



1960s Blues Room 2



The 1960s Blues Boom By John Power (page 2)



Shotgun Express.

As noted above, Shotgun Express were a similar revue style act like Steampacket that Rod formed in '66. Peter Bardens had played keyboards with Van Morrison in Them, and already had the hub of the group on the road, known as Peter Bardens' Looners, which consisted of Dave Ambrose on drums and an early pairing of Peter Green on guitar and Mick Fleetwood on drums. Besides Bardens on keyboards and vocals Rod and Beryl Marsden were the two upfront vocalists. Beryl had already had a successful career in the Merseybeat era of her Liverpool home town, but never pushed for commercial success like say fellow blues belter Lulu, and was always more of a cult figure. The band only lasted a year. A single 'I Hear the World Turn Around' was a fine one well sung but had violins added which did it no favours, as management failed to see where the fan base was. It can still be found on the double compilation 'Rod Stewart 1964-69.' Peter Green was the first to leave when John Mayall asked him to replace Eric Clapton in the Bluesbreakers as Eric joined Cream. The band split in '67. Beryl joined the She Trinity, Phil Sawyer joined the Spencer Davis Group, Dave Ambrose joined The Brian Auger team and Peter Bardens later formed the prog rock band Camel.

The Small Faces.

Another band that featured the sound of the Hammond organ as an integral part of their sound, but without brass horns like many Flamingo Club style jazzy r&b bands, were the Small Faces: not on their first single hit 'Watcha Gonna Do About It', which featured a few simple organ riffs from Jimmy Winston, but from then onwards when Ian Maclagan, from the Muleskinners, and the Boz People replaced him. The group began in Ilford, then in Essex, before the G.L.C. was created. Singer Steve Marriott, with his belting soulful voice had been a child star in the West End musical, 'Oliver', and also played guitar in the band. He met Ronnie Lane who was to be his co-writer for a lot of songs while he was working in a record store in Manor Park. Ronnie was also to play bass and sing. Kenney Jones was the drummer. The band had not worked their way through the ranks of Blues Inc, or the like but listened to what had been going on and emerged as a fresh talent, with eyes on commercial success, in the Mod era too. A 'face' was a name for a character on that scene, and as they were all of short stature the name of the band needed little invention.

The commercial success hit an unforeseen stumbling block when the group were spotted by impresario Don Arden who signed them and had the first single released within four weeks of their formation. All of which they readily agreed to, before finding out about his exploitative style of management. The contract kept them on a low weekly wage, but Arden did open accounts for them in trendy Carnaby Street boutiques, so the boys took loads of clothes and sold them on. Later legal battles over record royalties carried on until nearly two band members had died by 1996. On the plus side Arden also set them on a trail of top ten hits. Their second single, 'I Got Mine', by Marriott and Lane did not fare as well as their first so Arden employed professional writers, who came up with 'Sha La La La La La Lea', and oddly this profound lyric took them to no.3 in the charts. The first



'Small Faces' titled album was a mix of commercial writing and self-penned songs. The next single 'Hey Girl' reached no.10 in the charts, followed by a belting 'All or Nothing' that reached no.1, knocking the Beatles off of the top slot.

At this point the Rolling Stones manager, Andrew Loog Oldham helped to free the group from the Arden contract and signed them to his Immediate record label with a less punishing round of gigs. Arden released three more singles but the band did not promote them. 'Here Comes the Nice' was their first single for Immediate, the 'Itchycoo Park' reached no 2. It was a track from the celebrated psychedelic 'Ogden's Nut Gone Flake' no.1 album. The following single 'The Universal' was virtually a solo effort by Marriot that failed to chart and he soon left the band to join Peter Frampton in the group Humble Pie. Soon, after leaving the Jeff Beck Band, Rod Stewart and Ronnie Wood joined the remaining Small Faces causing the name change to just Faces, owing to their height. Ronnie Lane soon formed Slim Chance and took to the road with a financially disastrous show in a fairground marquee. There have been a partial Small Faces reunion from '76-'78, with Marriot, and in 2009 but Marriot, '91, Lane, '97, and McLagan 2014 have died along the way. Kenney Jones has kept a successful Jones Gang alive in the U.S. In 2017 a musical tribute 'All or Nothing' toured the country's suburban theatres.



