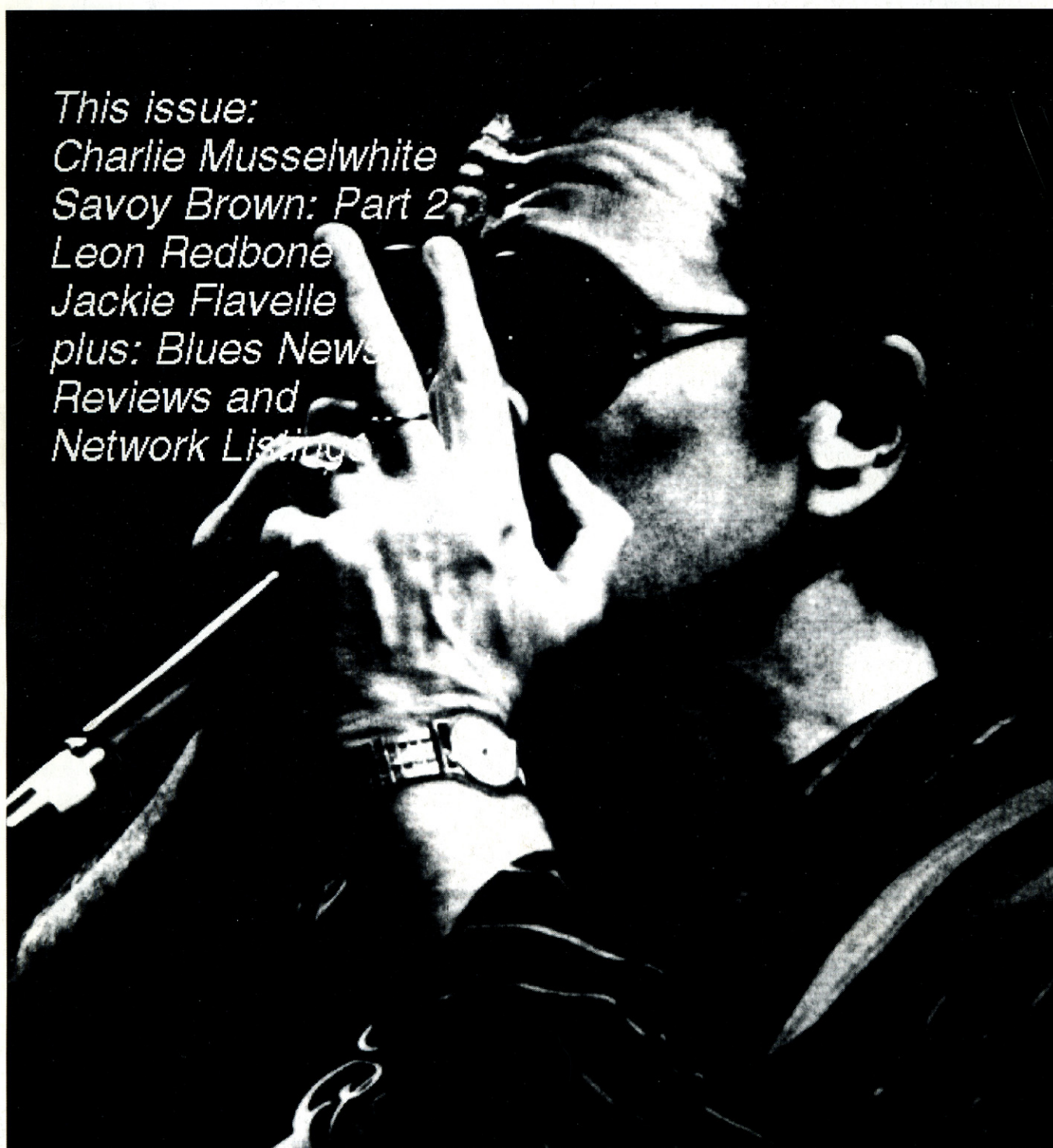


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BBB Boogie

ISSUE No. 17 MAY 1991

*This issue:
Charlie Musselwhite
Savoy Brown: Part 2
Leon Redbone
Jackie Flavelle
plus: Blues News
Reviews and
Network Listings*



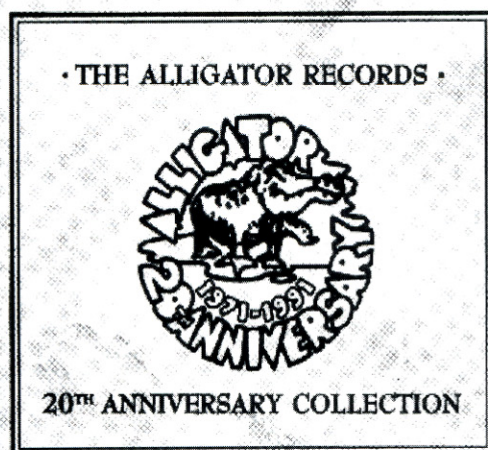
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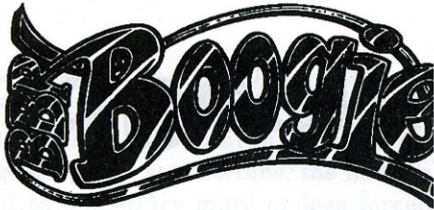
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Dear Editor,

Thanks for the latest issue of BBR - Boogie, it was really great reading from start to finish.

As you can see, I have enclosed renewal for my subscription, even if I was in doubt to continue beforehand, reading this latest issue changed my decision completely.

I must admit that articles like the one on Savoy Brown, or an interview with Paul Jones is for me the right way to continue.

To be honest, I prefer fifties and sixties blues above most of the recent new releases.

Final request, can you give me the address of the person who wrote the Savoy Brown story, maybe he would be able to tape the BBC recordings he mentioned?

Thanks in advance and hope to receive the latest issue as soon as possible.

Bye for now and keep up the good work.

**Harald de Boer
 Oss, Holland.**

Ed: Thanks for your comments Harald. Unfortunately, as editor, I have to try to get a mix of articles, rather than cover any one period.

In fact, if I published only what I preferred, I doubt if anyone else would be interested. The difficulty is that many of the groups of the fifties and sixties have already had plenty of coverage in the past and even though Savoy Brown didn't become the darlings of the Press, they didn't do so badly as far as working success is concerned. Another problem, as always, is giving a balanced account. Tim Pratt has obviously done his homework, which is why the article is being well received, but it is not the whole of the story. Perhaps we'll get that later from other sources. I'll pass on your requests about the tapes.

Dear Editor,

It was a welcome to receive the last issue of BBR after a long gap since the previous one, particularly as it had Tim Pratt's excellent and most comprehensive account of one of my

favourite bands, Savoy Brown. As he rightly says, the press never really gave them credit for their contribution to British Blues despite their long and changing career.

He mentions some early tapes of BBC sessions and live concerts during '68-'70. Are these tapes generally available? If so, where could I get my hands on them? Also, I wonder how much those early singles fetch these days, particularly the early stuff released by Purdah.

Bob Brunning produced a very good book back in 1986 called, "Blues-The British Connection" which contained a personalised view of the bands history but Tim's article made fascinating reading. I was a bit surprised that he didn't mention "Life's One Act Play" from "A Step Further" LP. This track surely must rank as one of the most ambitious blues numbers of its time as it not only features a brass section but strings as well. The instrumental "Master Hare" from "Raw Sienna" also has a string solo in the middle, quite unusual for a blues record.

Roll on part two of the story, the BBR Boogie magazine was well worth-the wait!

Yours sincerely

**J.R. Ogle
 West Thurrock, Essex,**

Ed: Julian, the comments to Harald de Boer also apply to you as far as the content of the mag and the tapes are concerned. With regard to the value of records I suggest you check out specialist collectors, perhaps through enquiries via Record Collector .

Dear Editor,

Sub enclosed for next year. Keep up the work with a great mag, though personally I could do without Blind Willie. Another page of news & views would be of much more interest.

Regards

**Graham Langley
 Crowthorne, Berkshire**

Ed: Again, I'm not publishing only what I like, Blind Willie isn't one of my favourites either, but many readers enjoy it. As far as more news and views...well, going monthly should help that aspect.

Going Back To Chicago

A profile of

SNATCH IT BACK

By Paul Lewis

Snatch It Back are Wales' foremost practitioners of the blues. With three strong albums to their credit, a Paul Jones Show session under their belts and a burgeoning following on the continent, now seemed a good time to have a chat about their origins, influences and aspirations as a band. To this end, I met with the group's singer/harp player Chris Rees and guitarist Dave Dearneley at Chris' Cardiff home, which also doubles as the base for his mail order record business, HARP ON BLUES INC. There amongst the boxes of R'N'B albums, we spent a fascinating afternoon discussing the music they obviously so dearly love, and about which they spoke intelligently and provocatively.

Both blues fanatics since the 'sixties, I asked them how it was that two young Welsh kids had first encountered the music:

CHRIS: 'I got introduced when I was about eleven, twelve. One of the kids in school, his father was from the States. Because I liked rock'n'roll - Elvis, all that sort of thing - he took me to his house, where his father, who was this black guy from Georgia, had all these records. He was at sea, so he just sort of picked them up - all this original Sun stuff, Chess stuff...and he played me a few of them. It was the first time I ever heard Howlin' Wolf, 'Smokestack Lightnin'. It was just unbelievable. But it was about four, five years before I heard these songs again - you couldn't get the records very easily. The first big influences were John Mayall, The Stones, The Yardbirds - these were the guys that we could hear playing the blues.'

DAVE: 'It's similar in my case. I had a friend at school who was a couple of years older than me, and he was a bit of a misfit - think we both were actually - but he had a knack of ferreting out these records that he'd heard on Luxembourg, stations like

that. And funnily enough he turned me on to the B-side of 'Smokestack Lightnin' on the Chess single, called 'Goin' Down Slow'. That just blew me away, and it still does to this day. It was that and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, because at the time I was getting into the folk boom - Dylan and so on - and they were parallel to all that, Terry and McGhee, Mississippi John Hurt, all these people I was hearing as a result of a friendship with a guy who had all the records.

'I was also heavily influenced by the Stones, in fact that's something that's never left me. I like the way the Stones play the blues. I was really disappointed seeing them live recently, that they didn't play a real downhome number, because I think it's their forte. Richards is the master of that 'feel'. Despite being inspired to form their own groups by these 'sixties heroes, it wasn't really until the mid-Eighties that the pair found the perfect vehicle for their desire to play hard-bitten Chicago-style blues, with the formation of Snatch It Back. The intervening years had seen them incorporating bluesy elements into the styles of various bands, whose main thrusts had been rock or rock 'n' roll. Chris had

taken up the harmonica towards the end of the seventies, due to his desire to play an instrument to supplement his blues singing. And he was also perfecting a talent for songwriting, which led to one of his songs being recorded by the hit-making, local boy-made-good, Dave Edmunds:

CHRIS: 'I knew Kingsley Ward from Rockfield, and I sent him a tape of some songs I'd written. Somehow, Edmunds got hold of a copy, and he ended up doing 'Bail You Out' on an album, 'D.E.7th'. The album wasn't exactly the biggest seller he ever had, but it was good to have something on there at least.'

The record did, in fact, get into the lower reaches of the LP charts, and sold well in the States. And sharing the songwriter credits with Rees was at least one illustrious name:

CHRIS: 'Springsteen! Actually what I was told was they had a choice as to the single. Edmunds wanted to do 'Bail You Out' at one time, but the record company had the last say and they picked the Springsteen number, 'From Small Things, Big Things Come'. But it didn't get anywhere, anyway so...(laughs).

It was to be another four years before Snatch It Back recorded the number themselves, reworking the neo-cajun tune into a much harder, bluesy rocker and featuring it as the opener on their 1989 album, 'The Movie'. In the meantime, they had been working away in the pubs and clubs of South Wales, slipping the occasional original song into what had become - locally at least - an unbeatable set of 'standard' blues material. This phase of the group's career culminated in the recording of their debut album which featured a sweaty live session laid down at Cardiff's 'Royal Oak' pub,

where the band still hold down a Sunday night residency which is legendary in the area. With some geographical good fortune, the location of this hostelry more or less forced upon them the rather glamorous title 'Live On Broadway'.

The whole idea of recording an album themselves in their local pub may have begun as a joke, and it may have been made on 'borrowed time, with borrowed people and borrowed equipment' (a rented 8-track, a household hi-fi and a mixing desk tucked away in an upstairs room, whilst a multicore was run down into the cramped downstairs bar where the band was actually playing), but the results are more than credible. 'Live On Broadway' is a splendid slice of barroom blues, in fact. It also provided the band with an impressive calling card:

DAVE: 'We had something to send people - more than a cassette, more than just a photograph...we actually had something solid; I suppose it showed a level of commitment.'

CHRIS: 'I had a lot of friends (in Holland), and I knew a guy who runs a record company over there. And being a blues nut when it comes to records, I always go to his shop to buy stuff when I'm over there, so I took about 10-15 copies of the album over with me, just to give around. I gave him one of the albums, and he played it and said he'd take a few of them off me. So he took about five copies, and then when we went over a second time - as a band this time - we happened to be at a club and Paul Duvivie, the guy from the record company, asked us if we fancied doing another album. We said yes, but that we couldn't afford to do another one ourselves. So he said: "Alright then, if you're interested..."'

Apart from a medley of Wolf's '44 Blues' and Elmore James' 'Pickin' The Blues', the second album consisted entirely of original material. I asked if this had been a band decision, or if it had been forced upon them by their new Dutch label, TRAMP:

DAVE: "It was our own policy. The only reason there hadn't been any more on the first album was that we just hadn't written enough, because as a 'covers' band - a fun blues band - which is all we were originally, there was no need at that stage. All we'd been interested in was having a go at some of the tunes that we'd always liked. But again its a



question of how far you want to go and at the end of the day money comes into the equation; if you're going to attempt to make a living or at least secure something for the future, then the only way to do it is by writing your own material, otherwise all the mechanical rights go to other people.

'You know there's a point you arrive at - for us, when we'd decided to do the first album - when you have to temper having a good time, which is what I suppose we were all about, with the harsh facts of doing records that are financially viable.'

This second release also marked the debut of the group's new drummer Robert Wilding who stepped into the shoes of Ian Davies when the latter didn't feel able to meet the demands of so many overseas trips. Wilding had been behind the kit with successful seventies unit Racing Cars ('They Shoot Horses Don't They?'), and as with his previous outfit, his playing with Snatch It Back introduced a whole new set of rhythmic possibilities into the band's make-up. Wilding counts among his influences Little Feat's Richie Hayward and Ry Cooder stalwart Jim Keltner, and to hear him in tandem with Paul Higgins, a bassist

in the Bill Wyman mould, is one of the greatest pleasures on the local scene. Wilding's heroes, and many other non-Chicago sources were inspirational in the putting together of their third and most diverse LP, 'Dynamite' (1990).

Written and recorded in just six weeks ('It was sprung on us a bit'), this collection has a magpie feel, with that musical box of tricks known as 'Americana' well and truly rifled through. The opener, 'Little Miss Pleasure' shows the Little Feat influence most clearly, although Rees' Bullet mike-distorted vocals make it far dirtier than anything Lowell George's band ever attempted. 'Good Morning Mr. Jones' has a smokey, jazzy edge, whilst the title track and 'I Like You' are pure rock'n'roll. I asked them how 'The Ballad Of Edward Johnson', a country-tinged ramble with a Dylan-esque theme had come about:

CHRIS: 'That's through watching a programme on TV about this guy who was killed for no reason at all. (Two BBC films, 'Fourteen Days In May' & 'The Journey' document the case of Edward Earl Johnson, a 26-year old black man executed in Mississippi in 1987 for the shooting to death of a town sheriff some eight years earlier.

Needless to say, Johnson was innocent of the crime.) I just wanted to write a song about him. It so happened that Dave came over with a riff that he'd written....'

