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The 1960s Blues Boom By John Power (page 3)

Chicken Shack.

David Yeats and Andy Sylvester started this band in Stourbridge, as the Sounds of Blue in '64. Stan Webb was leaving The Shades Five and was asked to join them, so he did. They emerged as Chicken Shack in '65, taking their name from jazz organist Jimmy Smith's 'Back at the Chicken Shack', itself taken from blues jargon. Without Yeats they got residency at Hamburg's Star Club, where many Merseybeat bands had polished their trade. Stan was the guitarist and Sylvester on bass. At first they filled the drum stool with Alan Morley, from '65-'68, followed by Al Sykes in '68, and then Hughie Flint a former Bluesbreaker, also in that year, then Dave Bidwell from '68-'71.

Their first major U.K. gig was the '67 National Jazz and Blues Festival in Windsor and Mike Vernon signed them to his Blue Horizon label as a result. The resulting album, '40 Blue Fingers, Freshly Packed and Ready to Serve' was released in '68, the same year that Christine Perfect, later McVie, after her marriage to John, joined on keyboards and vocals. It reached no. 14 in the album charts and Christine was voted best female vocalist for two successive years by Melody Maker readers. 'I Would Rather Go Blind' and 'Tears in the Wind' were minor singles hits. In '69 Christine left when she married John McVie. Paul Raymond replaced her briefly but Bidwell and Sylvester left to join the Savoy Brown Blues Band in '71 after the band were dropped by the Blue Horizon label. Stan Webb kept the name and recruited John Glascock on bass and Paul Hancox on drums to keep the band going until '74, when he joined Savoy Brown too, for the album 'Boogie Brothers'. In '77 he reformed Chicken Shack often changing line-ups included Paul Butler, Miller Anderson, and drummers Rick Lee from Ten Years After, followed by Keef Hartley, a former Bluesbreaker and founder of his own band for a while.

At the time of writing the band has had 41 members which include Dave Winthrop, an Essex boy, on sax, on and off from '76-2012. Stan Webb has been the only consistent lead guitar, but various line-ups have released 26 albums and four singles.... and counting!



Savoy Brown Blues Band.

Formed in Battersea in '65 by guitarist Kim Simmonds and harp blower John O'Leary. Again they have featured constant line-up changes. Bryce Portius was the original keyboardist, Ray Chappell was on bass and Leo Manning the drummer. Martin Stone and Bob Hall soon joined on guitars but John O'Leary then left, while the remainder recorded their debut album in '67. Up to 2009 there had been 62 members and there have been many guest members. They have had records released on Decca, Deram, Parrot and Black Pig labels. Kim Simmonds is the only original member left in the band, but other founder, O'Leary, is still active in other bands.

Their name became shortened to just Savoy Brown as the blues boom melted away and their success has mainly been in the States, by continuous touring rather than with any high-flying record sales. Their highest placed, and only U.S., single reached 68 on the Billboard chart, but in 2015 the album 'Devil to Play' reached no. 4 in the U.S. album charts. By 2017 they had released 39 albums.

The Bo Street Runners

Originally called the Roadrunners, after a Bo Diddley song, this outfit had to change their name when they realised that a Merseybeat band already had claimed the name, so in '63 the Bo Street Runners emerged, consisting of Gary Thomas, lead guitar, Bob O'Brien on keyboards, Dave Cameron on bass, Nigel Hutchinson on drums, and John Dominic on vocals. The Bo Diddley influence was still highly in evidence.

At first they were a local act around Harrow, but in '64 entered the Ready Steady Go T.V. Programme's Ready Steady Win competition, staged over several weeks as part of the trendy Mod programme. They won the first place with a song called 'I'm a Bow Street Runner'. The resulting single with 'Tell Me' as the 'b' side sold over 20,000 copies in the U.K. 99 copies of an E.P. sold at gigs and they got to support the Rolling Stones. Keeping up the success did not prove so easy, but they moved to Colombia in '65 after being dropped by Decca. Thomas, Dominic and Cameron remained in the band and were joined by Foy Fry on keyboards and Glyn Thomas on drums for a second single 'Tell Me What Your Gonna Do', a James Brown song, which made no impact so Fry and Thomas left to be replaced by Tim Hinkley on keyboards and Mick Fleetwood on drums.

