants prints, we can put you in touch with Brian.



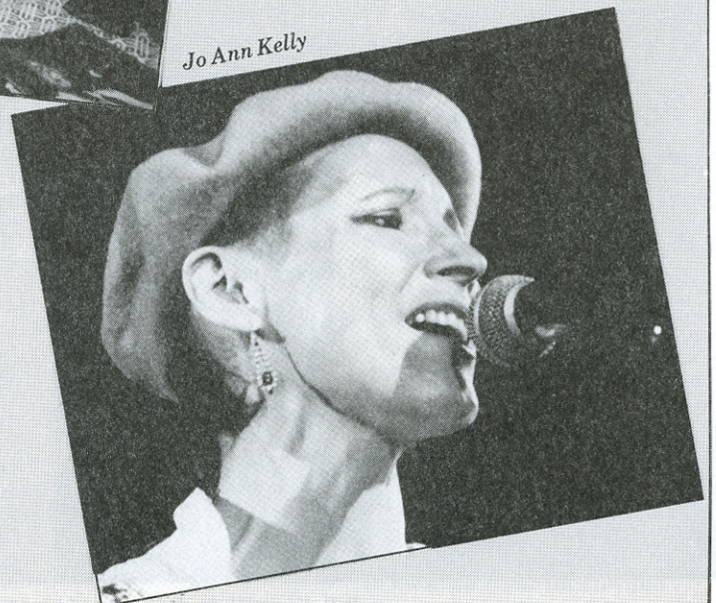
Fenton Robinson

Hans Theesink



Johnny Mars

Jo Ann Kelly

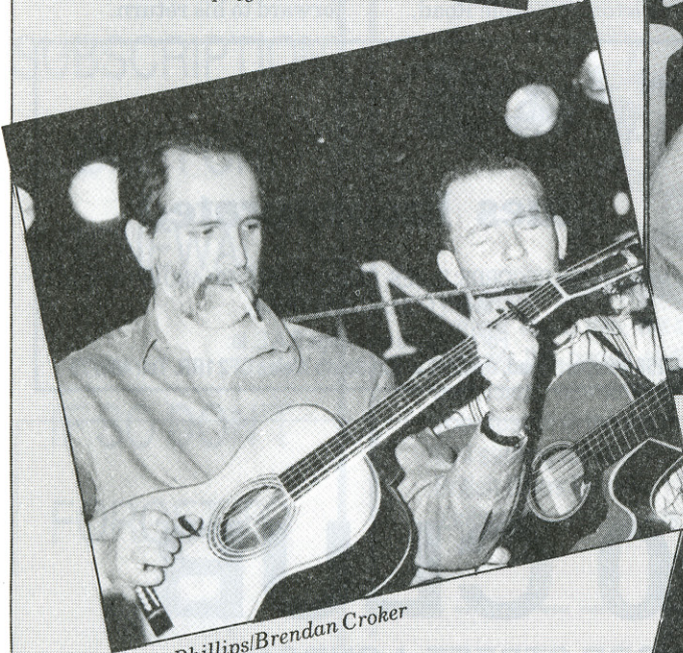




Champion Jack Dupree



Little Willie Littlefield



Steve Phillips/Brendan Croker



Champ and Future Champ



Diving Ducks

BLUESNEWS

Juke Joint Promotions are ensuring that July is going to be a good month for American Blues and R&B acts. With **Screamin' Jay Hawkins** and his **Chicken Hawks** at the Town & Country club on 7th, a long overdue return to the UK. On Monday 10th, **The Blues Brothers Band**, with **Eddie Floyd**, **Steve Cropper**, **Matt Murphy**, **Donald Dunn** plus horns will head a bill at Hammersmith Odeon. Support will be **Little Charlie and the Nightcats** from Chicago and the **Boogie Brothers**.

Wednesday 12th July sees the return of **Buddy Guy** and **Junior Wells** to the Town and Country. **George 'Mojo' Buford**, one of Muddy Waters' harpmen, will be a special guest there, with the **Junkyard Angels**. **Albert King and his Blues Band** will be at the T&C on Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th. Finally, 26th July will see the welcome return of **Etta James**, with **The Roots Band**, her first visit here with her own band, though she has been here before with pick-up bands.

Sunday evenings at T&C2, 20/22 Highbury Corner, London N.5, see the new **Film Club** venture, with music related films with the sound track through the PA system, which should be interesting. If you want blues films, then let them know.