DAVE: 'It's something that I'd had earmarked as an instrumental, that I was going to do with slide. Very much a Ry Cooder sort of thing. Then we sat down and started knocking it around and Chris had this lyric....A few people have commented that it's quite a jaunty little tune with such a serious subject.

I put it to them that such a 'confusion' in form and content could have actually worked in their favour, since the 'casual' nature of the piece seemed to point out the 'everyday' nature of such atrocities down South even today. A million miles away from the sort of heads-bowed, arm raised 'Biko' approach, closer to reportage than showbiz moralising:

CHRIS: 'Exactly. Which has actually been done for a long time in the blues, I mean you had Little Walter doing things like 'Dead President'. Howling Wolf had a couple of things in the early '70s which were protest songs, I suppose, but the way in which he did them - one of them was called 'Coon On The Moon', you know - it had its kind of jokey side, taking the mickey a bit, but the actual lyrics are quite good in view of what he's actually trying to say.'

DAVE: 'The thing is, we don't think that what we do is a particularly good medium for educating people. We're not in the business of education, we're in the business of entertainment, although having said that, if you see something that stimulates you into writing a song, then do it by all means. I think that's the way we deal with that dichotomy.'

We went on to talk about playing 'live' as opposed to on record. They'd said earlier that they had made their first three journeys to play in Holland purely 'on spec', sometimes finding cancelled gigs awaiting them when they arrived at their destinations. Having had two albums released on a Dutch record label, I asked them whether they still played the same small clubs that had played host to them on previous visits:

CHRIS: 'We play the festivals now. We still do clubs, but the clubs that are really for blues, which we were trying

to get into before, you know. We did the Amsterdam Blues Festival last year, which went very well. We also did the Osterhuis Festival. We do a lot with Otis Grand, it seems to me. But also we've played with James Harman over there; Honeyboy Edwards as well.'

DAVE: 'Kenny Neal.'

CHRIS: 'Katie Webster. When I was over in Belgium I met Ronnie Earl, The Thunderbirds.'

Getting into present-day heroes here I suspected:

CHRIS: 'The Thunderbirds are, yes. I've always liked Kim Wilson's harp playing.

DAVE: 'I like Ronnie Earl. I prefer his earlier stuff, I've got to be honest. If you're reading this out there Ronnie, that's what you should be doing. The 'Smokin' album is absolutely tremendous.'

Despite all of this rubbing shoulders with blues stars both contemporary and classic, one thing Snatch It Back refuse to be is a pick-up band:

DAVE: 'We can't afford to risk our identity as Snatch It Back. I mean that's the bottom line.'

CHRIS: 'Yes, it's not worth the bother. Be honest, sometimes you have a half a day to learn this stuff. It doesn't do you any good as a musician to be put in that situation. I enjoy jamming, I really do, but I wouldn't like to be in a situation where you are the main backing band for these people, because they've got their ideas of how things should be, and also the people listening to you know how they want these people to sound.'

With their name slowly getting known around the rest of Britain as well as on the continent, I wondered what sort of audiences they're attracting nowadays:

DAVE: 'At the time we did the first album we couldn't get anybody under the age of about 25-28, but over the last two years that's completely turned around and they're getting younger and younger all the time.'

CHRIS: 'Young people are coming up to us all the time. One young lad in one club we've played, he said: 'I've never heard a live band before. I've been to discos and all these sorts of things, but I've never heard a live band. This guy was about 17.'

Despite agreeing that the current 'roots revival' has been done some promotional good by the return to the fold of several established rock names,

Dave is sceptical as to how long they will remain loyal this time, once the 'boom' is over, and is also sad to see promising young bluesmen like Jeff Healey getting further and further into rock territory with each release:

DAVE: 'I think they really blow it when they make that move. You should be able to make it on the merits of the material you're doing without making it more commercial. A lot of these guys also, they must be under pressure from their record companies to sell the units, because they all seem to be going in this sort of rather bland Joe Louis Walker, Robert Cray sort of direction, which I think ultimately ends up with sort of glossy, blues-cabaret shows like that B.B. King thing on the TV the other night ('B.B. King and Friends'). To me, its very nice to see all these guys, but that really is the unacceptable face of the blues today. That really is horrible, to see it glossed up and glamourised like that, because really it's about sweaty little clubs, with people getting off to the music.'

CHRIS: 'We're going back to the Chicago roots in a way, we try to keep that danger that's in those blues, and also in a lot of early rock things. A lot of bands have lost that danger, they're afraid of it, so they stay away from it.'

DAVE: 'They've sanitised it.'

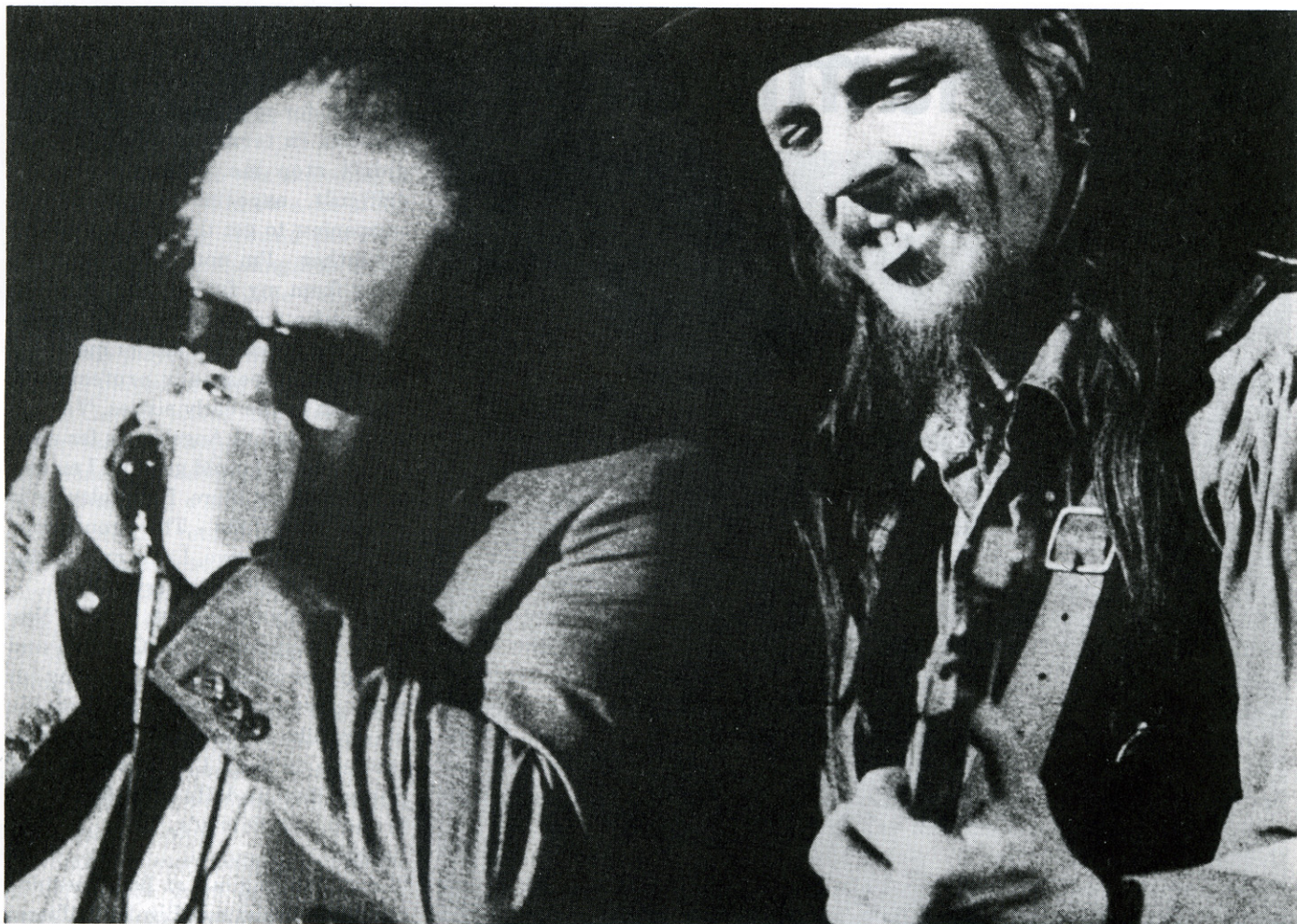
Despite this trend, they both readily admit that there are promising new names coming through all the time:

DAVE: 'From our point of view its quite frightening. There's bound to be kids 17, 18 years old that are getting into it for the first time, who might be bloody good. And we might miss out as a result, but it's good for the blues nevertheless.'

So is there an age limit on performing the blues?

CHRIS: 'No, not really. In fact the blues broadens the age limits. You can be anything from - if you're looking at Sugar Chile Robinson, from 8, up to 80. In some cases you get people, like us really, who've been interested in the blues for a long time and have never really had the chance to play, there's never really been the sort of place to play. Even in South Wales, and this has got to be one of the homes of r'n'b in this country.'

DAVE: 'It's regarded that way. Lots of the musicians 'round here have made it as sidemen, session players, and I



think it's been forced about by circumstance. If a guy feels it in him to make it as a musician, at the end of the day he has to make a choice. Either he stays at home with his local band not getting the breaks or he takes whatever opportunity presents itself and he goes as a session man. I really think that's happened a lot in this area. We've been three years now making a serious go of it and we're making progress, but it's still taking time and we're not getting any younger. We're older and more mature and we realise that these things are going to take time, but a lot of younger guys, they haven't got three years to wait, they want it *now*. So they have a go, if nothing happens, then they go their separate ways.'

CHRIS: 'Which is a shame because in some cases the bands are very good. It's only because there's so much apathy and lack of help from the media in the area - that goes for the BBC, HTV and also the papers.'

DAVE: 'Until recently this was the only area in the country where you could be English speaking but not get on the media because of your language. That's a policy that's only just beginning to change. We couldn't go on

the West Country channels because we were from Wales, but we couldn't get on Welsh TV either, because we spoke the wrong language. I don't want to make a big issue of this, but there's a lot of musicians in South Wales who would back me up on this. You know, we could have got on the TV three years ago if we'd done a blues number in Welsh, but that wouldn't be *Snatch It Back*, it would be a con. It's insulting to Welsh speaking people because we're not Welsh speaking. Fortunately, now with 'Night Club' (HTV's all-night service) and a few other things, we've managed to gain some access to the media, but even so there still isn't the funding'.

But with a datesheet bulging with planned gigs in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Yugoslavia and 'all points where the albums have touched', perhaps lingual hassles with the local media shouldn't hamper them too much. And with TRAMP on the point of signing an American distribution deal and enquiries already coming in from the States, maybe the band will soon be taking the blues 'back home', too. The productive recording rate shows no sign of slacking either, with a new album due mid '91 :

CHRIS: 'You said the last album was a little bit more diverse; well, hopefully we're going to get this one back to what we were all about initially and have more aggression - more like that old Chicago style again - without being 'live'.'

DAVE: 'We want to get some of the 'live'-ness back into the records, into the studio albums. I think that they're both a bit sterile by comparison to the live album, although they're much better recorded, sparkle a bit more on the turntable. But I'd still like to get some of the feel of that first album.'

Four albums in four years, though. Not bad going:

DAVE: 'The thing is, we're going to be writing 'Blues For A Bus Pass' fairly soon, and there's nothing in the pension fund.'

Discography:

'*Live On Broadway*' (1988) (*Snatch It Productions SNATCH 1*)

'*The Movie*' (1989) (*Tramp TR 9903*)

'*Dynamite*' (1990) (*Tramp TRCD 9904; TR 9904*)

Paul Lewis

John Hammond

interviewed by
Trevor Hodgett

Most of us have childhood memories of being taken by our dads to football matches or the circus. But when your dad is the most famous record company executive in history then your childhood treats become the stuff of legend.

John Hammond, whose father John Hammond Snr. discovered Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen, remembers, for example, being taken at the age of thirteen to the Apollo Theatre in Harlem.

"Nineteen fifty six. I remember it vividly," he recalls. "Bo Diddley. He played with drums and a maracca player and they were fantastic. It was mindboggling. Also on the bill was Jimmy Reed and Muddy Waters, with Little Walter playing harmonica. Howlin' Wolf as well. It was a truly magnificent blues show. I'd had some albums but it was my first time seeing it live. Bo Diddley was sensational. This is when he actually played and sang. Now he kinda talks a lot on his shows. Every now and then he'll get an inspiration and play a little bit, but then he played direct. It was great."

A few years later, in 1958, Hammond witnessed the Newport Festival. "I was actually employed. I paid several of the artists including Herbie Mann. George Wein (the promoter) gave me \$5,000 to pay this guy. I'd never held more than \$100 in my hand in my life and I was handed \$5,000 and told to pay Herbie Mann. I remember counting it out to him and he said (snarls) 'Give it to me and let me count it.'

"Chuck Berry was on the show cos I'd bugged my father that he had to have Chuck, 'cos at that time he was really hot. A few years later I was on a show with him in Michigan State Fair about 1964 and I was so thrilled I was on the

show with Chuck Berry, I sort of looked into his area backstage and said, 'Excuse me...' and before I could even get out another word he said, 'Fuck you. Get out of here. Who the fuck are you?' It just crushed me. I realised that some guys aren't so nice." Hammond's greatest inspiration was and is, Robert Johnson. "He was probably the synthesis of the blues artists of the thirties. He had obviously heard and been influenced by Lonnie Johnson and Skip James and Willie Brown, Son House and Leroy Carr. But what he came up with was so unique: his own voice, his own guitar style that really was so far ahead and so dynamic. I think of him as perhaps the best because he had everything. He had so many styles down, so many subtleties that were

"I knew a lot of the artists that hung around the New York scene, including Bob Dylan and John Sebastian, Jose Feliciano, Richie Havens ... everybody played and hung out in the street, played in the coffee houses, passed the hat."

fantastic"

According to his father's autobiography, *On Record*, Hammond's career began when he disguised himself as a blind man and went busking in the streets of Florida. "That's my father's fantasy," exclaims Hammond somewhat indignantly. "My dad and I had a kind of a funny relationship. When I became a musician he really was bummed out - I mean literally - maybe because he thought it was a terrible business, that it was gonna be very hard for me, or maybe he thought that it just stunk. I have no idea. He just thought I was being crazy and stupid, I guess. It really hurt me badly, so our relationship after that became sort of testy.

"I found that everywhere I went to perform - and I didn't ask him for any

help or anything - everybody knew my father. As a result, it was very difficult for me to establish my own persona in terms of who I was. It didn't stop me, but it was very difficult, especially with record companies, to get them to see beyond my father. I'm not taking anything away from my father who's a great man, who was heroic in so many ways, but it made it hard for me."

Hammond became a professional musician in the early sixties. "I began my career in Los Angeles, as far away from home as I could get, and I made a big success out there. I was playing in all the nice clubs - The Troubadour and The Ash Grove. I was making the scene there and doing very well.

"I eventually came back East to New York. I stopped off in Chicago and played jobs there and was hanging out with guys who were really terrific players like Michael Bloomfield, who took me to hear Little Walter and Sonny Boy and Howlin' Wolf and Muddy, at Silvio's, the Pepper Lounge. . .

"I was hanging out at Bob Koester's record store and met Big Joe Williams who lived in his back room, and I had a car and Big Joe said, 'Man, you got a

car. I got some gigs to play. You gonna drive me to these gigs? I'll let you play harmonica with me.'

"So I went for a week on tour with Big Joe and I got to play every night. It was really fantastic. By the time I came to New York I was ready to play."

Hammond refutes the story that he was discovered by the then popular Rooftop Singers. "No, not at all. I wasn't discovered by the Rooftops. The scene in New York at that time revolved round a club called Gerde's Folk City, so I played at the audition nights, the hoot nights, and I was very popular at those hoots, so the owner Mike Porco hired me to play there for a week. I was sharing the bill with Phil Ochs. It was also his first job in New York and Vanguard Records was down there every night to hear us and

they offered us contracts. My first six albums were on Vanguard, then I left and they released another album after I left."