A move to a more jazzy sound provided the next single, 'Baby, Never Say Goodbye' which managed to chart on a Pirate Radio top 40, but Fleetwood and Dominic left, to be replaced by Mike Patto on vocals to cover the Beatles 'Drive My Car' before they disbanded in '66.

A compilation C.D., was released in 2004: 'The Complete Recordings '64-'66' by Cherry Red Records.



The Birds

The band member that makes this group significant is Ronnie Wood, whose later work with The Jeff Beck Group, the Faces, and Rolling Stones we have already mentioned, as we did the Artwoods, formed by Ronnie's elder brother Art.

The band consisted of Ali Mac Kenzie on vocals and harmonica, Tony Munroe, guitar and vocals, Ronnie on Guitar and vocals, Kim Gardner on bass and vocals, Bob Langham, and later Pete McDaniel on drums. They originally came together in 1964. They always seemed to have a bit of a problem with a name for the band, first calling themselves the Thunderbirds, until they wound up backing Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds and realised they'd have to change it. So they just shortened it to the Birds, as a joke about having long hair. Later in '65 that also proved to be a problem, or maybe a good publicity stunt, when the Byrds, the folkrock/psychedelic band arrived from the States to promote their hit cover version of Bob Dylan's 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. They were served with legal papers by the Birds management, which were just ignored and they returned to the States after their tour. But their chart entries did tend to put the Birds somewhat in the shadows.

The band were also in the Ready Steady Go battle of the bands and impressed Decca Records enough to give them a contract. The first two singles were 'You Don't Love Me' and 'Leaving Here', after a third they moved to Robert Stigwood's label, Reaction for, 'That's All I Need For You'. They were highly regarded by audiences as a live act but as their early promise didn't seem to be fulfilled, despite sharing bills with the Who, so they split in '67 as things went psychedelic. Ronnie and Kim Gardner both joined Creation. Since 2010 Ali MacKenzie has gone on the road again using the name of the Birds.

'The Collectors Guide to Rare British Birds' C.D. on the Deram label gathered all their recorded material together in 1999

Creation.

In addition to Ronnie and Kim most of the rest of this band had been in the Mark Four from Hertfordshire: Kenny Picknett on vocals, Eddie Phillips on guitars, Mike Thompson on rhythm guitar. They had two records released on Mercury Records: 'Rock Around the Clock' and 'Try it Baby' in '64. The original bassist went to replace Pete Quaife in the Kinks so was in turn replaced by Tony Cooke. Mike Thompson left too but was not replaced. The group did two more non-charting singles '65 and '66 when they changed management to Tony Stratton-Smith, who replaced Cooke with Bob Garner from the Tony Sheridan Band, while Picknett came up with the name Creation for the band.

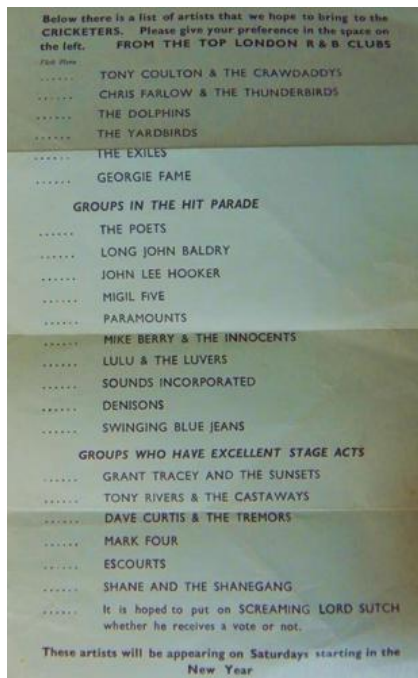
The band's style of playing went beyond the blues to an Art School, Pop Art inspired image similar to the early Who. Their first single as Creation went to no. 49 in the charts before a



couple of more line-up changes occurred. The next single in '66 reflected the Art School image with 'Painter Man', later covered by Boney M. Picknett took to playing guitar with a violin bow, before Jimmy Page [I can testify to having seen that], and spray can painted canvasses on stage amidst other Action Painting techniques.,p> Several singles followed, some successful in the States and in Europe, where they toured. More personnel changes occurred in '67, when Kim Gardner took over bass, while Bob Garner took over vocals as Picknett left, only to return the following year when the band reformed after a short hiatus when Eddie Phillips left. When they reformed in '68 Ronnie Wood was part of the group until they disbanded.