GUITAR CENTRED GROUPS.

Most of the bands we have noted previously, descending from Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated retained a Hammond organ and brass section that linked to jazz background or r&b in the style of Ray Charles, Jimmy Witherspoon, Otis Redding, James Brown, Wilson Pickett, and Tamla Motown artists from the States. But Alexis Korner also spawned the Rolling Stones who led the development of guitar and harmonica groups of delta and Chicago style electric blues. It is to that side of the fork at the crossroads that we now need to turn.

The Rolling Stones.

The Stones story is so well known that we don't need to dwell too long on them. Their Name came from the title of a Muddy Waters song. Their early influences came from imported American records and the early Ealing Jazz Club sessions of Alexis Korner and Blues Inc. Mick Jagger, Keith Richard and Brian Jones all learnt from and jammed with its members, which included Charlie Watts. Jagger learned harmonica from Cyril Davies. Dick [not Mick] Taylor was an early member of the Stones before going back to college and then joining the Pretty Things. Ian Stuart was a founder member but played off stage and acted as road manager. Bill Wyman joined in '62.

Jones, Jagger, Stewart and Taylor played a gig at the Marquee in '62, Wyman joined later in the year. Giorgio Gomelsky became their first manager and got them a Sunday residence at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond in '63. Andrew Loog Oldham took over later as manager that year. He had been a publicist for the Beatles beforehand. Their first record label was Decca and they began the trend of taking Black music back to America but to a white audience, notably getting Howlin Wolf on the Ed Sullivan show at their request. His song 'Little Red Rooster' was their fifth single and reached no.1 in the charts despite disbelief in its chances from Decca.

Brian Jones was the original band leader but became so unreliable due to his drug misuse he has to be fired in '69 and died in a swimming pool a month later. Mick Taylor took over when invited to join from John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, and remained until '74 when Ronnie Wood replaced him. Ian Stewart died in '85. Taylor had his own blues band from time to time. Other back-up members have included Nicky Hopkins on piano from '67 - '82, Ian McLagan from the Faces '78-81 on other keyboards, as was Billy Preston in the mid '80s, Chuck Levell from '82 and Bobby Keys on sax intermittently.'

Early blues and rock fusions influences included such songs as 'Not Fade Away', a Buddy Holly song given a Bo Diddley rhythm, were soon replaced by numbers penned by Jagger and Richard, a.k.a Nanker and Phelge, the Glimmer Twins. The band went briefly psychedelic after the Beatles Sergeant Pepper album with 'Satanic Majesties Request' but returned to their blues roots for



'Beggars Banquet' in '68, 'Let it Bleed', '69, 'Sticky Fingers', '71, [tax-] 'Exile on Main Street''72, a country and Western and disco interlude with 'Some Girls', '78, and 'Tattoo You' in '81, before a 2 year hiatus with Mick and Keith doing solo projects. All their albums and singles are too long to list but they tended to be linked to world tours after that time: Steel Wheels, '89, Voodoo Lounge, '85, Bridges to Babylon, '98, Licks, '03, Bigger Bang, 2005, Their retro roots studio album; 'Blue and Lonesome' was released in 2016.

The Pretty Things.

Little Boy Blue and the Blue Boys was a band that included Mick Jagger, Keith Richard and Dick Taylor. Dick and Keith had been at Sidcup Art College together. The three of them joined Brian Jones to form the Rollin Stones [original spelling] in '62. Taylor played the bass as at that time there were too many leads. Not wanting to risk an uncertain musical career Dick decided to carry on his education at Central School of Art and Design rather than go professional. Phil May who had also been at Sidcup Art College suggested a less risky semi-pro band, so Dick took up lead, Phil sang and played harmonica and they were joined by John Stax on bass, Brian Pendleton on rhythm guitar initially Pete Kitley on drums, who was eventually replaced by Viv Price, a Keith Moon style wildman of rock. Bryan Morrison who had also been at college with them and subsequently built the Brian Morrison Agency, which also handled an early Pink Floyd, managed them, and got them a record contract with the Fontana label in '64.