The New York scene was exploding in the early sixties. "I knew a lot of the artists that hung around the New York scene then, including Bob Dylan and John Sebastian, Jose Feliciano, Richie Havens. It was incredible. Everybody played and hung out in the streets, played in the coffee houses, passed the hat. It was really terrific.

"Everybody was equal, no one made any money. It was great that you got to do what you wanted to do. That was before the record industry went nuts and became so big that they were buying out radio stations and stuff. This was the folk scene."

By 1965 Hammond's relationship with Vanguard was fraught. "I enjoyed recording for Vanguard, but they were very conservative in their own far out way and they weren't always as enthusiastic as I was about the things I thought were good.

"I wanted to record with some friends of mine who were great players: Michael Bloomfield, Charlie Musselwhite, Robbie Robertson, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Rick Danko and Dick Manuel. These were



John Hammond and Trevor Hodgett Photo by Trish Keogh

"...and Big Joe said 'Man, you got a car. I got some gigs to play. You gonna drive me to these gigs? I'll let you play harmonica with me.'"

accomplished players, but Vanguard thought they were riffraff, and I said, 'No, wait a minute, you don't understand. These guys are just what I want to record with. This will be great.' They gave us two sessions. I mean, we're talking six hours to make an album, *So Many Roads*.

"That led to my first departure from Vanguard. I was so bummed with them for not acknowledging my taste - or who I thought was good - and these guys, every one of them turned out to be a star, and it really hurt me that Vanguard just thought so little of my taste."

Many of the musicians who played with Hammond later worked with Dylan. "I knew Dylan and Dylan was into everything I was doing and I introduced him to Mike Bloomfield

and he recorded with Michael right away. Snapped him right up. Then I introduced him to the guys in The Band, who were called Levon and the Hawks then, and the next thing I know, they were recording with Bob on his payroll up in Woodstock, at Big Pink."

Hammond speaks of Dylan with affection. "I knew Bob when he was a real guy and he hung out and he wasn't uptight. You see, he got signed up to Albert Grossman - y'know - Personal Management Deluxe. Albert's idea of how to make it was to take Bob and seclude him in some faraway place. Keep him away from his friends, from his associates, and make him this very elusive, exclusive guy with a mystique, and he created that mystique through God knows what. I don't even want to think what all went down.

"Bob became very remote, very uptight amongst regular folks after that, but I always remained friends with Bob to this day. I saw him about three years ago. I just know there's something

about him and me that goes so far back beyond the hoity, toity rock days. I'll always know the guy and he'll always know me for who I am. I just feel bad that he should be so out there drifting somehow and going from one extreme to the next. I mean this guy was once a real terrific guy. Really."

Another rock legend, Jimi Hendrix, was a member of Hammond's band. "He played with me for about two weeks before he went over to England and became a huge star. He was just a really nice cat. Really nice cat and really talented. Blues and r'n'b was his thing. I think when he came to Europe he was encouraged to just stretch out and go psychedelic, cos that's what was happening and he didn't mind to drop a tab or two! When he first came back to New York after his success he looked me up and we hung out. He was a nice guy. No lie. He was a real straight guy."

Hammond's band at that time also featured Randy California, later of Spirit. "Yeah, for a brief time. He was a young kid. He had a lot of energy.

He was a good guitar player. I rarely saw him after that. Randy Wolf, his name was."

In 1967 Hammond played at the Apollo Theatre with Big Mama Thornton. "That's true! Where did you read that? There was Buddy Guy, Junior Wells and Big Mama Thornton and Buddy Guy got sick and they asked me if I would fill in for him and I did. I was numb. I was so thrilled to be there that it was phenomenal. It was an amazing scene."

By 1968 Hammond had signed to Atlantic. "Atlantic was one of those deals where Jerry Wexler who signed me to the label idolised my father so much that the guy never really gave me a listen or a fair shake, so I got the sloppy end of the deal. Many years later he called me in the middle of the night and apologised to me for having not ever given me a chance."

Atlantic sent Hammond to record with the legendary Muscle Shoals musicians. "It was very difficult. I'd been having a hard time with these guys, just trying to get across what I wanted to do. I was pissed off. I was really bummed out. I was all set to go back to New York and just tell Atlantic that these guys weren't really happening for me. They were good musicians all of them - Barry Beckett, Roger Hawkins, David Hood, Jimmy Johnston, Eddie Hinton - but they had attitude. They were tough with me. They were really like, 'Who the hell are you?' And I looked young then.

"I'd been down there for three days and Duane (Allman) heard that I was recording there, where he'd done a lot of session work with Aretha and Pickett and a lot of other guys. Duane came to meet me and all these guys who were on the set, all these guys really idolised Duane. So when Duane showed up and said, 'Where's John Hammond?' and showed them that he dug me, all of a sudden they understood everything that I meant! Later on I got to know them better."

Moving on to CBS, Hammond, in 1973, released *Triumvirate*, on which, to his intense chagrin, Dr. John and Mike Bloomfield are given co-billing. "It was my album. I hired Mac and Mike, who were friends of mine, to back me on the recording date. I chose the songs. I did all the songs. It was my record. Then right in the middle of the session Mac got this hit with *Right Place*



John Hammond, Photo: Ken Robbins

Wrong Time on Atlantic, so Columbia said, 'Wow, we've got this guy on this recording date,' so they exploited his name and sort of screwed me out of all the points on the album. It was my album and they made it into like this *Supersession* thing. It was bogus."

Since leaving CBS Hammond has continued to record prolifically. "I went back to Vanguard in 1976 and I made three more LP's for them. One was called *Solo*. The other was *Footwork* with Roosevelt Sykes playing piano on four of the cuts, and then the third one I did for them was

called *Hot Tracks*. I was backed up by a band called *The Nighthawks*. That was in 1978 and then I left Vanguard again. I went to Rounder.

"For the last twelve years I've been working all over the world intensely and it's just getting better and better for me. I'm very happy and I feel as good or better than I have in my whole life."

Trevor Hodgett

THE STORY OF
BLIND WILLIE McTOOL



Bad luck and trouble

With humble apologies to all those great men & women who have lived and died for their art. But no apologies to artists of Stockport.

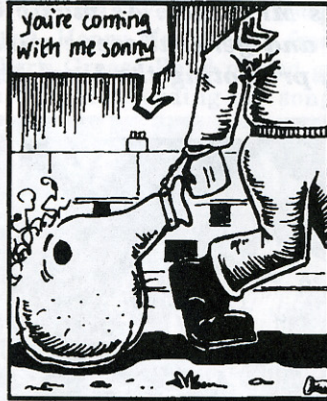
Well, 'Blind Willie blues' was sellin' pretty good and Willie was beginning to hit it big. Him & Barrelhouse done got themselves a gig down at the dirty dog on main street. They was makin' good money down at that place and things was lookin' pretty good...



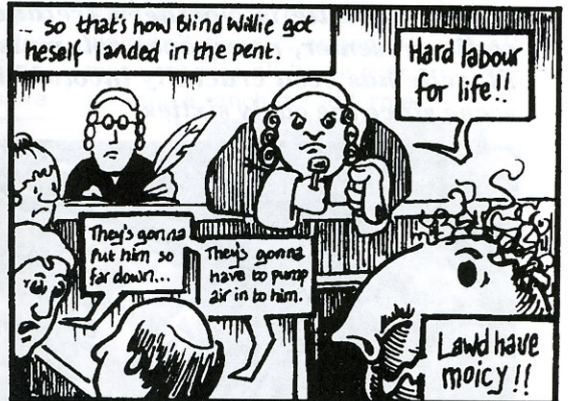
...until one night...

That's him officer, he killed my brother.

dat's moider! (moider in the first degree).



you're coming with me sonny



... so that's how Blind Willie got heseff landed in the pent.

Hard labour for life!!

They's gonna put him so far down...

They's gonna have to pump air in to him.

Lawd have moicy!!



So po' blind Willie was sent out to work on the levees...

Jeez, I donno. guess he aint goin' no place no how.

where do I put the shackles on him boss?



...but they soon saw that Willie weren't no good for diggin' no levee.

AIN'T YOU GOOD FOR NOTHIN' BOY?

Well sir, I can play the harmonica sir.



Well why didrit you say so boy? You can play some o' them WORKSONGS, that way we can get twice as much work outa them no-good sons o' bitches.



So everyday Willie played and sang while the other prisoners worked on the levee...



and in the evening that harp could be heard, sad and lonesome. That's blind Willie playing the blues.



but he jus' couldn't play it like he did in the old days...



he missed his old friend Barrelhouse with his thumpin' guitar boogie...



and he missed the old days back on the streets of memphis.



but back on Beale street, as you can see...

there aint no crowd and there aint no boogie.



well im just playin' the best I can, but the people's so sad, without that man.



All the women got to cryin' when they heard the news, 'bout that strange little man, with a whole lotta blues.

Willie's down for murder, murder in the first degree,



but then the judges wife cried...

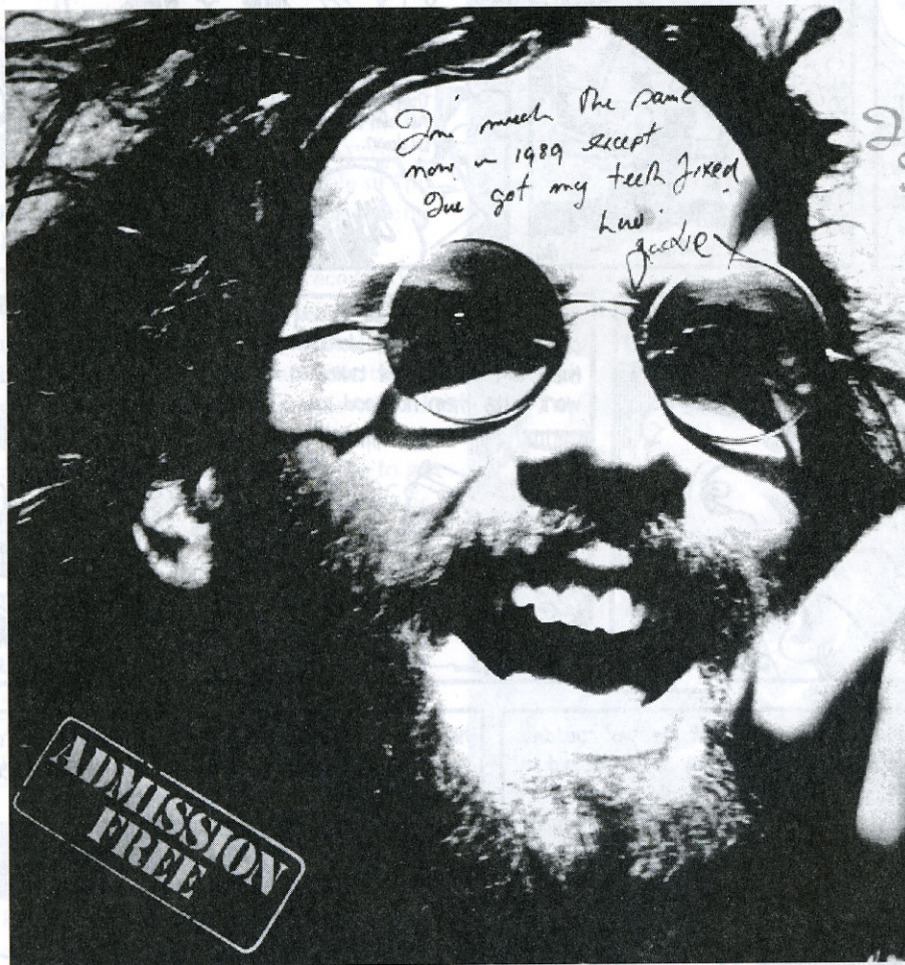
let that boy blind Willie go free...

to be continued...

FREELY ADMITTED: JACKIE FLAVELLE

talks to Trevor Hodgett

Jackie Flavelle is Northern Ireland's Mr Blues. As musician, radio presenter, newspaper columnist and general scene maker, Flavelle has been crucially involved in promoting the local blues scene since the early sixties.



Like other great Irish bluesers such as Van Morrison, Rory Gallagher and Henry McCullough, Flavelle first turned pro with a showband, joining the Dave Glover Band as bass guitarist in 1959. "We used to get the top ten records and learn them. Dave and I fell out over rock'n'roll. I used to sing Shaking All Over. Dave said, 'You're too loud, and I says, 'You bastards can't play rock'n'roll anyway!' There was a shouting match onstage. We got to my house afterwards and Dave threw my gear out of the back of the van and said, 'GOODBYE!!!'"

After a few years playing with bands in Derry, Birmingham and Galway, Flavelle returned to Glover, gigging five or six nights a week around Ireland's ballrooms of romance. By now Belfast had a thriving blues scene. "That was absolutely taboo in showbands. But we used to have a room in Gt. Victoria St. for blows. Van Morrison lived on the top floor, so he was in and out of the place, and Billy Harrison who was the guitar player in Them was a mate as well. We all kicked round together. And Peter Lloyd's studio was going very strong at that time - he was making tapes of all the rhythm and blues scene. He has a

tape of Van, myself, Billy Harrison and all, playing together."

Flavelle remembers Morrison's band Them with admiration. "The first time I actually heard Them was in the Maritime Hotel and I was totally amazed. People would say now that perhaps the band was rough but it wasn't. It was at least the quality of, if not better than, any of the bands that were coming out of London. I always reckoned Van was a star. I'm one of the people who has believed in Van Morrison from the first time I saw him as a squirt to the superstar he deservedly is now. I thought he was terrific. Always. He had stage presence and very advanced vocal technique for the time. Van was the first one I actually heard locally who could sing the blues."

One memorable night, in Belfast's Astor Ballroom, Them supported the Glover Band. "We were all clean cut guys - sort of Beach Boys, short hair and uniforms - and they wore long hair and whatever they happened to put on. And the crowd went absolutely bananas. It was the first time outside of visiting English bands that I'd ever seen rock 'n' roll idolatry."

In 1966 Chris Barber invited Jackie to join his band as bass guitarist.

"Needless to say I nearly broke his arm. I was really pleased to get out of the showband scene, much fun as it was. There was no musical satisfaction. The trad boom was in the doldrums. That's why Chris hired me and John Slaughter, this very good blues guitar player who'd played with John Mayall. Him and I did a lot of blues and r'n'b and the band started to go in that direction. We were basically playing clubs, but Chris had been very big in Europe and hung on to that, so the European work sustained us. We were the first British group in East Berlin since the Cold War. We played a 15,000 seater for three nights and it was sold out. We arrived like the Beatles in New York and were followed everywhere by photographers!"

The band's singer Otilie Patterson was also from Northern Ireland. "A brilliant singer. Inspiring. She could

turn you on. You'd go 'Arrrgggghhhh'. Unfortunately a lot of her best singing records are in the early Barber days even before they had a blues guitar player, and it's a six piece traditional New Orleans lineup with a banjo, and it's not the best setting for her. But you can hear the voice. She's Bessie Smith from Comber."

The Barber Band toured with many of the greats, including Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. "One morning in this hotel in Birmingham I was woken up by these horrific female screams. This maid was running down the corridor screaming. Sonny's door was open, so I dashed in, and there was this twenty stone man, completely naked, sitting on the sink with his legs on a chair, washing whatever part of his anatomy he wanted to wash, and the maid had walked in on this. It was the funniest thing I've ever seen in my life. Sonny was laughing his bloody head off."

Sonny Boy Williamson also worked with Barber. "He was a character. Amazing. He used to keep disappearing. We were supposed to be playing in the Marquee Club and we couldn't find him - he was in Leicester Square playing the harmonica to taxi drivers. Just going from cab to cab saying 'I'm Sonny Boy Williamson man, very pleased to see you. I play the blues, you know.'"