The value of the band to musical evolution has been recognised by younger musicians and reunions have been staged between 1980 and 2016 despite Kenny Picknett dying in '97. A form of the group with Eddie Phillips continues to tour.

There have been 13 singles, 3 albums, 15 compilations and live albums.



The Paramounts (Cricketers flyer copyright Maurice Hyde)

The musicians that made up Paramounts will be best known to the public as Procul Harum. But during the blues boom they were a successful r&b group from Southend. Their first incarnation was as the Raiders in the '50s, working the youth centres circuit doing rock covers. The name change to the Paramounts came in '61. Keyboardist, Gary Brooker and guitarist Robin Trower were the two consistent members of the line-up. Chris Copping came and went and returned as organist when Diz Derrick took over on bass in '63.

They played on the same bill as the Rolling Stones at a gig in Deal, in Kent, and the Stones announced on ITV's Thank Your Lucky Stars that they thought that they were "The finest r&b band in England", and used them as opening act at many gigs. EMI Records signed them up in '63, and released 'Poison Ivy'/'I Feel Good All Over' which reached no.35 in the charts. That was followed by 'Little Bitty Pretty One'/'A Certain Girl' and four more singles. But by then many of songs they had featured in their act had become stock in trade for many other groups and they got lost in the boom, and wound up as the backing group for Sandie Shaw. Robin Trower left to form a group called the Jam [before Paul Weller used the name]. Gary Brooker decided it was time to start writing original material and teamed up with Keith Reid to do this until they decided that it was time to form a band to perform their material. That group in 1967 became Procul Harum and all the members of the Paramounts came and went amongst its ranks. The original line-up under that name was Gary Brooker, vocals and piano, Matthew Fisher on organ, Dave Knights on bass, Roy Royer on guitar and Bobby Harrison on drums. That grouping only did four or five gigs and put out one single, but that one single was of course the worldwide best seller 'Whiter Shade of Pale' in '67. Later that year Harrison and Royer were replaced by B.J.Wilson and the return of Robin Trower to create the line-up for three albums. By that time they were a psychedelic/prog rock band and faired best in the U.S.

There have been many line-up changes, re-unions and albums over the years as Procul rather than Paramounts. Gary Brooker joined the all star line-up of Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings, and amongst many other ventures has done solo projects with a choir and orchestral backing

The Fairies.

This group from Colchester took their name in response to longhairs being referred to as fairies by some other sections of the public. They has begun as Dane Stevens and the Deepbeats playing gigs around Essex. 'Dane's ' real name was Dougie Ord. Fred Gandy and John Acutt were on guitars, Wimp Weaver on bass and John 'Twink' Alder on drums. After the name change they brought out two singles: 'Any Time at All'/'Don't Think Twice It's Alright', by the then little known Bob Dylan, often regarded as the 'a' side in 1964, and 'Get Yourself Home'/'Don't Mind' in '65. The second single had Nick Wymer, formally of Nick's Nomads, as vocalist, as by that time Doug Ord had been given a jail sentence for manslaughter after a car accident. He worked as a scenery painter for a theatre in Colchester after his release.

The band member who made the biggest impact on the music scene was drummer 'Twink' Alder. The groups management were also involved with the Pretty Things and by 1968 he played on the First rock opera 'S.F. Sorrow' by the Pretties. Between then and the Fairies he had been a member of the In Crowd and then Tomorrow, one of the original psychedelic bands to emerge from

the U.F.O. club in '66-'67, with singer Keith West who's 'Excerpt From a Teenage Opera' made it into the Top 10, although the opera never manifested, and the group broke up as a result, as the hit had diverted the group's Underground image, better represented by the single 'My White Bicycle' about the free bikes left around Amsterdam by the Dutch Provo activists. The group had also played at the launch of alternative newspaper 'International Times' in '67, and at the newspaper's Free Speech Benefit at Alexander Palace in that year, The 14 Hour Technicolour Dream. In '69 they played at London's Olympia arena for 'Christmas on Earth with Jimi Hendrix headlining. Guitarist Steve Howe went on to play for 'Yes' and 'Asia', and Twink remained firmly in the Underground in Pink Fairies and gigging around with bands like the Deviants and Hawkwind as well as the Pretty Things, before moving to Morocco, marrying a Muslim girl, becoming a father, and converting to that faith while broadening his drumming skills.