The Pretties were very purist blues at first with their first self titled album of '65 favouring especially Bo Diddley, who's song 'You Pretty Thing' gave them their name, and Jimmy Reed, although a couple of their own songs were in evidence. Their first three singles all charted in '64 and '65 : 'Rosalyn', 'Don't Bring Me Down', and 'Honey I Need'. David Bowie covered the first two of these on his tribute album, 'Pin-Ups'. The group were popular in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, where they exhibited fairly anarchic behaviour, especially Viv Prince, who caused visa and permit refusal threats in the latter. He was eventually asked to leave and was replaced by Skip Allen in '65. In '66 they did a cover of a Kinks song and charted again.. An album called 'Progress had brass instruments added and moved towards soul music. But the following 'Emotions' album had brass and strings which proved to be a step too far for fans. It was their last on Fontana. A change to Colombia as psychedelia dawned saw further changes to their sound on 'Reflecting Grey' in '67 was better received, and was followed by a single, 'Taking 'Bout the Goodtimes'/'Walking Through My Dreams'.

The band are credited with the first rock opera: 'S.F. Sorrow' in '68 before the Who's 'Tommy'. The post World War II gloom theme did not appeal to all though. Skip Allen left the drum stool to be replaced by Twink from the Colchester Band the Fairies, In Crowd and Tomorrow. Victor Unitt replaced Dick Taylor in '69 and Twink formed the Pink Fairies in the same year, as Skip Allen returned for the next psychedelic album, before the group disbanded in '71. Other albums for porn and horror movies were done under an alias, the Electric Banana..

By '74 the band had reformed and signed to Led Zeppelin's manager Peter Grant and their record label Swan Song to record the album 'Silk Torpedo' and then 'Savage Eye' before disbanding again. From '78 to '81 the '67 line-up reformed but were competing with 'new wave' styles of music and fashion, so they toured in Europe up to '94 and did a live album of live 'classics' in '87, 'Out of the Island'. In '91 Phil May and Dick Taylor joined with Yardbird Jim Mc Carthy on drums and went to Chicago and teamed up with Richard Hite from Canned Heat on bass and Stuebaker John on rhythm and slide guitars and harp to play with a host of Chicago bluesmen, black and white for the 'Chicago Blues Tapes'. 'Rage Before Beauty' was a studio album of 2000, then live recordings with Frank Holland on guitar George Woosey bass and Jack Greenwood drums, then a compilation, 'Come See Me' in 2004, 'Sweet Pretty Things' in 2015, a tribute by younger musicians called 'Sorrow's Children' in 2012.

Brian Pendleton died in 2007 and Phil and Dick announced that their 2018 tour would be their last, owing to Phil's emphysema, but that they would be doing acoustic London gigs as a duo.

The Yardbirds.

The Yardbirds originally formed in 1963 with Keith Relf on vocals and harmonica, Jim McCarthy on guitar, and sometimes bass, but