Paul McCartney wrote and produced a single, *Catcall*, for the Barber Band. "It took about three days - a phenomenal time for a single for a jazz/blues band. It was a perfectly produced pop single and for an instrumental it did quite well. Brian Auger played organ on it, as did McCartney. Jane Ash was the chief go out and fetch food person. She would take a pound off everybody. Paul didn't carry any money. When we had a whip-round Graham Burbridge, our drummer, used to put the pound in for him! He's a very good musician. He knows about arranging. He's an excellent player."

In the late sixties Barber nearly hired a new singer. "During the time Rod Stewart was out of work, just before The Faces, he used to come down to the Marquee where we were resident and sit in with the band. And at one stage he actually asked for the gig. In fact, we had a meeting to decide whether we would let Rod join the band. The only reason we decided against was, he was a good rock singer but he wasn't a good blues singer. In the days when he was with Steampacket, Long John Baldry was the main blues singer. Now if Long

John Baldry had asked to join the band he would have got the gig, because he was a purist blues singer. Rod wasn't. But we were always very pally with Rod. Absolutely one of the boys. Eventually, when Rod made it, he wrote one of the tracks on Smiler with the Barber Band in mind - Dixie Too. So we recorded it with him. We're credited as a band, not individually." In 1972 Jackie released a solo lp of his own compositions (*Admission Free*) on York Records. "We got the best people around. Henry McCullough from Joe Cocker's Grease Band played guitar. Apart from recording my songs we



Recording session for Paul McCartney's Catcall: (l-r): member of the New Vaudeville Band, Jackie Flavelle, Brian Auger, member of Barber Band, Paul McCartney.

blew for hours. It got good reviews in *Melody Maker* and *NME*, but York went bust shortly after. It sold about 2,000, which would have been the first run in effect."

The magic began to fade for Jackie. "That era, when it was really exciting around the London scene, finished. A new scene came in with bands like Queen. The old r'n'b, all mates together scene died on its feet. It was over. And to be frank I got bored out of my tree."

While pondering his future Jackie dabbled in session work. "Hardin and York - I did those. I did sessions with Deep Purple. Me with the fretless bass. Maybe Jon Lord would have a song of his own and he would want a different style on it, and we'd go and do that."

Jackie also worked with the ex-members of The Doors. "We rehearsed for about three months, every time I wasn't working with Chris. I used to go down to this big house they had in Richmond and play for hours. We were trying for a different sort of a sound and trying ambitious things, like

things in funny time signatures. At the end of the day it didn't really work 'cos the only musician in The Doors who could actually blow was Ray Manzarek - and he didn't talk. A really strange man. The only thing he ever said to me was either 'yeah' or 'no'. Bobby Krieger, though sounding fine, learnt everything off on guitar. He would get the tune and go away with it for three days and come back with something to play on guitar and that was it till the end of time - that wouldn't have changed. It was all mega - it was all 'come over and we'll give you a ranch in California.'"

Jackie discovered the joys of broadcasting. "We were kicking about Radio Luxembourg after a gig. Baby Bob was doing his programme and he says, 'One of you guys have a blatter at this,' and me being me I was in like a dog. And I thought, 'This is great.'" With an idea now of his future Jackie left Barber. "The last job was at the Nord See Jazz Festival. We played after Count Basie and before Duke Ellington. I wanted to stop when it was all there."

Back in Northern Ireland Jackie became a late night Jock on the local commercial radio station Downtown Radio, for whom he also presents superb weekly jazz and blues programmes. In addition he still drags his bass out for gigs with various local blues bands (often accompanying the likes of Dr. John or Lowell Fulson), and contributes a music column to the *Sunday News*, ensuring that he is still able to make an important contribution to the music that first inspired and excited him thirty years ago.

Trevor Hodgett

THE S. E. 13 BLUES CONNECTION

I started Rock Around Lewisham two years ago and my aim was to focus on and briefly chart the area's associations with rock and popular music from 1950 to 1990. Lewisham has a rich local history of popular music including musicians born in the area, those who developed their music locally and those who have played in the borough. Researching the subject by studying newspapers and contacting local people, musicians and promoters, I began building up an interesting picture of Lewisham's rock history which has been published by Lewisham Council. The book contains a diverse range of rock and popular music connections from the famous to the 'unknown'. The Beatles, Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, Kate Bush, Desmond Dekker, Dire Straits, Flying Pickets, Winston Groovy, Japan, Manfred Mann, Maxi Priest, Mica Paris, Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, Squeeze, Tina Turner to name a few. Alongside these names are many lesser known bands and performers who have gigged in the area. Local skiffle groups, pub rock bands, reggae, punk and new wave groups etc. BBR Boogie readers may be interested to hear about some of the area's associations with blues and R&B.

Like many communities, Lewisham's young people, during the Fifties, underwent a "teenage revolution", part of which was the rock & roll and skiffle boom. Chris Barber's Jazz Band played at Lewisham Town Hall in 1956 with a young (Leadbelly

BROMLEY COURT HOTEL, Rengades, rhythm and blues. Next Friday, Sonny Boy Williamson. Bromley Court Hotel, Sonny Boy Williamson

influenced) Lonnie Donegan during his "Rock Island Line" period. The skiffle boom stimulated the formation of many local groups. In Lewisham The Hells Angels from the Bellingham Housing Estate were billed as "South of England's leading skiffle group". Their claim to fame in 1957 was winning a talent contest at The Granada, Woolwich. However, rock & roll rebels they were not, with gigs like

MEL WRIGHT has laid down his drumsticks temporarily for a word processor in order to write 'ROCK AROUND LEWISHAM'. This article for BBR Boogie draws out the strong R&B connections with this South London borough.

the Centenary Dinner of Chislehurst Ladies Guild!

The Witch Doctor
13 HUSNEY GREEN, CATFORD, S.E.6.
SAVOY ROOMS.

CLOSED GOOD FRIDAY

TONIGHT THURSDAY
TONY SIMONS DISC SHOW
7.30 p.m. - 11 p.m. Entrance 2'6

SUNDAY DISC CLUB
with South London's leading Disc Jockey
TONY SIMONS
7.30 p.m. - 11 p.m. Entrance 2'

The **LOOSE ENDS**
The **LONELY ONES**

During the late Fifties, the underground development of British R & B championed by Alexis Korner, Cyril Davies and Chris Barber seems

to have had little immediate effect on suburban Lewisham. However, it must have sowed the seeds for many young players and enthusiasts. And no doubt the pioneering central London blues clubs and, later, the West London blues network which were patronised by many South Londoners.

In the early Sixties British R & B developed a more popular image fuelled by the increasing interest in the music roots of The Beatles and The Stones. The Lewisham Odeon was a major South East London concert venue for these Sixties luminaries as well as a host of others. The Stones played support to Bo Diddley and Little Richard in October 1963. (They had previously played two Lewisham gigs, The Glenlyn, Forest Hill and The Witchdoctor, Catford. Futhermore Bill Wyman was born William Perks on 26th October 1936 at Lewisham Hospital.) Other R & B notables at The Odeon include: Chuck Berry (1964 show was only half full), The Animals,

LETTS GO DANCING SAVOY ROOMS, CATFORD

HITHER GREEN 840B

MODERN DANCING every Wed., Fri., Sat. (& Sun. Club)

OLD TYME DANCING every Tuesday

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SPECIAL APRIL ATTRACTIONS

Wednesday, April 10th

4 DANCE
LATIN-AMERICAN

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2 demonstrations
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Wednesday, April 17th

By public demand

welcome return visit of

S. of England's leading

SKIFFLE GROUP

"HELLS ANGELS"

Graham Bond Organisation (drummer Ginger Baker was born at Lewisham Hospital on 19th August 1940), Long John Baldry & The Hoochie Coochie Men, Canned Heat, Ray Charles, Rory Gallagher, Tommy Tucker, The Yardbirds, and many more.

Small R&B clubs sprang up in the Lewisham area. The Glenlyn featured John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton. (Mayall lived in Southbrook Road, Lee, during this period.) At the Bromel Club (Bromley Court Hotel)

Irish band Them, featuring Van Morrison.

An interesting gig in early 1964 at Laurie Grove Public Baths, New Cross, was the appearance of US bluesman Jimmy Reed. Apparently he was advertised as 'Jim Reid' and only a few people attended. I can also contribute a similar personal experience; in 1970 at Goldsmiths College, New Cross, we played to only a handful of students as The Nighthawks, accompanying Arthur

EL PARTIDO
 8-12 LEE HIGH ROAD
 LEWISHAM (Ph. Clock Tower)
 TEL. LEE 9671
 FRID. 2ND DEC. - ALL-NIGHTER
GRAND XMAS EVE PARTY
LOOSE ENDS
 DUKE LEE
 FRANK SHEEN SOUND
 SAT. XMAS DAY ALL-NIGHTER
 DUKE LEE
 SUN. 3RD DEC. - 8-2
 DUKE LEE

During a short break in the band's career Tom joined my own occasional Quaggy Delta Blues Band, (Quaggy is a stream in Lewisham). This nine piece band played regular Sunday evening gigs at The Goldsmiths

Tavern, New Cross, and featured Wolfie Witcher as well as guests Shakey Vick, Jo Anne Kelly, Carol Grimes and Sam Mitchell.

From the late Eighties to the present time a number of R&B related bands have their origins in, or are locally active, in the area. The Roadrunners, who play at The Duke, Creek Road, and Kit Packham's One Jump Ahead, have Deptford origins. Blues Party, Mick Kemp Blues Band, and Midnight Blues all play around Lewisham, as do Jagger Band (who play The Crystal Palace Tavern, Tanners Hill, Deptford, Sunday lunchtimes).

For those interested in reading more and finding out where Johnny Winter stayed in New Cross, where Blues Unlimited was published from; what Paul McCartney was doing at Ladywell Police Station in 1963; where Val Doonican got married; which Squeeze member wrote a song about public toilets in Deptford Broadway, and why Marty Wilde was rejected from the army in 1959, look no further than Rock Around Lewisham (Lewisham Leisure).

Mel Wright



The Roadrunners, at The Duke

ODEON LEWISHAM ON THE STAGE
 6.45 **FRIDAY, JANUARY 8** 9.00
 (in place of the usual film performance)
 ROBERT STIGWOOD ASSOCIATES LTD. presents
CHUCK BERRY
 THE KING OF RHYTHM & BLUES
 GRAHAM BOND ORGANISATION
 THE MOODY BLUES
 WINSTON G THE FIVE DIMENSIONS
 LONG JOHN BALDRY AND THE HOOCHIE COOCHIE MEN
 PRICES: 12/6, 10/6, 8/6, 6/6, 5/-
 Box Office Now Open 10.30 - 8.30 Sun. 4.30 - 8.30

'Big Boy' Crudup.

The Seventies produced a groundswell of pub rock in Lewisham, particularly in the Deptford area, with Dire Straits and Squeeze riding the crest of the wave. R & B was never lost within the set lists of the Lewisham bands that emerged. The Realists, The Otters, Terraplane (featuring Shakey Vick), Brockley Boogie Band, Swamp Creatures, Amazing Hot Shots, Willie & The Poor Boys

(not the Bill Wyman band). This was perhaps the heyday of pub rock.

The Lewisham blues connection continued into the Eighties against a background of wider and diverse popular music where blues and R & B perhaps sat more acceptably with mainstream popular music formats. Tom McGuinness, a longtime Lewisham resident, has a deep and active interest in blues. Along with drummer Hughie Flint, (also at the time living in the area) they helped form the Blues Band. The band has gone on to international acclaim.

Chris Farlowe & The Thunderbirds were a regular band (which included bass player Bugs Waddell of Manor Park, Lee); Geno Washington's Ram Jam Band who had Lee area origins also appeared there. El Partido Club, Lee High Road, was a venue for R & B/Soul clubbers. Bo Diddley and Solomon Burke played there as well as a reputable local R & B band, The Loose Ends. The Fellowship Inn, Bellingham, was also a popular club for circuit bands like John Mayall and, later, Fleetwood Mac. The Tigers Head in Catford hosted an appearance of

ON THE STAGE **ODEON LEWISHAM** LEE Green 1331
 6.45 **THURS. 8th OCT.** 9.00
 ROBERT STIGWOOD ASSOCIATES LTD.
 present
 THE SENSATIONAL
ROLLING STONES
 INEZ & CHARLIE FOX
 SIMON SCOTT with the LEROYS
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 Your Compere DON SPENCER
 ALL SEATS BOOKABLE
 10/6, 8/6, 6/6, 5/-
 Plus THE MOJOS

Rock Around Lewisham is available from Lewisham Libraries (£3.95) or direct from: Lewisham Local History Centre, The Manor house, Old Road, London, SE13 5SY, (£4.95 inc. p & p).

CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE: 'BUILDING UP MOMENTUM'

Charlie Musselwhite only played the one date at the T&C 2, but it was the last date of a three week slog around Scandinavia, Germany, Holland and Belgium. In short, work for Charlie Musselwhite is life on the road.

“We’re basically nearly always on the road. Sometimes I get home, do my laundry and go straight out on the road again. It gets tiresome sometimes, but things could be worse. We work a regular 300 or so dates a year mixing clubs with bars and festivals and occasionally colleges. I particularly like the festivals because it gives you the opportunity to catch up with a lot of friends, and you pick up on all the gossip” (laughs).

Charlie originated, like many of his contemporaries, in the deep south, in Mississippi. Playing the blues was an expression of a way of life. “It wasn’t anything special to play the blues. What I mean by that is that the blues always is special to me - it always struck a chord in my heart, but as a musical form blues was all around you. There was all sorts of music such as hillbilly, gospel, sacred music and rockabilly. In fact Memphis was just about the centre of things.

“Johnny Burnette lived right across the street from me, Slim Rhodes lived further down the street and Travis Waller, the guitar player, went to the same high school as me - Memphis Tech. To top it all Jimmy Griffin lived next door to me. He had a band called Bread I seem to recall. So what you had was a wide-ranging music scene with blues as an important element in it, and everyone who could play anything got into it, so they didn’t have to work in the fields or in a factory.”

Charlie’s rise to the top of his profession was the classic case of

drifting into playing and gradually picking up work, but not before a couple of major moves in his life.

“It took a long time for it to sink in that you could make a living from playing. Playing is a form of professional expression, but I was just doing it because I loved playing. I used to go around junk shops looking for old blues records, like Memphis Minnie records, to learn stuff. But it wasn’t until I moved to Chicago that I realised there was such a big scene. I’d heard of Chess records of course, but

“We’d hop on a Greyhound and play some Roadhouse place in the country, and some really rough places where everything, including guns, was pretty wide open...if you played any top 40 stuff, you’d be shot.”

nobody had told me there were all these people making a living (just) playing music, and actually all working in Chicago. So when I left the South looking for better work generally, I was just knocked out by the amount of posters advertising people like Howlin’ Wolf, Muddy Waters etc. I mean, WOW! THIS WAS LIKE A DREAM I NEVER HAD! It literally all unfolded in front of me. Any night you could catch Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson - although he didn’t actually live in town, he’d come and go, and eventually I ended up playing with Robert Nighthawk.

“I came to know people who eventually would ask me to sit in after they found out I blew a little harp. This started to

happen more often, and I was getting a few gigs, but - the trouble was, unless you were a name, you were always being undercut by other performers, there were so many of us in Chicago. So, looking back, it was difficult to make a living. Like I said, I just played ‘cos I loved it. I was also playing with people I admired, loved and respected and above all they were now my friends. One day Vanguard asked me to record (the excellent ‘Stand Back’) and I thought, why not? That was really the beginning of my professional career, because it put me on the road. Firstly, a few blues clubs started showing an interest and a lot of things happened in that time. I ran into Mike Bloomfield and Paul Butterfield, I worked with Johnny Young, J.B. Hutto, Robert Nighthawk, and we ended up going to play a few runs of dates in some wild places. We’d hop on a Greyhound and play some Roadhouse place in the country and some really rough places where everything, including guns, was pretty wide open. There were no police around or anything like that. But these people loved their blues. The nastier it was the better they liked it! (laughs). If you played any top 40 stuff you’d get shot.”

Charlie’s contribution to the first white blues scene was not planned and in fact it’s only in retrospect that things took on a particular character.