The Action

The Action reached the peak of their popularity in the Mod era, and had quite a cult following as they sang harmony and used string instruments without a brass section to cover mostly Tamla Motown classics. At first they had been known as the Boys when they formed in North London's Kentish Town in 1963, with Reg King on vocals, Alan King on rhythm guitar and vocals, Mike Evans on bass, and Roger Powell on drums.

They played mainly in bars and in Germany at first and then backed Sandra Barry calling themselves the Boyfriends on the single 'Really Gonna Shake' in '64, then Pete Watson joined on guitar and the name change to the Action came about, with a cover of the Wilson Pickett song, 'Land of a Thousand Dances' / 'In My Lonely Room' as the result. It was on Parlophone arranged by George Martin. Pete Watson left in '66 after disagreements with manager Rikki Farr, and Parlophone dropped them in '67, the year that psychedelia transformed the mode of music. The new line-up changed to include Ian Whiteman on keyboards, and Martin Stone, from Savoy Brown Blues Band, on guitar, and the sound became folk rock psychedelia. By '69 they were known as Mighty Baby, and signed to Head Records.

Alan King formed Ace in '75 and they scored a U.S. hit with 'How Long'.

In 1980 there was a compilation C.D and in '90 Paul Weller wrote the sleeve notes for a previously unreleased album, 'Rolled Gold'.

In 1998 the original line-up reformed, played the Isle of Wight Festival and gigged around for six years.

Garry Farr and the T-Bones

Gary and his brother Rikki were sons of Welsh heavyweight boxer, Tommy Farr. Gary was born in 1944 and died in '94. He began as a folk blues singer, before putting the backing band together. They took over the Yardbirds slot at the Marquee and also played at the Crawdaddy Club. In '65 they issued the E.P. 'Dem Bones, Dem Bones, Dem T-Bones' on Columbia,

produced by Giorgio Gomelsky. There were a couple of other singles and a U.S. appearance on Shindig. Keith Emerson, later of the Nice and Emerson, Lake and Palmer joined the band on keyboards briefly. After '68 Gary went solo. Brother Rikki was in music management and was site manager and compere for the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970.



The Clique



Were formed in '63 in Harrow by John Rowe, lead guitar, Peter Westgarth, vocals. Adrian Stanbach, bass John Kitchen, rhythm guitar, and Trevor Roberts on drums. Brian Morris replaced Roberts in '64.

They had two singles released in '65: 'She Ain't No Good' on Pye, and a twelve inch single 'We Didn't Kiss, Didn't Love But Now We Do Do', also on Pye. In 2011 there was the '64 Rave-Up' E.P. [Acid Jazz] and in '95 the C.D, 'The Complete Recordings 1964 to '65 on Dig the Fuzz Records.

The Climax Chicago Blues Band

Quite a late starter to be part of the blues boom, if old in years, the Climax Chicago Blues Band, was formed in Stafford in 1969 by Colin Cooper on harmonica and vocals, Peter Haycock on guitar and vocals, Derek Holt on guitar, Richard Jones on bass and keyboards, George Newsome on drums and Arthur Wood on alternative Keyboards. After 1972 they shortened the name to just the Climax Blues Band.

In in '70 they had changed to Harvest records, and became more rocky. Over the years there have been 18 albums, two U.S. single hits, 'Get it Right' in '77 and 'I Love You' that made no. 12 on the Billboard charts.

Jones left in '69 so Holt took over bass. Newsome left in '71 and was replaced by John Cuffley.

There have been 16 line-ups altogether so far, and they are still going, but three of the original members are dead: Cooper in '08, aged 69, Wood in '05 aged 76 and Haycock in '13 aged 62.



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