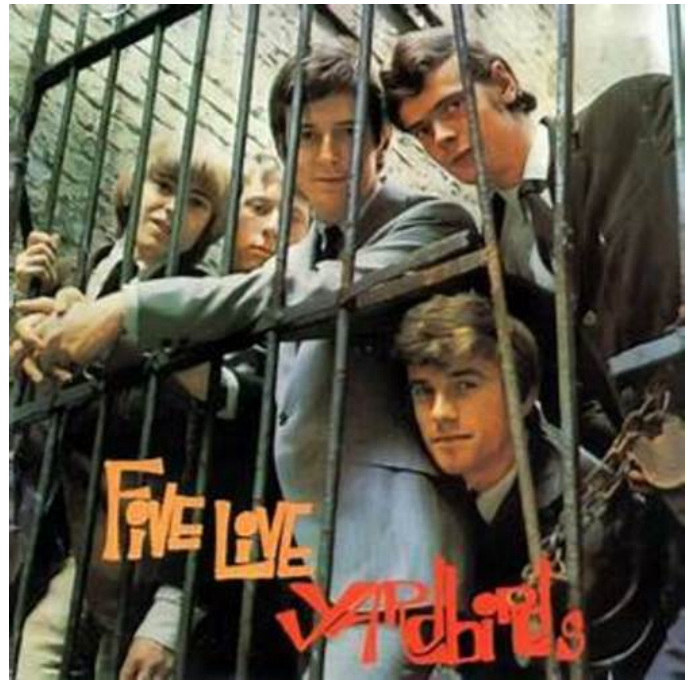


originally Paul Samwell-Smith as bassist and record producer. Relf and Samwell-Smith had been in the Metropolitan Blues Quartet, but were joined by Dreja, McCarthy, and Top Topham on lead guitar, for their first gig at Kingston School of Art in '63, backing Cyril Davies Allstars. At first they called themselves the Bluesounds and then changed it to Yardbirds after the American hobos who hung around freight yards waiting to jump a free ride. They followed the Rolling Stones to become house band at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond. They chose to feature songs from Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson [II], Howlin Wolf, Elmore James and other mostly Chicago blues singers, even though Relf's voice, if not his harp playing, sounded very white by comparison. Topham left the band and was replaced by Eric Clapton. Giorgio Gomelsky, who managed the Stones also took the Yardbirds into his fold. He got them a tour backing Sonny Boy Williamson at the end of '63 to early '64 which produced an album, to be followed by 'Five Live Yardbirds' on EMI Records.

They did well with singles too 'I Wish You Would', 'Good Morning Little Schoolgirl' featured Clapton, but once the band ventured into early prog rock with 'For Your Love', with Brian Auger on harpsichord and experimental guitar sounds Eric, then a blues purist decided to join John Mayall's Bluesbreakers instead. He recommended Jimmy Page as a replacement, but Jimmy had a safe position as a studio session musician and declined at first, but recommended Jeff Beck instead. Jeff was only too glad to join an experimental band: Indian raga sounds, fuzz boxes, feedback and distortion all joined other innovations like a Gregorian chant on 'Still I'm Sad' the 'b' side of the single 'Evil Hearted You'. They embarked on a U.S. Tour in '65, with new tracks like 'Mister You're a Better Man Than Me' and 'Train Kept a Rollin' was mixed into the middle of U.K. material in U.S releases. They did three more tours before the end of '66. 'Shapes of Things' and 'Over Under Sideways Down' in '66 were later hailed as the pre-cursors of psychedelia. The album 'Yardbirds' marked the end of their association with Giorgio Gomelsky as manager. In June of '66 Jimmy Page did join the group, not to replace Beck, but on bass and then to create a two lead guitar line-up that produced 'Becks Bolero' as John Paul Jones joined as bassist before joining Page in Led Zeppelin. Only compilations of tracks from that era were issued later. A couple of their songs appeared in the trendy film about a fashion photographer, 'Blow Up' at that time.

Beck left at the end of '66 during their last U.S. tour and formed the Jeff Beck Group with Rod Stewart, Ronnie Wood and Aynsley Dunbar in a group that preceded the sound that Led Zeppelin would create. Page stayed as the only lead until '68 when the group disbanded and he reformed the New Yardbirds with Robert Plant as vocalist, his second choice after Terry Reid who was tied to another contract, but who recommended Plant and his mate John Bonham on drums, while John Paul Jones played bass and keyboards. When he told Keith Moon his idea, Keith said that should go down like a lead balloon.....or Zeppelin as it turned out. Keith Relf, Chris Dreja and Relf's sister formed the band Renaissance playing more folky mediaeval music, but Keith was electrocuted by a microphone while rehearsing. Zeppelin refused to be pigeon-holed musically but it was clear that all members had their roots in the blues.