“At the time I didn’t think much about the future, I just went with the flow. It goes back to the point about not seeing playing as making a living. I did see other guys around with day jobs who were hustling for a single, but there was no real plan. But as things began to unfold I figured playing music was going to be a better life than other alternatives.

“With my first record I was offered a tour of California, and I had to take some time out from work. They kinda sneered and said, ‘yeah, you’ll be back in a week.’ But when I got off the plane it was warm, sunny and Chicago



Photo: Pat Johnson

was mean and cold, I mean real cold. Here, people were smiling and friendly and you weren't looking over your shoulder the whole time. No people carrying guns. I thought, 'this is a better way of life'. The other thing was, being California, people didn't know too much about the blues. There was a blues scene, but mainly kind of underground in Black ghettos like Oakland, so not too many people got to hear it. Above all there was MONEY here, plenty of clubs without the back stabbing. And it dawned on me I didn't have to get a day job! I thought 'this is THE PLACE TO STAY!' So I just never went back. I came for a month and stayed."

Charlie's music probably took on

different hues with the moves, but again it was a natural thing, and not major shifts in style.

"There wasn't any great change. Even moving to Chicago from the South was a move that put me amongst characters from all over the South. They called Chicago 'North Mississippi'. But going to California was like a new country to me. But playing-wise, I always played what was in my head rather than anything that was specifically learned. I've a wide appreciation of music. I listen to jazz for example - everything from Charlie Patton to Charlie Parker, so my style varies.

"When people ask me about my playing, the first thing I tell them is to

forget that it's a harp they are playing, and just think about the music. I tend to listen to a lot of horn players, or any instrument that plays melody. I used to raid junk shops for violin and sax tutors to find new ways of expression...of getting the sounds out." Charlie's current tour is on the back of the excellent *Ace Of Harps* album. It's a record and a deal that Charlie is very happy with.

"It's good for me because *Alligator* is run by Bruce Iglauer, a man who loves music, really cares about his artists and he's a good businessman as well. To get all three in one person is a rare combination. So the deal is great for me and it provided me with a much needed push."

I asked Charlie about his band, a sizzling outfit which pushed the T&C show along at a rate of knots.

"I used to sit in with people, and basically, what you always got was a jam session, so I decided it was time to stop that. All the guys in the band have a wide background of R&B, jazz and gospel and for me that's a perfect combination. We've been working together for over a year now and we are still friends and the music's getting better all the time."

Finally, a question about one of the few covers on the cut, Jerome Kern's standard 'Yesterdays'.

"Well, like I said, I've always listened to jazz, and most jazz players know that tune, although few blues players probably would. It came out of listening to phrasing, so I hear a song like that and I want to play it. It's got that certain feel. It's not a 1, 4, 5 blues progression or anything, but people are pleasantly surprised when I play it."

Aside from the album, Charlie's still in demand as a virtuoso player, and just before the tour he opened up for John Lee Hooker in front of 10,000 people in Madison Square Gardens. People had come to see the master John Lee; they went home having witnessed two, for as Charlie himself says about his music; "The blues doesn't have a fad quality about it, it's just growing and building up momentum".

As a parallel observation of Charlie's career, it's the perfect point on which to end.

Ace of Harps is on *Alligator* records
Pete Feenstra

Checking out America's musical roots with

“Great Show Leon!” shouts out an American fan in the post-gig soiree in a compact room deep in the bowels of The Royal Festival Hall. “I thought tonight’s performance was a lot more rootsy than the Shaw Theatre?” “That’s because we were rehearsed for the Shaw Theatre.” responds a smirking Leon in tones heavily reminiscent of W.C. Fields.

You might not have to rehearse the blues but in Leon’s case his music draws inspiration from a bewildering number of influences. Yet rehearsals are probably more important in shaping up his band, if he were honest. But as regards Leon’s own stage presence, he’s a one man Vaudeville show given to mixing pre World War One tunes with spontaneous bouts of whistling, yodelling or just wheezing, in between finding his way around a curious number of stage props.

You see, with Leon Redbone, they broke the mould. The mysterious character with Zapparesque drooping moustache, shades and fedora, first caught the media’s attention back in the mid 70’s when he made a number of short but effective appearances on Saturday Night Live in the US and the Whistle Test in the UK. A couple of memorable tunes such as Shine On Harvest Moon and Champagne Charlie ensured that Leon’s presence extended beyond his curious attire and music hall style. For behind the facade is a person who is making a living playing an eclectic range of music that is close to his heart. It’s an interest in a historical musical period that has led Leon into researching his musical roots to the point of threatening a book on a little known Minstrel performer, Emmett Miller.

“Nobody much may know about him now, but it’s already taken me 8 years

to track down some of his activities, so I guess he must have been pretty well known all those years ago.” says a defiant Leon.

It’s the music of the yesteryear that Redbone is keeping very much alive, but in a way that bears his own personal stamp.

“What we are talking about here is a period of time at the very dawn of recorded music in the early 1900’s, right through to the 1930’s. It’s 35 years or so of memorable music that few people can remember. There was so much music being played at the time that it’s remarkable such a lot of it has been ignored.”

In truth, a substantial body of work does still exist and is regularly referred to and performed by both

partake of a mysteriously comfortable looking set - cosy slippers and all - that is meant to represent travelling in today’s public sector.

“I’ve done a number of ads in the States.” says an unconcerned Leon. “They asked me to put my voice to a few jeans and beer commercials

....And I’m happy if they are happy.” comes the perfunctory explanation.

Tonight’s show brought a warm response from an audience partly made up of long term fans and new converts. Was Leon surprised at the current levels of interest in his musicologist’s approach?

“Well, I think there’s always been a high level of interest in the historical side of music in Europe. It’s gratifying coming over here and finding that to

‘I’ve done a number of ads in the States. They asked me to put my voice to a few jeans and beer commercials ... and I’m happy if they are happy.’

blues players and classic New Orleans jazz fans. “Of course, just about everyone was playing something at the time” counters Leon, “ And lots of people didn’t get to hear that because the recordings came out as “race records” and so you had some truly great music that was only heard by certain sections of the community.”

Redbone’s own style is blues based but wide enough in scope to include Mustafa the Castrato, Caruso and Portuguese Fado Music to mention but a few. Live, you are more likely to catch up with these influences in passing as he might offer a 60 second falsetto in the direction of the orchestra pit and mutter a few informative lines about the great Caruso. Much more prevalent is Redbone’s obvious liking for pre-war jazz as Jelly Roll Morton and Fats Waller find their way into a varied set that also includes the current So Relax single. It’s the perfect piece for the BR advert that invites its customers to

be the case. Back home there is also an audience for this kind of stuff, but it’s much more difficult to get it played.”

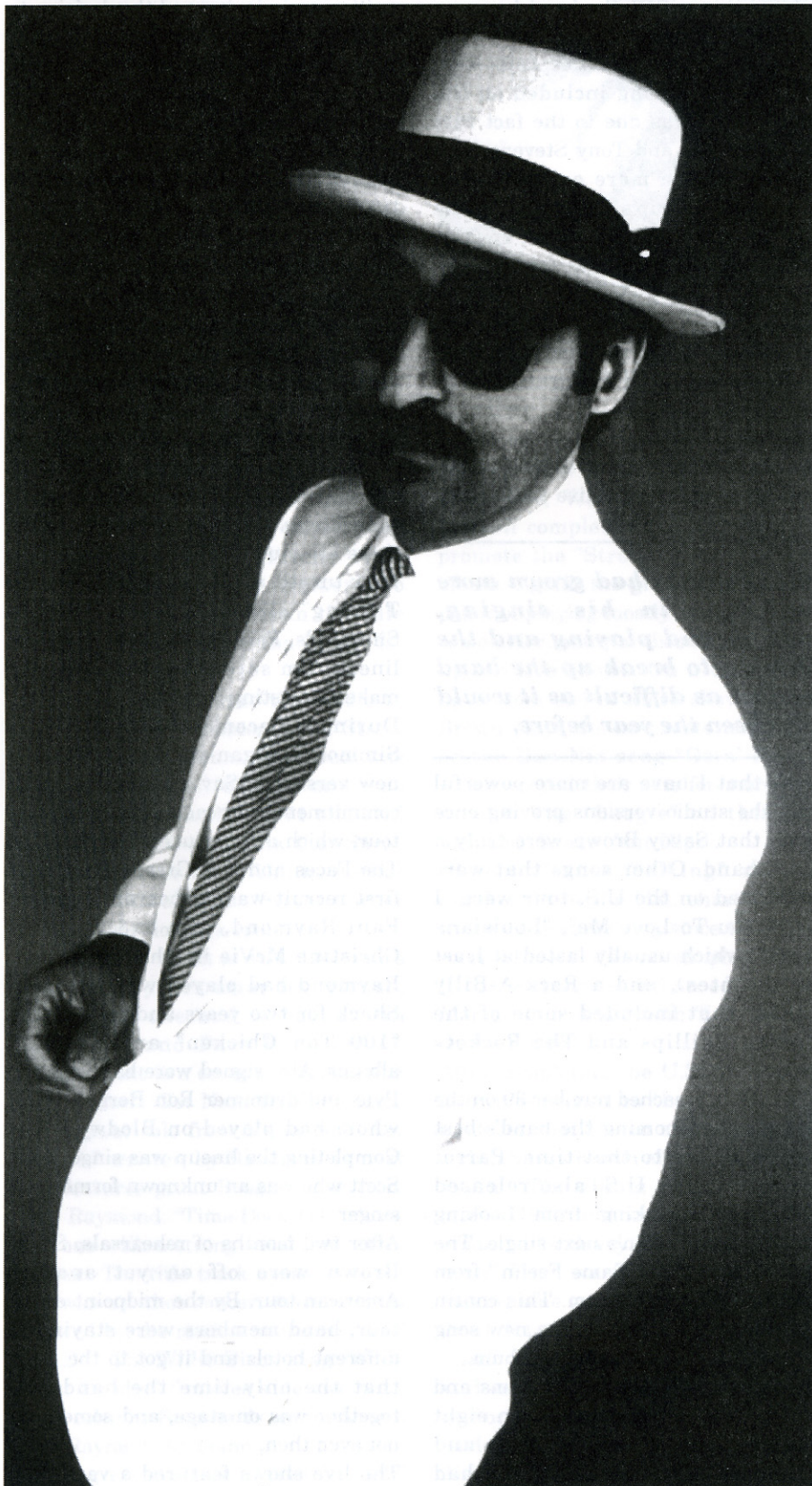
To this end Leon has plans to maybe present a radio series based on his findings, although, as he says, “It takes a long time to research all of this stuff, and with working live at the moment it might take a while longer yet.”

However long Leon’s efforts are likely to take him, there’s little chance of the music becoming outdated.

“This music is an American heritage. People like Jimmy Rodgers, Blind Blake and Jelly Roll Morton wrote music that will last and last. Unfortunately, American media networks don’t look at it that way, and the result is there are still loads of people not aware of some of the great music that came out of the first three or so decades in the twentieth century.”

As on this current tour, Redbone is at least able to bring his own style of

LEON REDBONE



delivery to bigger audiences. Sugar, the album, is selling very well and the current tour is taking in a number of sizeable concert halls.

"I'm quite pleased about that," says a concerned looking Leon. "I really don't like those smoky clubs anymore. It's nice to play bigger places, put on a bit of a show ... the folks seem to like it as well, so it suits me fine."

Off stage the dapper Mr Redbone is pretty much the same character you get for the 70 or so minutes he holds court. The humorous twitches, almost involuntary gentle grunts often say far more than words could express. And of course the stage apparel remains unaltered. Socially, he's at ease with most of his company, and he does occasionally slip into an excited earnestness when discussing the merits of a particular tuba player with his British double bass player, a well-built figure called John, a man he first worked with back in the mid 70's.

"We both used to smoke back then ... and I had long hair, the lot." says the bowtied figure of respectability with all the department of a classical musician. "But Leon hasn't changed a bit in his music; he's just discovered more of the same in the intervening 15 years."

"Did I ever tell you the one about big bad John?" asks Redbone of his clarinetist. "He shot two people stone dead, and they gave him two weeks in Jail!" "Two weeks?" came the reply. "Yep, two weeks - then they took him out and strung him up!" It was a joke Leon has told a number of times, and I'm sure at least half the audience had heard it before. But just like the music he plays, it's the method of delivery that clinches the successful audience response. For Redbone's fans, just like all of us, know this is 1990 but they're quite content having Leon reinterpret their musical past for them.

Pete Feenstra

SAVOY BROWN:

PART TWO by Tim Pratt

The relative commercial failure of "Raw Sienna", the pressures of constant touring (Savoy Brown spent 9 months of 1969 in the U.S.) and conflicts over material, led to Chris Youlden's departure from Savoy Brown in May 1970. Many critics and fans thought that this could be a death blow to the band which had built up a huge U.S. following thanks to constant touring. Youlden was a very visual front man with his top hat and fur coat, along with his ever-present cigar. Youlden was also responsible for most of the band's material and would be hard to replace. So he wasn't!

The remaining members of Savoy Brown decided to continue as a four piece with Lonesome Dave Peverett becoming the vocalist. Peverett had been singing "Louisiana Blues" as well as other numbers occasionally since joining Savoy Brown and this helped make the final decision not to replace Youlden a bit easier.

Savoy Brown went into the studio almost immediately after Chris Youlden's departure and started work on what was to become the "Looking In" album.

"Looking In" was Savoy Brown's sixth album and was released in October 1970, only four months after the release of the "Raw Sienna" album. The album was again produced by Kim Simmonds and on this album Savoy Brown went back to the basics. The songs were more accessible than those on "Raw Sienna", being stripped down to only two guitars, bass, drums and occasional piano from Simmonds. Dave Peverett handled the vocals with fair results.

"Looking In" seemed to have more of a group feel than some of the other albums where Peverett, Stevens and Earl were usually no more than backing musicians for Simmonds and Youlden. The album was also the most straight forward rock album that Savoy Brown had recorded to this time

with "Leavin' Again" being one of the heavier things that the band has ever recorded. The band also seemed to have forsaken their blues roots with not one blues song included on the album. This was due to the fact that Dave Peverett and Tony Stevens were finally given a more active role in writing the group's material. On the earlier albums, Simmonds and Youlden had monopolized the writing credits.

The best songs on "Looking In" are "Leavin' Again" written by Stevens and Peverett and "Take It Easy", written by Simmonds and Peverett. Savoy Brown toured the U.S. twice to promote "Looking In" and, as usual, played most of the new songs in their live shows. Again, the live versions on

Dave Peverett had grown more confident in his singing, writing and playing and the decision to break up the band was not as difficult as it would have been the year before.

tapes that I have are more powerful than the studio versions proving once again that Savoy Brown were truly a "live" band. Other songs that were performed on the U.S. tour were "I Want You To Love Me", "Louisiana Blues" (which usually lasted at least ten minutes), and a Rock-A-Billy medley that included some of the Warren Phillips and The Rockets songs.

"Looking In" reached number 39 on the U.S. charts becoming the band's best selling album to that time. Parrot Records in the U.S. also released "Sitting An' Thinking" from "Looking In" as Savoy Brown's next single. The flip side was "That Same Feelin'" from the "Raw Sienna" album. This continued the policy of releasing a new song with a B side from an earlier album.

The Simmonds, Peverett, Stevens and Earl lineup only lasted for an eight month period between May and December 1970. Dave Peverett had

grown more confident in his singing, writing and playing and the decision to break up the band was not as difficult as it would have been the year before. This fact, as well as continuing hassles with manager Harry Simmonds over money, led to the breakup of this version of Savoy Brown. When Peverett left, he took Stevens and Earl with him and emerged 18 months later with former Black Cat Bones guitarist Rod Price as Foghat. Foghat owed a lot of their early popularity, especially in the U.S., to their former band. Magazine articles and record company press kits used the Savoy Brown connection for all it was worth. Years later in an interview, Kim Simmonds stated that the "Lookin' In" lineup also started recording a follow up album and that there are studio versions of songs that later turned up on the "Street Corner Talking" album that features the Simmonds, Peverett, Stevens and Earl lineup. I'm sure these tracks would make interesting listening.