Incidentally, 'Mojo' Buford will not be appearing at Burnley Mechanics Centre as previously advertised. There will be a replacement act. On 14th July, **Taj Mahal** will be at Burnley. I hear the Burnley festival was a great success and will obviously be repeated next year.

Further afield, there will be a festival at **Gaildorf, West Germany**, on Fri. 30th June and Saturday 1st July. Prices for the festival are 16DM on Friday, 18DM on Saturday or 27DM for both days. Details and tickets are obtainable from **KULTURSCHMIEDE GAILDORF E. V.** Organised by **Werner Eichele**, Schillerstr. 7, 7160 Gaildorf. Tel: 07971/5753. Artists booked are: **Henry Heggen & Abbi Wallenstein** blues duo, **Eb Davis Bluesband** (Eb is from New York but is an American serviceman stationed in Germany), **Vince Weber**, Chicago blues singer **Zora Young** with **Christian Willisohn**, **The Mighty Flyers**, from California, **Hans Theesink** and **Jon Sass**, Holland's **Magic Frankie** and the **Blues Disease**, **Otis Grand & The Dancekings** and **Phillip Walker Blues Band**, an American west coast bluesman. On 3 June, **Pete York** and **Brian Auger** also appear in Gaildorf, so if your holidays take you to the area, you've

got plenty to enjoy.

Jo Ann Kelly is back in business with a number of gigs: Wed 7th June, The Railway, Clapham, with **Geraint Watkins**; 22nd June Half Moon Putney, with her band; 15th July WOMAD Blues and Rhythm festival South Park, Bracknell (solo); 22nd July Hounslow Civic Centre (with her band); 26th July, The Folk Club, Carlisle (solo); 27th July, The Black Swan, York (solo).

Welsh Skiffle band, complete with Washboard and Tea-chest Bass, **Railroad Bill**, will be at the Sir George Robey, N. London, on Sun 18th June. Contact number for the band is 0222 491209.

Midlands Blues-based four-piece **Off The Wall** will be at The Bird in Hand, Hilderstone, Staffs on Sat. 3rd June. The Band can be contacted on 0782 722113, for further gig information.

A new London Blues venue on Monday nights is the Victoria, Worple Road,

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Isleworth, where **Top Topham** gigs each week with various guests. For further details contact John Rees on 01-892 3536.

BBR gigs at London's 100 Club in Oxford Street include: **Shakey Vick and his Combination Boogie** with special guests, on 20th June from **Johnny Winter's** band, **Jon Paris** and **Rockola**, plus **The Diplomats**; July 4th, special guest **Lucky Lopez Evans** and band; July 25th special guest **Chris Youlden** (tbc). Those who were at the last 100 club gig with **Lucky Evans** will look forward to his return.



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July 4th: from USA, **Leo 'Lucky Lopez' Evans** (ex-**Howling Wolf**) and band.

July 25th: **Chris Youlden** (ex **Savoy Brown**) Plus **Tom Nolan's Bluescasters**.

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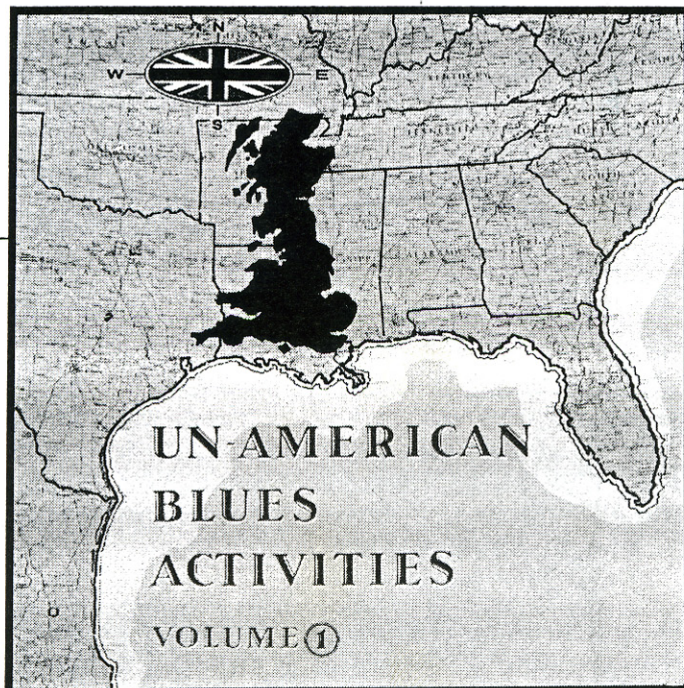
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