In the '90s Dreja and McCarty reformed the Yardbirds, with a new singer, John Idan, who looked like Keith Relf, sounded like him as he sang the old songs, and played bass. Gippy Mayo took on the task of walking in the shoes of former guitarists and also did a good job before joining Dr. Feelgood and then the Marques Brothers with Jeremiah Marques, before dying of cancer in 2014. Many line-up changes continued and there was an album 'Birdland' in 2003 of old reworked and some new songs with a host of younger musicians playing as a tribute. Jeff Beck has even been known to guest again with the band



John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

John Mayall was born in 1933, so was old enough to be conscripted into the Korean War. Back in Manchester he studied Art and became a graphic designer for a while playing with semi-pro bands while living in a tree house in his family's garden. In 1963 he decided to make the move to London and make a full-on attempt at a musical career. With Bernie Watson on guitar, John McVie on bass, Martin Hart on drums and John on keyboards and harmonica, the first single came out in '64: 'Crawling up a Hill'/'Mr. James', the latter a tribute to Elmore James. After the single Roger Dean replaced Watson and Hughie Flint took over the drum stool from Hart, for the Decca album, 'John Mayall Plays John Mayall' and then a single, 'Crocodile Walk'/'Blues City



'Shakedown'. When Roger Dean left he was replaced by Eric Clapton, from the Yardbirds.

The next single, 'I'm Your Witchdoctor'/'Telephone Blues' in '65, with Clapton, was on the Immediate label and produced by Jimmy Page. It was the first time the Bluesbreakers name appeared on a record. Other albums were still released on Decca, or its subsidiary labels, like 'Blues Alone' where Mayall sang, played all instruments and designed the album sleeve for the Ace of Clubs subsidiary. The groundbreaking album on Decca, sometimes called 'the Beano album' as Clapton is reading the comic on the cover photo, was simply called Bluesbreakers, and where Clapton used amp distortion to emulate the music of Big City electric blues greats like Buddy Guy, B.B. King and Freddie King as well as his Mississippi Delta hero Robert Johnson. A month after that album Mayall and Clapton released a single on the Purdah label, 'Lonely Years'/'Bernard Jenkins'. Clapton also recorded with Steve Winwood from the Spencer Davis group and an ad hoc, and largely anonymous for contractual reasons, group calling themselves the Powerhouse, with a few tracks that appeared on an Electra, multi artist album called 'What's Shakin'. Before there was another Mayall album Ginger Baker had talked him and Jack Bruce to form Cream, which started out as a hard core blues band but soon had jazzers Baker and Bruce using Clapton as front man for lengthy improvisations mixed with shorter, almost pop songs, part written by poet Pete Brown, in the psychedelic era.

Mayall replaced Clapton with Peter Green for the next album 'Hard Road', which had a Mayall painting of the group on the cover. Green left before the next album to form Fleetwood Mac with Mick Fleetwood on Drums, John McVie on bass and Jeremy Spencer on Slide guitar. Future Rolling Stone, Mick Taylor, replaced Green with Mayall's band for the 'Crusade' album, then Tony Reeves replaced McVie for the 'Bare Wires' album. Taylor was also on the album 'Blues from Laurel Canyon' in '68, and the double 'Diary of a Band'. Laurel Canyon is in California and that album marked Mayall's emigration to the States. Mick Taylor joined the Stones in place of Brian Jones, and the 'Blusbrakers' suffix for Mayall's bands disappeared until a 1982 revival.

With numerous line-up changes and guests joining for various projects Mayall has continued to record over 50 albums. A reunion for his birthday in 2002 a reunion in Liverpool included Clapton, Mick Taylor and Chris Barber. He had continued to tour until he said he was retiring, aged 75, in 2008. Over the years his bands have featured 16 guitarists, 9 drummers, 9 bassists, 14 brass players, 1 other pianist, 1 violinist, and 1 other harmonica player. Anyone who has played with any of his bands has found it a good way to gain their own musical reputatio.

Cream/Blind Faith.

We have already looked at Eric Clapton's career in the Yardbirds and John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, and Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce's history in Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated and with Graham Bond: a C.V. that allowed them to use the name Cream for the group where they played together. This trio of top rank musicians came together in 1966 but only lasted until '68, during which time they built a huge international following and sold over 15 million records.