During December 1970, Kim Simmonds began putting together a new version of Savoy Brown to fulfill commitments to headline an American tour, which also included Rod Stewart, The Faces and The Grease Band. His first recruit was keyboardist-vocalist Paul Raymond, who had replaced Christine McVie in Chicken Shack. Raymond had played with Chicken Shack for two years and was on the "100 Ton Chicken" and "Accept" albums. Also signed were bassist Andy Pyle and drummer Ron Berg, both of whom had played on Blodwyn Pig. Completing the lineup was singer Pete Scott who was an unknown former pub singer.

After two months of rehearsals, Savoy Brown were off on yet another American tour. By the midpoint of the tour, band members were staying in different hotels and it got to the point that the only time the band was together was on stage, and sometimes not even then.

The live shows featured a variety of

material; songs from earlier albums were played as well as new material, some of which was used on later albums and others which were never recorded.

I have a BBC tape from early 1971 that features Savoy Brown with Pete Scott on vocals performing "Blues On The Ceiling" which has never been released, and a slightly different version of "Street Corner Talking". Pete Scott was a great singer and sadly no recordings were ever released on which Scott was the vocalist.

When the tour was over, only Kim Simmonds and Paul Raymond stayed together to carry on Savoy Brown. Andy Pyle and Ron Berg went on to what was to become the final version of Juicy Lucy and played on the band's "Pieces" album. Pete Scott showed up in 1975 on the Beggars Opera album "Beggars Can't Be Choosers".

In May of 1971, Kim Simmonds again raided Chicken Shack, this time taking the rhythm section with him. Bassist Andy Sylvester and drummer Dave Bidwell had played together since late 1967 and were featured on the first four Chicken Shack albums. Also signed was singer Dave Walker who had replaced Jeff Lynne in the Idle Race and appeared on the "Time Is" album.

Savoy Brown went into the studio to record what was to become the "Street Corner Talking" album. The album was produced by Neil Slaven and was released in September 1971 and still rates among the best work that Savoy Brown has ever done. Unlike earlier Savoy Brown albums, "Street Corner Talking" has no weak spots.

"Tell Mama", which is still the group's anthem 17 years after its release, opens side one and features both Simmonds and Paul Raymond on guitars. Next is a cover of the old R&B song "I Can't Get Next To You" which has a great solo from Simmonds. "Let It Rock" written by Raymond is next and features great Boogie piano from Paul Raymond. "Time Does Tell" closes side one with a strong vocal from Dave Walker. The title track opens side two and was another concert favorite. It is followed by the mellow sounding "All I Can Do". The Willie Dixon song "Wang Dang Doodle" finishes side two with great solos by Simmonds on guitar and Paul Raymond on piano.

To the great surprise of both fans and



Chris Youlden '... hard to replace'

Photo: Jimmy Appudurai

critics, this lineup of Simmonds, Raymond, Walker, Sylvester and Bidwell completed two U.S. tours to promote the "Street Corner Talking" album. Again, the group continued its policy of playing mostly new songs with some older material thrown in to make up the live shows. On a tape that I have from one of these shows, Savoy Brown plays the new material as well as the Dcn Nix song "Goin' Down", which opened their sets for more than a year. The "Boogie" on this tour included "Shake Your Hips".

"Street Corner Talking" reached number 75 in the U.S. charts, which was a little surprising since the album received a lot of radio air play. Parrot Records also released an edited "Tell Mama" as a single with "Let It Rock" on the B side.

After completing the U.S. tour, Savoy Brown returned to the studios with producer Neil Slaven and recorded the eighth Savoy Brown album, "Hellbound Train". The album was released in March 1972 and was the last album produced for Savoy Brown by Slaven.

"Doin' Fine" starts off the album on a rocking note with a fine piano solo from Paul Raymond. "Lost and Lonely Child" follows and again features great keyboard work from Raymond as well as one of Dave Walker's better vocal performances. "I'll Make Everything Alright" is next and is more solid rock

and roll. Next is "Troubled By These Days and Times" written by Paul Raymond and it is a good slow blues with great piano and a fine solo from Kim Simmonds. "If I Could See An End" opens side two and is the album's strongest cut with fine playing from all. "It'll Make You Happy" is next and is the weakest song on the album. The album's final cut, the title track, is the album's tour-de-force. "Hellbound Train" starts with just drums and bass, and by the end reaches an unbelievable climax with a surprise ending similar to Jeff Beck's "Rice Pudding".

"Hellbound Train" reached number 34 in the U.S. charts and was the most commercially successful album to that date. "If I Could See An End" was released as a single with "Lost and Lonely Child" as the B side. As is the case with most album tracks, the songs were edited for single release.

Savoy Brown came to the U.S. in March 1972 to begin a nationwide tour to promote "Hellbound Train". Playing support to Savoy Brown on these dates were Fleetwood Mac and Long John Baldry. One of the early dates on the

After two months of rehearsals, Savoy Brown were off on yet another American tour. By the midpoint of the tour, band members were staying in

tour was the infamous Mar-Y-Sol festival. There was an album released from this festival, but Savoy Brown was not included because of contractual problems.

Savoy Brown broke tradition on this tour as far as the songs that were performed. Tapes from this tour again open with "Goin' Down" but, unlike past tours where mostly new material was played, these shows still featured songs from the "Street Corner Talking" album. An extended version of "Hell Bound Train" was played on the tour but other new songs were rarely performed. This was partly due to Kim Simmonds' dissatisfaction with much of the album. He openly agreed with critics who said that the album was too keyboard oriented.

After the completion of the U.S. tour in June 1972, bassist Andy Sylvester left Savoy Brown for personal reasons and was replaced by former member Andy

Pyle. The band went into the studio almost immediately to work on their next album. These sessions produced the "Lion's Share" album, which was released in November 1972, by which time Dave Walker had left to join Fleetwood Mac.

Walker did complete one final tour with Savoy Brown and, as in the past, the shows featured songs from the as yet unreleased "Lion's Share" album. "Lion's Share" is a strong album and surprisingly was a commercial failure, only reaching number 151 in the U.S. The strongest tracks are "Shot In The Head" written by Aussies and former Easybeats members Vanda and Young, which sounds similar to "Tell Mama". Other strong cuts are "Second Try" and "So Tired" which was a very powerful live number.

Savoy Brown had made its mark in the beginning playing classic blues, and were now building up a large following as a very powerful rock and roll band. The band's live performances were drawing rave reviews and they were one of the hardest working bands on the road. The live versions of the songs from "Lion's Share" are very powerful and unfortunately this lineup only lasted from June to September, 1972.

In interviews from this period Simmonds said that he was not satisfied with Dave Walker's contributions as a songwriter, only having written one song on the three albums that he performed on. Walker's stint with Fleetwood Mac was even shorter. He was with The Mac only long enough to sing on the disappointing "Penguin" album and did a short American tour with the band in 1973. Walker later turned up as Ozzy Osbourne's replacement in Black Sabbath for a few months in 1978. I have a tape of a U.K. TV appearance with this lineup and it sounds a bit strange to hear Walker's vocals and harmonica on a Black Sabbath song. Walker then moved to the U.S. and worked with John Cippolina among others.

Dave Walker's replacement in Savoy Brown was Jackie Lynton who had released a few solo singles in England in the '60s. After a short European tour, Savoy Brown went into the studio to record the follow up to "Lion's Share". While the recording was going on, Dave Bidwell left the band and was replaced by Ron Berg. This reunited

the former Blodwyn Pig, Savoy Brown and Juicy Lucy rhythm section once again.

These sessions produced the "Jack The Toad" album, which was released in June 1973. Lynton wrote or co-wrote five songs, the best of which is "Just Coz You Got The Blues Don't Mean You Gotta Sing" which features one of Kim Simmonds' best ever guitar solos. This album also marked the first recorded vocal by Kim Simmonds on "Ride On Babe" which he wrote. His only other writing contribution, on "Jack The Toad", was the group credited number "Some People". Simmonds said later that his interest in the band was waning and this may have been an indication of things to come.

"Jack The Toad" met with the worst critical response to any Savoy Brown album ever. Many reviewers stated that Simmonds should be ashamed of himself for carrying on the Savoy Brown name with such a second rate outfit. What the reviewers should have said was with such a second rate singer-songwriter. Of all the songs on the album, only a few lived up to past performances despite consistently good keyboard work from Paul Raymond, who should have received some kind of Unsung Hero Award. The rhythm section of Andy Pyle and either Ron Berg or Dave Bidwell on drums was steady throughout the album, but the reviews said that they played more like session musicians than group members. Savoy Brown went on yet another American tour. The band had a regular routine of recording an album, then taking off to the U.S. where they were more popular than anywhere. Despite a sizeable following in Europe (especially Germany), Savoy Brown meant nothing on the British music scene. The band was never the darlings of the British music press who had, and still have, the

power to make or break a band in England. More was made of Savoy Brown's instability than to the music that the band was making. It became a standing joke each time a personnel change was made to note which number the new member was. In America things were different. Savoy Brown built a large following, which probably peaked in the Dave Walker era by being one of the hardest working touring bands.

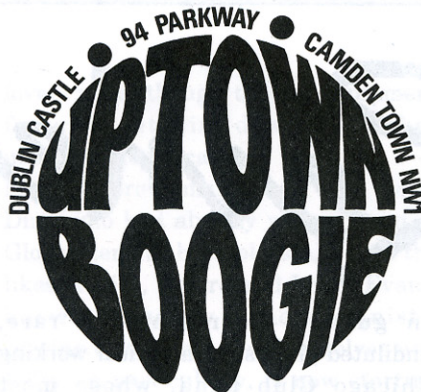
During the "Jack The Toad" tour, Savoy Brown appeared on American television a number of times and problems in the band were obvious. Unlike past tours where songs from the albums came across better live than in the studio, the songs from "Jack The Toad" didn't even come close to the studio versions. On a tape I have from a TV appearance, the band does "Just Coz You Got The Blues..." and "Tell Mama", and during both songs everything seems ready to fall apart. Very untogether.

The "Jack The Toad" album reached number 84 in the U.S. charts, which was a bit surprising considering the quality of the album. "Coming Down Your Way", one of the better songs on the album, was released as a single with the B side being "I Can't Find You" from the "Lion's Share" album.

Kim Simmonds considered "Jack The Toad" an artistic failure and the problems on the American tour, probably made his decision to break up the band a lot easier. Simmonds said that he had lost all his intensity for playing during the tour and saw no use in carrying on with this lineup.

Jackie Lynton went on to form his own band, Jackie Lynton's Grande, which included Paul Raymond, and recorded an album soon after the Savoy Brown split. Andy Pyle accepted an offer from Mick Abrahams to reform Blodwyn Pig and when Ron Berg refused the offer he was replaced by former Jethro Tull drummer Clive Bunker. I have a BBC tape of one of the band's shows, which includes both older material and some unreleased songs. Unfortunately, the reunion only lasted from January to July 1974. On the tape, Mick Abrahams introduces the song "Six Days On The Road" and comments, "which we haven't been because nobody'll book us". The timing for the reunion was wrong considering what was in the British charts at the time. After the split, Berg and Pyle again teamed up on the Alvin Lee album "Pump Iron" in 1975. Their next project together was a band they formed in 1978 called Network, which also included ex-Kink John Gosling. Pyle had been in the Kinks from November 1976 to April 1978.

Part three of Savoy Brown by Tim Pratt will appear in our next issue.



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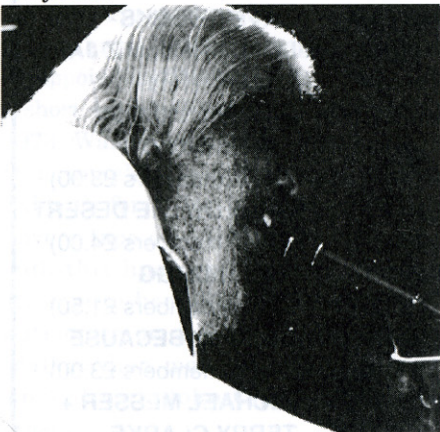
Live Reviews

BURNLEY 1991

Dizz must be the place! Once more and despite a nice looking festival at Gloucester now establishing itself over the same weekend, Burnley was the place to be at Easter.

In its third year and already one of the dates permanently inked in on the European Blues calendar, it again provided a good balance of styles and content. We had marvelous performances from two legends from different ends of the blues spectrum, the return of one of last year's hits, a rising star and yet another little known lady stopping the show and all in addition to the usual brew of record and instrument fairs, live music and workshops in the bars, lectures and late night boogieing at the hotel.

Proceedings kicked off on Thursday with the opening of this year's Gallery Downstairs exhibition - a lovely retrospective of Paul Oliver photographs and record sleeve drawings. I'd forgotten just how many of these now classic images were Paul's and my one regret of the weekend was not getting there early enough to meet the man himself, as I've wanted to do for years.



Big Moose Walker, photo: Brian Smith

The first night's concert started with a lovely acoustic set from the talented John Pearson, followed by an opening spot from the Chicago House Band. These four guys - Ike Anderson, bass, Harmonica Hines, Jeff Taylor on drums and vocal and James Johnson

on guitar - represented a rare, undiluted glimpse of a typical working Chicago Club band, whose most glamorous work so far has probably been on US campuses (for which work Johnson is known, snappily, as 'J R Guitar' he tells me!). As they are amongst hundreds of similar sidemen and possibly not even in the front rankers, it is a satisfying reflection on the depth of talent still working there that they were still so solid and competent. After their own entertaining, largely instrumental, set, they were joined by the first headliner, John 'Big Moose' Walker. Moose is known primarily for his fine piano work behind the likes of Ike Turner, Elmore and others and, especially, Earl Hooker and this facet was shown to good advantage, but he still possesses a strong, deep singing voice. His was a static, traditional piano blues set (hardly surprising after 62 years, 4 strokes and a broken leg!), but he nevertheless proved a welcome new face for the first day.

One new departure this year was the addition of some afternoon concerts. I only caught part of Jesse 'Guitar' Taylor, on Friday, as we had an interview arranged with Moose (entertaining and revealing - order your 'Blues & Rhythm' today!) but it was enough to dispel any preconceptions from his years with Joe Ely. Some first class stuff in the best modern Texas tradition - I won't miss him next time he is around.

Call the Doctor!

The festival really took off for me with a little piece of history from Doctor Isiah Ross. One of our more endearing attributes in Europe has been our willingness to give a respectful hearing to older bluesmen, even occasionally past their best (and why the hell not - a chance to see a legend and earn him some belated bread). Just occasionally though, we are fortunate to get a performance where the whole audience instinctively realises that it is witnessing something magical and this was just such a night. For well over an hour, he held a packed drinking hall

silent and spellbound (no other word for it) with a wonderful set of country blues; unaccompanied vocals and hand-held harp, lovely delicate guitar and the only sound in the room his own feet or his drum and cymbal. He sang about fourteen songs, some blues standards, but in his own individual style including Blues in the Night, Baby Please Don't Go, Crudup's That's Alright Mama, a couple of Muddy's as well as Biscuit Baking Woman, Chicago Breakdown and, after 'the boogie disease', I could cheerfully have gone home. Smiling faces all round proved that it was not just me who found this a genuinely moving and uplifting experience. A real 'tingler' and well worth a solo CD, I hope, (you heard it here first!).

If there was still no Burnley Broth (despite my whinge last year!) we



Dr Ross, photo: Brian Smith

nevertheless had a broth of a boy in Jim Daly (that's a link almost worthy of Pete Murray!). Trevor Hodgett has been singing the praises of the Daly band for some time. On this evidence we have been hiding a real light under a bushel. I don't know if it's my ignorance or pure geography which has prevented me from seeing him before, but Jim was one of the revelations this festival usually manages to produce. For a crude description, imagine a visual cross between Eric Morecambe and Van the Man, pounding the keys somewhere between Ammons, Sanchez and Otis Spann and you have some idea (all intended as compliments!). Built firmly around the strong and

ebullient piano and vocals of Jim Daly and the splendid guitar solos of guitarist Ronnie, they are definitely one to check out again. After their own fine spot - years of experience and obvious enthusiasm - the boys (boys!) returned to provide equally solid backing for Jan Harrington of whom I confess I knew nothing beyond a few Continental Festival reviews. She was in the same raunchy, eye-rolling mould as Anglea Brown, last year, with perhaps a touch of the Koko Taylor's thrown in. Revealing a rich voice (and a lot more besides, stirring a few loins in the front rows!) she turned in a barnstorming performance on songs such as Let the Good Times Roll, Sweet Talking Man and staple fare like Baby What do you Want me to Do, One Scotch One Bourbon One Beer, C C Rider and a lovely 'Telephone baby'. It was all gloriously rude and risqué, but never descended to the coarse Millie Jackson level.

She brought on Big Bad Angela Brown, herself, for an unstoppable hip-grinding finale, on 'Mojo' and 'Don't Mess with my Man'. The success of this her UK debut was helped no little by the Daly's. They apparently do this job for bluesmen visiting Ireland. Promoters could do a lot worse than book them for whole tours in this capacity and remove much of the hit and miss aspect of 'pick-up' bands.

On Saturday, after an informal day time session and chat from the Doctor and an opening set by ex-Killing Floor Mick Clarke, Angela Brown was back with her own evening concert. It was asking too much to top last year's epic performances (five acts with different accompaniments inside twelve hours!) but she still turned in her usual rumbustious mixture of the soulful and the risqué, including 'Stagger Lee', Helen Humes' Million Dollar Secret, You Make my Love Come Down and T'aint Nobody's Business, accompanied only by Christian Christl's rolling piano. C C (the 'Boogie Man') also did his own spot and, though his singing will win no Grammy's, he is certainly one hell of a pianist.

'I'm Lefty' - Your Right - He's Gone! Veteran British Bluesman Tony McPhee opened the Sunday evening concert, an unaccompanied, mostly acoustic set. As uncomprisingly esoteric as ever, he showed what a fine guitarist he still is, including some

lovely slide, though the PA equipment for once let him down by rather muddying his vocals.

No such problems though with Lefty Dizz, who had already wowed them at Gloucester. It's been pleasing to see the likes of Dizz, Buford and Lopez Evans, known primarily as accompanists, carving solo niches for themselves and Lefty, in particular, is now starting to become a big leaguer. I've now seen him a few times, with above average local bands and been increasingly



Lefty Diz, photo: Brian Smith

impressed each time. At Burnley however, we saw him for the first time in his natural habitat, with the Chicago House Band - he knew them and they knew him and it showed! He was terrific, looking and sounding hellishly sharp (almost literally so, with his blood red suit in the second half giving him the appearance of a guitar swinging Old Nick!). In as good a modern Chicago set as you'll see, he showed all his controlled showmanship and demonstrated that he has developed a recognisable style of his own, from stinging, urgent blues like Jimmy Rogers' "That's all Right" and Muddy's "Mannish Boy" to slashing uptempo "Talk to Me" and Freddie King's "Hideaway" (via the Batman theme!). Moose joined him in the second set on Shake Rattle and Roll and Sitting on Top of the World and stayed for Lefty's last six or seven numbers, including his own excellent "Bad Avenue." He gets better and better. Great stuff!

Rhythm and Rapping with Rosco (and Oh, 'Tis Grand!)

Monday belonged to the long awaited Rosco Gordon. First his rehearsals with Otis Grand. I think Otis may have put the set together - at least, Rosco kept asking "what's next", then

proceeded to get it just how he wanted it. Then an irrepressible interview with the "Blues and Rhythm" team (more commercials Tony!) and on to the last evening's concert.

Otis opened with his own spot, his usual scorching guitar dominated blues, featuring Earl Green's excellent vocals, plus a churning rendition of the Mar-Keys "Last Night". He then came back with Rosco, who looked lean and sharp and romped through a varied set, opening and closing with "Just a Little Bit" and including "I Got Love", "Drink and Drive" and "That's The Way You Feel", all featuring that lovely loping "Rosco's rhythm" which so influenced Blue Beat, Ska (and thence Reggae and beyond). The horns were a bit under-miked I felt and Otis occasionally cranked the power up a bit, but he was spot on with a glorious and amusing "Cheese and Crackers" "Tell Me I'm the One" and a medley of "No More Doggin" and "Kansas City".

Rosco's voice is as rich as ever and he finished an entertaining and thoroughly professional set (if a slightly short one) with "Let' Get it On" before reprising on "ittle Bit" then I was off into the night, exhausted but well satisfied.

I had a few listens to the recorded results - they have now set up a separate studio so Robin Turnbull can concentrate on this (instead of the concert sound as well) and, if it sounds as good in the cold light of day, then maybe more than one CD from JSP this year (though not, I understand, in the usual "Festival" format. Watch these pages!)

My usual thanks to Dave Peirce and Ian Welles for the run of the place once again. And to finish where I came in, I know a few are worried that two good Easter Festivals (let alone the others now in the pipeline) might stretch a limited market, but I remain optimistic. If the Organisers and Bookers ensure a few separate solo gigs at which to catch any missed headliners, they should manage to complement each other nicely, without undue clashes. Having said that, it's now on with the decorating and gardening at home, to muster enough Brownie points for Redcar, Bodelwyddan and beyond (have mercy!).

Brian Smith

Record Reviews

CHUCK BERRY FRUIT OF THE VINE

Chess/Charly CD RED 19

Downbound Train/Wee Wee Hours/No Money Dow/Drifting Heart/Brown Eyed Handsome Man/Havana Moon/Oh Baby Doll/Anthony Boy/Merry Christmas Baby/Jo Jo Gunne/Childhood Sweetheart/I Got To Find My Baby/Worried Life Blues/Jaguar And Thunderbird/Confessin' The Blues/Thirteen Question Method/The Things That I Used To Do/You Two/Little Marie/Dear Dad/It Wasn't Me/Ramona Say Yes/Tulane/Have Mercy Judge.

A worthy compilation this one, which as John Collis points out in his booklet notes, digs deep into the Berry repertoire and succeeds in pulling together a couple of dozen tracks of the more obscure variety 'obscure', that is, when compared to the plague of 'Greatest Hits' past-ups that have appeared over the last twenty-odd years with more regularity than a Zsa Zsa Gabor facelift.

What you get is a compilation of lesser-known A/B sides and album tracks, starting with 'Wee Wee Hours', the flip-side of Berry's first Chess single from way back in '55, and ending with the '69 U.S. coupling of 'Tulane' and 'Have Mercy Judge', tracks that are widely regarded as being the last two significant compositions to have flowed from the pen of the merry Mr Berry. Nice to see the inclusion of a clutch of blues standards, including the obligatory 'The Things That I Used To Do', and my own personal Berry blues favourite 'Worried Life Blues'. A mention also for the atmospheric, Diddleyesque 'Jo Jo Gunne' - good to see that putting in an appearance, a number, that in my view is a grossly underrated performance.

Having applauded Charly's choice of material on the whole, there are, however, a few black sheep included, namely, 'Anthony Boy', 'Ramona', and the horrendous 'Thirteen Question Method' which features a seemingly totally disinterested Berry delivering a similarly disinterested, lifeless vocal. I'd like to have seen 'Down The Road Apiece', 'Don't Lie To Me', 'Run Rudolph Run' or any of his '50s instrumentals in their place. Perhaps next time? Minor moans and gripes apart though, this is another excellent set in Charly's mid-priced CD RED series.

Total playing time: 61.10

SMOKEY WILSON—SMOKEY WILSON & THE WILLIAM CLARKE BAND Black Magic CD 9013

Down In Virginia/I Wish I Was Single/Howling/Wolf/Tell Me What Do You See/Bar Room Blues/Cold Chills/Ghetto Woman/Dimples/Lien On My Body/The Things That I Used To Do/Truckload Of Love.

First a short history lesson. Smokey was born in Greenville, Mississippi, during the mid '30s and grew up listening to such pre-war heroes as Peetie Wheatstraw and the like. During the '60s he played guitar with numerous local groups before moving to Los Angeles in the early '70s where he ran/owned a couple of blues clubs that gave him the opportunity to showcase his own particular brand of downhome Mississippi blues. The city's Big Town label also sat up and took notice, recording albums by Smokey entitled, 'Blowin' Smoke' ('77), 'Smokey Wilson Sings The Blues' ('78), and finally, in 1982, '88th Street Blues'.

Which brings me nicely on to the set presented here, recorded in 1986 with the aid of the William Clarke Band. The booklet notes give no indication as to where the tracks were recorded, but an educated, and logical guess on my part, would suggest that L.A. was the scene of the crime. It's a mixed bunch of items that includes many tried and trusted familiars plus one Wilson original, 'Tell Me What Do You See', and one contribution from William Clarke, 'Cold Chills'. Clarke also supplies rock-solid harp on a number of the tracks, most notably on the Jimmy Reed-penned opener, 'Down In Virginia', and also, 'Howling Wolf', on which he and Smokey turn in a good version of this blues standard.

On the whole, Smokey's vocals are quite adequate, displaying both a warm, rich feeling, as on 'Dimples', whilst also being capable of a raw, biting tone as displayed on 'Cold Chills'. Would have been nice though, to have heard a little more in the way of axe action from the man in question, most of the spadework being done by the Clarke Band's Joel Foy and Alex Schultz. nonetheless, a very enjoyable, unpretentious set of blues 'n' boogie.

Total Playing Time: 45. 00

VARIOUS ARTISTS—CRUISIN' AND BLUESIN' Ace CD 284 .

JOE HOUSTON - *Rock That Boogie*/THE SAVOYS - *Darling Stay with Me*/SAVOYS - *Yacka Boom Boom*/ PAUL PRESTON & HIS ORCH. - *The Chase*/CHUCK HIGGINS - *Bug Jump*/AL SMITH & THE SAVOYS with JACK McVEA - *Chop Chop Boom*/JACK SMITH & THE SAVOYS - with BROTHER WOODMAN -

Lovin' Man/JOE HOUSTON - *Texas Walk*/THE PARAMOUNTS - *Thunderbird Baby*/THE NUTONES - *Beans 'n Greens*/JAKE PORTER & THE COMBONETTES - *Hi-Diddle Diddle*/JONES'S COMBO - *Ting Ting Boom Scat*/THE DUCHESS with JAKE PORTER - *The Monkey*/BROTHER WOODMAN & THE CHANTERS - *Watts*/CANDY RIVERS - *Shout Shout Shout*/FLOYD TURNHAM - *Rocket Ride.*

Culled from the vaults of Jake Porter's Combo label, this really is a first rate collection of '50s sax-dominated r'n'b instrumental and vocal numbers. Prior to setting up the label in L.A. in the early '50s, Porter had played trumpet with such jazz luminaries as Hampton, Goodman and Henderson, so it comes as no surprise to learn from Ray Topping's excellent sleeve notes that Porter's first task on forming Combo was to send out an s.o.s. to some of the best horn players then active on the West Coast. Joe Houston was one of the first to answer the call and he subsequently recorded *Rock That Boogie* and the previously unreleased

Texas Walk, both of which feature some tough tenor. Equally as impressive are Floyd Turnham's *Rocket Ride* and Chuck Higgins' *Bug Jump*'

Once Porter had managed to gather some of the area's top musicians around him he turned his attentions to recruiting some local vocal talent, including The Savoy's, who appear on four of the cuts here.

Chop Chop Boogie is probably the pick of the bunch and features Jack Mc Vea weighing in with a blistering tenor solo, (sax fans please note this album is totally riddled with them !).

One of the most interesting characters that the Combo label recorded was The Duchess - " a cute little thing about 4ft 5ins tall", according to Jake Porter. Her lack of inches were no handicap judging by the after hours vocal she turns in on the risqué *The Monkey*, her voice blending perfectly with the sax embroidery of someone who sounds as if he had the odd Lester Young record tucked away in his collection.

Lack of space prevents me from waxing on at great length about the remainder of the tracks, suffice to say they're all fresh, vibrant examples of '50s r'n'b that are indicative of the wealth of golden music produced during the golden era of the small r&b independent label. Sheer nectar.

Pete O'Gorman

DIZ 'HONEYBEAR' WATSON featuring

TONY UTER - '88 SPECIAL (White Label Cassette)

CRY TO ME / 88 SPECIAL / CLASSIFIED / EVOLUTION / TEXAS TONY / MARDI GRAS / RUM N' COKE / ROLONDE'S RHUMBA / CHECKIN' OUT / ONE MORE SONG.

Great nickname, great piano player. What we have here are ten unerringly accurate cuts of New Orleans joanna from Britain's finest exponent of same. Whether you prefer the syncopated rhythms of a Professor Longhair, the good humoured creole R&B of a Fats Domino or a good old pounding piano boogie, Diz's tape's got a bit of everything.

It was recorded in 1988 (giving a double twist to that title), and features the fuzzy-headed Watson in the company of congas player Tony Uter, an instrumentation which will immediately strike a responsive chord with many 'Fess fans, and needless to say some of the finest moments here are those associated with that great 'Bach of Rock'n'Roll' - 'Mardi Gras', and 'Cry To Me' in particular. On these numbers, Watson's vocals, all 'Fess-style burp 'n' whistle, are especially good too.

The spirit of the Fat Man is invoked on the closing piece, 'One More Song', whilst 'Checkin' Out' will be more familiar to many of you as the Brook Benton hit, 'Hotel Happiness', but whatever you choose to call it, Diz carries it off with some panache. Likewise, James Booker's 'Classified' is excellent, displaying Watson's uncanny understanding of the nuances of the subtler forms of Crescent City blues, as well.

My only gripes with this cassette concern its disappointingly short running time (in these days of CD-length albums, the 30 minutes or so here seems paltry), and its rather hard-to-read hand written and xeroxed inlay card. But its obtainable at gigs and should keep you well amused on the car stereo as you head home. Nice souvenir then, from a man with a left hand like God, and a heart full of the Devil's music.

Oh yes and MEMO to the folks at Ace Records - How about re-issuing some of Diz's terrific recordings of a decade or so ago?

Paul Lewis

JOHN PEARSON - Streamline Train -

Last Days Recording LDR90 (Cassette only)
Streamline Train/Look Down the Road/Honky Tonk Blues/Jesus on the Mainline/As I Went Down the Railroad Track/John Ain't It Hard/Oozlin' Daddy Blues/Blues Go Rolling On/Deep River Blues/Precious Memories/Walkin' Blues/I Don't Worry About a Thing

After last year's solo outing on 'Drive My Blues Away' (LDR89) singer/acoustic guitarist, John Pearson has elected to follow up with an album which features various backing musicians on

most tracks. Quite often when solo artists attempt this kind of thing it results in a dog's dinner, but I'm pleased to be able to report that nothing could be further from the truth with 'Streamline Train.' Thanks to careful arrangements by John, his co-production with Colin Gibson and Kenny Craddock of Invisible Studios and his careful selection of top-notch accompanists we end up with a recording that conjures up such expressions as "good taste" and "classy." It is not purely a blues album, but also features a few outings into the country music field and a gospel track.

The backing musicians include the above-mentioned Craddock (ex-Van Morrison, Paul Brady, Gerry Rafferty etc. etc. and recent session man with Billy Bragg and John Wesley Harding) on keyboards and accordion and Gibson (ex-Ginger Baker, Danny Richmond and current member of Buick 6 and Moire Music) on bass guitar and percussion.

Both the other members of Buick 6, Roger Hubbard (slide guitar) and Liam Genockey (drums) also play on the album - how does Liam do it? apart from session work he is also currently in Steeleye Span and Moire Music! George contributes some bass, Dave Hayward pedal steel, Raphael Callaghan harmonica and Neil Morton backing vocals. All in all quite a line-up, who, thanks to their experience and professionalism, make sure they complement John's playing and singing without ever getting in the way by going over the top.