The idea for the group came from a conversation between Ginger and Eric in which Eric also suggested that Jack Bruce would be a good choice for bass and vocalist. Ginger was not so sure, not so much on musical grounds but as he and Jack had a history of disagreements which had contributed to the breakup of the Bond Organisation, but he finally agreed, and Jack was approached about the idea. Eric and Jack had worked together in Powerhouse, and briefly in Bluesbreakers so Eric new of his skills, which included fine harmonica playing as well. The band first came to the notice of the public with their second gig at Windsor Jazz and Blues Festival in '66 playing mostly blues standards but in their own improvisational way, before original songwriting entered their repertoire as a response to psychedelia in '67. Although Jimi Hendrix was American, Chas Chandler, the one time Animals bassist, had brought him to England, where his talent was first fully spotted. Not only was he a big influence on Eric but they became great pals and often jammed together. Where many groups like Cream followed the outward trappings of psychedelic fashion there was little doubt that Jimi's songs and guitar style came from the spacey realms of L.S.D. Trips.

Cream's first album, 'Fresh Cream' in '66 reflected mainly their blues influences but with the odd Bruce song and a Baker drum solo. Their first single, 'Wrapping Paper' by Bruce and poet Pete Brown, not on the album, was a calmer mellow ballad and

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actually entered the Top Twenty singles chart. The album tracks were around five minutes, but stretched out to greater length in live performances.

'67 was the year that psychedelia emerged from the cultural underground, and saw more of Jack Bruce's songwriting with Pete Brown appearing when their second album, 'Disraeli Gears' appeared, with songs like 'Strange Brew' and 'Sunshine of Your Love', even one by Martin Sharp, illustrator of Underground magazine 'Oz', contributing with 'Tales of Brave Ulysses' as well as with the design of the dayglo album sleeve. With Eric already known in the U.S. because of the Yardbirds the album reached the top five on both sides of the Atlantic. Their blues roots were still in evidence.

Although they were predominantly an albums group, their record company, Reaction, did release successful hit singles: after 'I Feel Free' that reached no.11, 'Sunshine of Your Love' reached no.5 in the U.S. Charts, 'White Room' no.6, U.S., 'Crossroads' no.28, U.S., and 'Badge', U.K. no.18. It was however their live act of long improvisations mixed with the shorter songs that attracted the most attention. In 1968 the band's next album, 'Wheels of Fire', was a double and one record was devoted to live recordings. 'White Room' and 'Politician' were among the Bruce/Brown songs on the other album. By August '67 the group had been headlining gigs at the Fillmore West in San Francisco and elsewhere in the States, but soon the relentless touring, high volume performances, and Bruce-Baker antagonism were leading to the group's demise. The farewell tour began in California in '68, although they had effectively broken up six months earlier. The album, 'Goodbye' recorded in Los Angeles in '68 had six songs. Again three were long and live. One of the studio tracks, 'Badge' was co-written by Eric's mate George Harrison under a pseudonym. The Farewell Tour had nineteen U.S. dates and finished with two at London's Royal Albert Hall.



Blind Faith and other projects.

If Cream had a short career then Blind Faith was even shorter: effectively less than a year. Eric had long wanted to play more with Steve Winwood from the Spencer Davis group who he had worked with on the 'What's Shakin?', Electra Records collection where they were part of an ensemble they called the Powerhouse, and after Cream it seemed a good time to try. Ginger Baker turned up at Eric's house and talked himself on board, but his hard drug habit probably had a lot to do with their short career. Rick Grech, from Family, was on bass, while Steve Winwood was on Hammond organ and vocals. Another problem was that there was no real songwriter among them. After that Eric's career was fairly solo, although after a stint with Southern U.S. acoustic bluesers Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett and Traffic's Dave Mason, he did put together the first of his backing bands that he called Derek and the Dominoes which at times included Allman Brothers guitarist Duane Allman on songs such as 'Layla.'

Jack Bruce also went solo with a group of jazzers for backing. The album 'Songs for a Tailor' came out in '69. He avoided playing any of his Cream songs for many years.

Ginger Baker formed the Ginger Baker Airforce with Winwood and Grech from Blind Faith and his old boss Graham Bond on keyboards, as well as Denny Laine from the Moody Blues, before Denny joined Paul McCartney in Wings. Later bands included the Baker-Gurvitz Army and time playing with Hawkwind, who claimed that they got him off heroin with two bottles of whisky per day!

Spencer Davis Group.

It 1963 when Spencer put this group together in Birmingham, with himself on guitar, Pete York on drums, Muff Winwood on bass and child prodigy brother Steve Winwood, still of school age, on organ and vocals. He called them the Rhythm and Blues Quartette. By '64 they had a recording contract with Fontana records, after being spotted by Chris Blackwell, producer for the then small label of Island Records. At that point they changed their name. Steve's soulful deep gravelly voice was ideal for delivering songs by black performers. Their first recording was a cover of John Lee Hooker's 'Dimples', followed by an E.P with 'It's Gonna Work Out Fine', 'Midnight Special', 'Every Little Bit Hurts' and 'I Can't Stand It', which had also been a single, and all went on their 'First Album' in '65. Their '65 single, 'Keep on Running' went to no.1 in the charts. The follow up 'Somebody Help Me' did well in the U.K but was not promoted in the States. Two more albums, 'The Second Album' and 'Autumn '66' followed, then in '67 singles 'Gimme Some Lovin' and 'I'm a Man'

were both million sellers and sold on both sides of the Atlantic, on the United Artists label.

In '67 Steve Winwood left to form Traffic, in response to various psychedelic stimuli and was replaced by Eddie Hardin as singer, and Phil Sawyer on organ and they released the single, 'Time Seller'/'Don't Want You No More'. Muff left at the same time to work for Island Records. Music from both bands featured in the film 'Here We Go Around the Mulberry Bush'. 'Mr. Second Class' was the second Spencer Davis single without Steve in '67, along with the album 'With Their New Faces On'. Then Ray Fenwick replaced Sawyer. 'After Tea' was also a minor hit, but the band had become more pop than blues by then, and after one more single disbanded. York and Hardin formed a duo.

The band had never been the same after Steve left. The singles he had sung on have been covered by many artists worldwide. Traffic's career began with the album 'Dear Mr Fantasy' as he and the band escaped to a rural creative idyll in a Berkshire country cottage. Spencer Davis himself revived versions of the group in later years.



Traffic

Consisted of Winwood, on keyboards and vocals, Jim Capaldi on drums, Chris Wood on wind instruments like flute, and Dave Mason on guitar and vocals for a short time. Steve experimented with a mellotron and harpsichord, and Mason with a sitar. The first single was 'Paper Sun', followed 'Hole in My Shoe' after which Mason left, having sung and written it, but the rest of the band were not keen on it. A joke cover version of it was released by Nigel Planner in the '80s. 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush' was also released as a single, more for the record company than as an example of the band's real musical direction. Other albums were 'Traffic' in '68, 'Last Exit' in '69 and 'John Barleycorn Must Die' in '70. During '68 Steve often played with Jimi Hendrix, and was on the 'Electric Ladyland' double album anonymously. <p>

The band formerly disbanded in '69, Steve joined Blind Faith and then Ginger Baker's Air Force. There have been partial re-unions but Chris Wood died in '83, so only Winwood and Capaldi made the last, but then Jim died in 2005. In 2007 Paul Weller and Pete Townsend helped create a tribute version of 'Mr. Fantasy' at the Roundhouse.

Fleetwood Mac.

The band members' romantic interactions have almost led to more interest than their music. The attention in often repeated media coverage tends to focus more on the post-blues band days, but there is also an interesting tale to tell about their earlier evolution. A good place to start that tale is with a group called the Cheynes. That band was formed in 1963 by Peter Bardens who had been Van Morrisons keyboard in Them, and after a year Mick Fleetwood joined them on drums. They managed to record three singles: 'Respectable'/'It's Gonna Happen to You', in '63; 'Going to the River'/'Cheyne-Re-La' in '64; and 'Down and Out'/'Stop Running Around' in '65. Rolling Stone Bill Wyman co-wrote the last of these and, with Glyn Johns, co-produced it as well as playing bass on it. They had a strong reputation for live gigs. Mick Fleetwood met John McVie in '64 when he was in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