Take Roger Hubbard for instance, whose slide National guitar on 'Walkin' Blues' and 'Jesus on the Mainline' slots nicely into the Pearson arrangement, avoiding any temptation to take over the cuts with lots of flashy playing (of which he is well capable in the right context). In fact John's very individual style comes through on all the songs, not least (and naturally enough) on the self-penned 'Oozlin' Daddy Blues', a humorous song in the rural blues tradition.

Hopefully you are now beginning to get the picture - overproduction, that common failing, is well avoided here. Indeed, three tracks feature John solo, including the title track where his guitar picking successfully emulates Cripple Clarence Lofton's rolling barrelhouse piano as well as some superb 12-string guitar playing on the Leadbelly number, 'As I Went Down the Railroad Track.'

Don't be put off by the small label - sound quality is excellent throughout and the graphics/packaging tastefully done. 'Streamline Train' makes for very pleasant listening, so treat yourself to a copy.

(Available from John direct-at P.O.Box 128, Dover, CT16 25X or from Grammar School Records Mail Order, High Street, Rye, TN31 7JF at £6.50).

Michael Prince

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LONDON NORTH WEST

Wed 1st **BBR Boogie Blues Jam**, Dublin Castle, 94 Parkway, Camden
 Sat 4 **Wolfie Witcher & His Brew** (12-5pm) Underworld, 174 Camden High St NW1
 Sun 5th **Shakey Vick Blues Band** Dublin Castle Camden NW1
 Mon 6th **Guitar Shorty and Shakey Vick Blues band** Dublin Castle Camden London NW1
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 Sat 11th **Bob Brozman**, Dublin Castle, 94 Parkway, NW 1
 Wolfie Witcher & His Brew, (12-5pm) Underworld, 174 Camden High St,
Automatic Slim, Ship & Star, Sudbury
 Sun 12th **Shakey Vick Blues Band**, Dublin Castle, 94 Parkway, Camden
 Wed 15th **BBR Boogie Blues Jam**, Dublin Castle, 94 Parkway NW 1
 Sat 18th **Wolfie Witcher & His Brew**, (12-5pm) Underworld, 174 Camden High St NW1
Booze 'n' Blooze, Ship & Star, Sudbury
 Sun 19th, **Shakey Vick Blues Band**, Dublin Castle, Camden, NW1
 Wed 22nd, **BBR Boogie's Blues Jam**, Dublin Castle, 94 Parkway, NW 1
 Sun 26th, **Shakey Vick Blues Band** Dublin Castle, Camden NW1
 Wed 29th, **BBR Boogie Blues Jam**, Dublin Castle, 94 Parkway, NW 1.

LONDON NORTH

Wed 1st **Little Matthew & the Intentions** The Hare & Hounds, Islington
Howlin' Wilf Band T&C2
 Fri 3 **Little Matthew & the Intentions** Samuel Becket, Stoke Newington High St
 Sat 4th **The AM Band** Old Bull Arts Centre
 Wed 8th **Little Matthew & the Intentions**, The Hare & Hounds, Islington
 Thu 9th **The Producers**, Steam Rock Cafe, Tottenham
 Wed 15th **Little Matthew & the Intentions** The Hare & Hounds, Islington
King Pleasure & his Biscuit Boys T&C2 Highbury

Fri 17th **Wolfie Witcher & His Brew**, The Hare & Hounds, Islington
 Wed 29th **Little Matthew & the Intentions**, The Hare & Hounds, Islington
 Fri 31st **The AM Band** The Torrington N. Finchley
LONDON SOUTH EAST
 Wed 1st **Wolfie Witcher & His Brew**, Aztec Room, Borderline Restaurant,
 Fri 10th **Kit Packham's One Jump Ahead + Slim's Cyder Co**, Up the Creek, Greenwich, SE10
 Wed 15th **Kit Packham's One Jump Ahead** Aztec Room, Borderland Restaurant
LONDON SOUTH WEST
 Thu 2 **The Guv'nors** The Half Moon, Putney
 Fri 3 **Jesse Guitar Taylor** Half Moon, Putney
 Thu 9th **Little Ed & the Blues Imperials, Paul Lamb & the King Snakes**, Half Moon, Putney
 Sun 12th **Boogie Brothers**, Half Moon, Putney
 Wed 15th **Thu 16th Jesse Guitar Taylor**, Half Moon, Putney SW15
 Sat 18th **Climax Blues Band**, Half Moon, Putney SW15
 Tue 21st, **Noel McCalla's Contract**, Half Moon, Putney
LONDON WEST END
 100 Club, Oxford St W1
 Sun 5th **The Metrotones**
 Tue 7th **Jimmy Rogers and his band + Big Joe Louis and His Blueskings**
 Sun 12th **Dana Gillespie**
 Wed 15th **Beryl Bryden's Birthday Night**, with Roy Williams, Martin Lytton, Alan Elsdon, Dick Charlesworth, Tony Raine.
 Thur 16th **Laverne Brown + The Blues Bunch**
 Sun 19th **Big Town Playboys**
BERKS
 Fri 10th **Streatham Sidewinders**, After Dark Club, London St, Reading
 Thu 16th **Delta Echoes** MacDevitt's, 21 South St Reading
 Fri 17th **Streatham Sidewinders**, Granby Tavern, Reading
 Sat 18th **Big Boys Blues Band**, Coach & Horses, Wallingford
BUCKS
 Fri 10th **Guitar Shorty + Shakey**

Vick Blues Band, The Stables, Wavendon, Nr. Milton Keynes,
 Sat 18th **Paul Lamb & the King Snakes**, The Rose & Crown, Kings Langley
CORNWALL
 Sat 4th, **Backdoormen R n' B Band**, Q Club, Bude
DERBYSHIRE
 Wed 8th **ZZ Birmingham Blues Maestros**, The Bell, Derby
ESSEX
 Mon 6th **Automatic Slim** Essex Motor Show, Essex Showground, Gt Leighs, Nr Chelmsford
 Sat 11th **Booze 'n' Blooze**, Bakers Arms, Colchester
 Sat 18th **Automatic Slim**, Three Horseshoes, Duton Hill, Nr Great Dunmow
GLOS
 Sat 4th **Guitar Shorty, Graham Davies Band with Eddie Martin**, Gloucester Civic Hall
 Thu 6th June **Otis Grand & the Dance Kings, Ray Gelato's Giants of Jive, King Pleasure & the Biscuit Boys**, Cheltenham Town Hall
HANTS
 Fri 3rd, **The Producers**, Pier Showbars, Bournemouth
 Sat 4th **Otis Grand & the Dance Kings + The Red Birds**, South Parade Pier, Southsea, Portsmouth
 Sun 5th, **Sonny Black's Blues Band**, Joiners, Southampton
 Thu 9th **The Dan Band**, The Maltings, Farnham
 Fri 10th **Sonny Black's Blues Band** Railway, Gosport
 Sat 11th **Busted Fender Blues Band**, Landmark, Portsmouth
 Wed 15th **Gary Murray & the Blues-oogie Band**, The Toad & Stump, The Green, Eversley Cross, Nr Yateley
 16th, **The Producers**, Woodman, Branksome, Bournemouth
 Fri 17th **Sonny Black's Blues Band, + Busted Fender Blues Band** Thorngate Hall, Gosport
 Sat 18th **Sonny Black's Blues Band**, Onslow, Southampton
 Thu 23rd, **Sonny Black's Blues Band**, Farnham Maltings.
 Fri 30th, **Wilko Johnson, The Hamsters, The Gutter Brothers**,

South Parade Pier, Southsea, Portsmouth.
 Sat 1st June, **The Big Town Playboys, The Gutter Brothers, Blues Bunch**, South Parade Pier, Southsea, Portsmouth.
HERTS
 Sat 4th **The Guv'nors**, The Leviathan, Watford
 Fri 10th **Automatic Slim** Crown, Borehamwood
 Fri 17th **The Dan Band**, Going Underground, Berkhamstead
KENT
 Sat 4th **The Dan Band**, Woodlands, Gillingham
 Fri 10th **The Dan Band** Dolphin Hotel, Herne Bay
 Sun 12th **Kit Packham's One Jump Ahead**, Frog & Bucket, Ide Hill
MIDDX
 Fri 3 **Gary Murray & the Blues-oogie Band** Ship Hotel, Shepperton
 Fri 10th **Gary Murray & the Blues-oogie Band**, Ship Hotel, Shepperton
 Fri 17th, **Gary Murray & the Blues-oogie Band**, Ship Hotel, Shepperton
OXON
 Mon 1st **Sonny Black's Blues Band** The Old Fire Station Gloucester Green, Oxford
SALOP
 Thu 9th **Guitar Shorty + Bare Wires**, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury
SOMERSET
 Sat 4th, **Automatic Slim**, S.W. England Bike Show, Royal Bath & West of England Showground, Shepton Mallet
STAFFS
 Fri 3rd **The Mighty Houserockers**, Nags Head, Nuneaton
 Fri 10th **The Mighty Houserockers**, Freetown Club, Hanley, Stoke
 Sat 18th **Bare Wires**, The Breendon Bar, Birmingham.

Book Reviews

FERNANDO JONES

"I Was There When The Blues Was Red Hot"

*The Fernando Jones Publishing Group Ltd,
5 North Wabash Avenue,
Suite 1409, Chicago, Illinois 60602-9915, USA
171 pp, illustrated, index*

Maybe I'm biased, but anyone who lists Howlin' Wolf's 'Commit A Crime' in his Top Five favourite songs has got to be OK with me! Fernando Jones is a young African-American bluesman from Chicago, and this book (his first, I think) details his own discovery of and entry into his local blues community. His love for the music and its creators shines through on every page. Although there are numerous chapters devoted to various male and female artistes, Fernando does not present standard biographies but rather gives personal anecdotes, memories and discussions...and not only musicians are included - club owners, disc jockeys, educators and even black professors are brought into the book. The author is careful to ensure that credit for the blues is given to the Black originators, whilst also acknowledging that the music has had a worldwide impact. It is good to see him drawing attention to those musicians who are taking the blues into schools - and all white blues critics should read the chapter 'Borrowed (And/Or) Stolen'.

Many of the names that Fernando mentions are familiar in this country as just that: names! Others are better-known: Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, Lefty Dizz and Sugar Blue, for example, but Chicago blues has been overlooked a little of late so this goes some way to redressing the balance. Like almost all oral histories there are a few flaws, inaccuracies, and generalisations, but these are more than made up for by the enthusiasm and first-person perspective of the text. The illustrations are in collage format, a mixture of photos, cuttings, posters, handbills and letters; the reproduction of some of the photographs could be better, but that is a minor complaint

At the end Fernando states: "I had a great time writing this book" - well, I had a great time reading it! If you're interested in Chicago blues, make an effort to get a copy - write to the above address if you get no joy from your specialist dealer. The good news is that there will be a paperback version coming out in June and a film!

ROBERT SACRE

"Musique Cajun et Musiques Noires en Louisiane Francophone"

Published by the author 34pp

This is an A4 sized booklet designed to give an overview of the 'French' music of Louisiana and, as such, it succeeds admirably. It is written in French, but should not pose many problems to anyone who paid any attention at all to the subject at Secondary school. The introduction details the varied backgrounds of the state's French speakers and then there are five chapters dealing with the evolution of Cajun music from the eighteenth century up until the present day; important musicians and record companies are indicated, but it is also good to see that the rediscovery of pride in French/Cajun culture that took place in the sixties is examined. The final chapter is devoted to Black music (which is of course touched on prior to this); not just Zydeco, but also 'Black Cajun music' and 'la musique creole'. There is a bibliography and selected discography (including several CD's) and it is profusely illustrated, scrapbook style, with maps, posters, record labels, album covers and Robert Sacre's own photos. Much of the literature on Cajun music is both expensive and hard to find, so this booklet fills a gap quite nicely; you can get a copy by sending a five pound note to: Robert Sacre, Chaussee de Tongres 117, 4420 Liege-Rocourt, Belgium...and if your interests stretch to pre-war blues, it is worth enquiring about his excellent book "Charley Patton - The Voice Of The Delta" which is also available.

Norman Darwen



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ALLIGATOR RECORDS

Twenty years with the 'Gator

COMPETITION TIME

for BBR BOOGIE readers

As part of their celebration of twenty years of the label, Alligator Records are giving away prizes of CD's and T-shirts to the winners of a simple competition open to all our readers. Details in box at right.

The Alligator story started back in the late sixties when Bruce Iglauer was a student at Lawrence University in Wisconsin. Bruce started to visit the Chicago blues clubs. He decided to move to Chicago in the winter of 1970 and soon got a job as a shipping clerk for Delmark records which was active in the jazz and blues scene in a small way.

Iglauer began hanging out in a small Sunday afternoon blues joint, Florence's where Hound Dog Taylor was resident. Bruce was sure that he could do something for Taylor with the right marketing, but Delmark weren't interested. The upshot was that Bruce took a risk and formed Alligator to make just the one record.

He got the record out with his savings and hustled it himself, with the result that he felt confident enough to go his own way, quitting Delmark. The decision was a tough one because the early years were bleak as each record had to subsidise the next one, which meant about one release a year and lots of long hours on the road selling the product. At the same time, the radio scene was changing adversely for Iglauer's goals, with AOR displacing blues and other less popular music. Bruce persisted, despite this setback and started getting gigs for his artists as well as recording them. In the middle and late seventies, the business began to expand and get recognition. Grammy award nominations followed over the next few years and then the awards started to roll in, with the

result that Alligator gets more than a small label might reasonably expect, but it's nothing to do with luck - just hard and relentless graft by Iglauer and his dedicated small workforce. Distribution by Sweden's Sonet company, helped the worldwide expansion of the label and the result of all the efforts of Iglauer and his associates is a leading roster of blues artistes and award winners, who are lined up for international work that most non blues musicians would envy. A specially priced double CD and double Cassette release celebrates the label's twenty year anniversary, along with continuing new single releases from people like Kenny Neal, Little Charlie and Elvin Bishop. Just a few years before Bruce got into the blues, Bishop was of course pursuing the



The Alligator team, sporting prize T-shirts and CDs

TEN WINNERS!

For the first six correct answers, prizewinners will each receive two Elvin Bishop CDs, "Big Fun" and "Don't Let The Bossman Get You Down" plus a "Bossman" T-shirt.

The next four correct answers will each receive a "Bossman" CD. All you have to do, to be eligible for a prize, is correctly answer the following question;

In the early sixties, Elvin Bishop was working in a Chicago blues band with a young white harmonica player. What was the name of the band?

Send your answer, with name and address to:

Comp. BBR BOOGIE
113 Holmesdale Road
Reigate, Surrey RH2 0BT

blues with the same dedication that Iglauer was to put to recording it. He reached Chicago ahead of Iglauer, but here they have got together in that common pursuit.

Koko Taylor and the Blues Machine
Ronnie Earl with Sugar Ray and the Broadcasters
Magic Slim and the Teardrops
Jimmy Rogers
Lil Ed and the Blues Imperials
The Blues Band
Honey Boy Edwards
John Hammond
Walter Trout Band
Wild Child Butler
Guitar Shorty
Little Willie Littlefield
The Big Town Playboys
Paul Lamb and the King Snakes
King Pleasure and his Biscuit Boys
Dana Gillespie
Ray Minhinnett
Kevin Brown
Norman Beaker Band
Big Joe Louis and the Blues Kings
Top Topham
Dave Peabody
Gypsy Dave Smith
The Sensational King Bizkit
Ruthless Blues
Mick Clark Band
Mick 'Wildman' Pinni
The Hamsters
Innes Sibun
Frank White
Ray Stubbs RnB Allstars
Booze n Blooze
Snatch It Back
The Elmores
Bare Wires
The Harp Breakers
Junk Yard Angels
Mr 'C
Red Lemon Electric Blues Band
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