In '66 Bardens formed Peter B's Looners with Fleetwood on drums, with Peter Green as lead guitar, Phil Sawyer, also from the Cheynes and a later member of Spencer Davis Group, as second guitar. Barden's Looners were later incorporated into Shotgun Express with Rod Stewart and Beryl Marsden. After Eric Clapton left John Mayall, Peter Green joined the Bluesbreakers and Mick Fleetwood and John McVie were the rhythm section. Fleetwood had joined when Aynsley Dunbar had joined Jeff Beck's Band, with Rod Stewart and Ronnie Wood. So at that time three quarters of the future Fleetwood Mac were in the Bluesbreakers.



Green left to start the group in '67. Fleetwood at first followed, and after some persuasion John McVie gave up his steady job with Mayall, although the original bassist was Bill Brunning, and Jeremy Spencer played slide guitar. Their first gig was at the '67 Windsor Jazz and Blues Festival. McVie joined a week later. Their first album, 'Fleetwood Mac', popularly known as 'The Dog and Dustbin' album, due the album sleeve image, on Blue Horizon Records in '68 reached no.4 in the album charts. The singles 'Black Magic Woman' and 'I Need Your Love So Bad' soon followed, and an 18 year old Danny Kirwin was added as another guitarist, dueting with Peter on the single 'Albatross' which became a no.1 hit. Two albums of compilations, 'English Rose' and 'Pious Bird of Good Omen' came next. In '69 in at Chess Studios in Memphis they recorded with blues legends Buddy Guy, Otis Spann and Willie Dixon. As they moved away from purely blues music in the psychedelic era they changed record labels to Immediate and released 'Man of the World', which was also a top ten hit, followed by a more rocky number, as Jeremy Spencer added '50s revival songs to performances: oddly titled 'Somebody's Going to Get His Head Kicked In' in the era of 'love and peace man', before swapping to Warner Brothers Reprise record label with who they released the album 'Then Play On', including the single 'Oh Well' on the English pressing. Other songs on the album were by Green and Kirwin, while Spencer's '50s rock numbers were on a solo album.

In '69 and '70 they supported TenYears After in New York, but 1970 was not a good year for Green, or Kirwin: at a hippie commune in Munich they both took a large dose of some bad L.S.D., possibly mixed with strichnine which was going around at the time, which brought on latent symptoms of schizophrenia. The commune leader Ushi Ubermaier who gave it to them was hoping to get them on board for a European Woodstock style event. Instead Green's last single with the band was 'Green Manalishi' that year. Electro-convulsive therapy at the hands of un-comprehending clinicians made matters worse and Green retired from music for a couple of decades, while Kirwin became alcoholic and eventually institutionalised.

An album without them however was also released later in the year, but with Christine Perfect who came from fellow blues band Chicken Shack on piano and the lady who married John McVie to go by the name she was later better known by in the band, as Christine McVie.. In February '71 Jeremy Spencer spontaneously left the band at a U.S. airport to join a religious group called The Children of God. Also that year Bob Welch took over as lead as Fleetwood had to fire Kirwin because of his alcoholism. Alcohol didn't get McVie fired but it did later cost him his marriage to Christine a few years later. Bizarrely there was an interval when a fake Fleetwood Mac was doing gigs around the States as nobody knew what they looked like with so many personnel changes. Welch decided to leave the band. After hearing the album 'Buckingham Nicks' Mick Fleetwood had the inventive idea of asking Lindsey Buckingham to fill the void in the band with a different electric acoustic sound in '73. That would change the sound quite a lot but Lindsey would only agree if his partner Stevie Nicks was part of the deal too, so the resulting, generally mellow West Coast sound that resulted would mark a real change to the band's sound, and a very successful one, if not a change to the personnel changes soap opera.

In 1996 Peter Green's friends in Southend, led by Nigel Watson managed to get him back on stage for a short while, as the Peter Green Splinter Group after many years of punishing mental health treatment. The old hits were played by Nigel. If Peter took a solo he would go on his own tangent, but could still play a mean harmonica and an album of blues songs was released, before he lapsed back into a quiet life of retirement.

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