



Chelmsford Corn Exchange



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Remembering the Corn Exchange by John Power



Remembering the Corn Exchange In the early '70s Rock journalist Chris Welch fell asleep on a train to London after attending a gig at Essex University. He was stirred from his slumbers by a station public address system announcing "This is Chelmsford; this is Chelmsford." This set his mind wandering into reverie as to what this sleepy commuter town was like. The gig he had been to was obviously not worth writing about as when he did write in Melody Maker the following week his mental meanderings about the County Town of Essex, which he had never visited, filled his column. Very amusing it was too: without ever having been there he managed to profile the commuter slumberland exactly.

What Chris did not know was that only a few years previously there had been a thriving music scene which would have the locals reminiscing beyond the Millennium. This scene, 'the Saturday Scene', took place in the old Corn Exchange building that stood facing Tindal Square where the Chancellor Hall and Co-op food store stand today, and was heralded each week by dayglo silk-screen posters slapped on derelict shop fronts. Having lost it's use to the agricultural community, the Corn Exchange still remained as a massive hall that was used for anything from Flower Festivals to Wrestling Matches.

It was to a local wrestler, Bob Archer, that the venue owed it's growth in popularity to the younger generation. It had seen a few gigs after the original 50's Rock Explosion, by the likes of Screamin' Lord Sutch and the Savages, and lesser known Beat groups like Bern Elliot and the Fenmen, who had done early Beatles covers. But Bob ran the Cromwellian night club in London and was well connected with all the happening club acts and set about bringing them to the mohair suited, fishtail parka wearing, chromed scooter riding generation of the original Mods.

Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames were resident band at Wardour Street's Flamingo Club. The band and derivatives like Zoot Money's Big Roll, Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds and Geno Washington and his Ram Jam Band were regulars, in between charting bands like the Animals, Small Faces, and Spencer Davis Group with teenage prodigy Steve Winwood, all who were guaranteed to fill the hall and raise the roof. The Who were also regulars and represented the Marquee Club's more electric, rather than Jazz or Soul orientated sounds. They even played in Chelmsford when they were still called the High Numbers. All-nighter club circuit stalwarts like John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and the Graham Bond Organisation that spawned Fleetwood Mac and Cream, who also played there, could be relied on to turn in excellent performances. Long John Baldry grew out of Blues pioneer's Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated into his Hoochie Coochie Men, and then after discovering Rod Stewart joined him and the Brian Auger Trinity and Julie Driscoll in a soul review called Steampacket: a format Rod repeated with Beryl Marsden in Shotgun Express. Elton John was Bluesology's piano player. Pop names like the Hollies and even Herman's Hermits turned up at least once. Lulu was still belting out the Blues with her Luvvers when she played there. Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood was with his brother Art's Artwoods and Creation for their appearances.

It wasn't just the English dialect of Rhythm and Blues that belted out from the Corn Exchange but soon Americans that had inspired the English explosion started to arrive. Wilson Pickett managed a three quarter of an hour version of his Top Ten success 'In the Midnight Hour', John Lee Hooker did similarly with 'Dimples'. Rolling Stone's hero Howlin' Wolf honoured the town with his arrival, but sadly Bo Diddley failed to show up.

Local groups like 'The Mooche', Coltrane Union' and 'RBQ' played regular support gigs. The Southenders RBQ played Stones style sleezy guitar blues covers of the likes of Jimmy Read, Muddy Waters and Bo Diddley, as was the case with local bluesers, the Fairies; whereas the Mooche and Union added saxes and their players went on to better known bands: The Mooche's Dave Winthrop went to blow for Supertamp and the Union's Martin Dobson for Jools Holland, Style Council and Eurythmics. Martin's dad was a local bespoke tailor who managed to clad half the snappy mohair dressers who attended the gigs. One act that played the venue, no one there on the night would ever forget was the wholly amazing Jimi Hendrix Experience. Jimi had charted with 'Hey Joe' and 'Purple Haze' and had experience near Beatlemania from the teenyboppers, but was well prepared to deal with this possibility in Chelmsford, and when he soared into a final explosion of feedback the lights went out. When they came on again bassist and drummer were packing up their gear and Hendrix' guitar was face down on the stage still pouring out he feedback from the strings it rested on. Jimmy was long gone!

Otherwise Chelmsford was not ready for Psychedelia, and still hankered after the high energy R&B of Geno Washington. When Pink Floyd played the Corn Exchange it was to about two dozen people. The bouncers opened the side door to let people in for free to make it look a bit busier than it was. When the mode of the music changed it signalled the end of the Saturday Scene and the demolition workers set about flattening the building that housed it along with one side of Tindal Street, including with the Spotted Dog, Dolphin, and White Hart pubs. The White Hart had itself housed a Folk Club that had hosted gigs by Paul Simon when he lived in Brentwood, Julie Felix and other names that became well known once the Folk Rock era took off.

The Chancellor Hall was no substitute as a music venue. Sunday gigs even had to be seated owing to the land being owned by the Cathedral. Status Quo, Dr Feelgood, Gong and several emerging acts did manage to play there. Rock is people's music and doesn't go well with regulation so it was left for Pub Rock to fill the gap, not always in ideal surroundings, but at least there will be a generation able to say they saw Oasis and Blur at the old Army and Navy stretch bar. The suggestion of a Free Concert in Hylands in imitation of those going on in London's Hyde Park at the time, goes back to 1969 to my knowledge, but was thrown out on Health and Safety grounds. It took Richard Branson's money to make it realised. But this little money spinner only happens once per year. The nearest big halls for more regular indoor gigs that will attract high profile acts are in Brentwood and Southend, and Brentwood's was built as a Sports Centre so has rotten acoustics. Cambridge kept their Corn Exchange and still attracts international performers. Another City Status asset that the expanding town needs is such a hall of those kind of dimensions. Nobody wants the noise and disruption on their doorstep, so the 'no neighbours' town centre site of the Corn Exchange was perfect. But in the 21st Century perhaps there is a farmer out near Writtle and Hylands that would welcome the financial input of having such a venue on their land or that acquired from them, so that it could tie into the 'V' festivities. If anyone has another suggestion I'm sure there's an entrepreneur like Branson and his team out there who would just love to make it happen.

John Power

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Listed below the complete Chelmsford Corn Exchange gig listings history, compiled from archive local newspaper adverts and reports. Also comments and memories from people who played at the Corn Exchange and who had attended gigs at the now demolished venue.

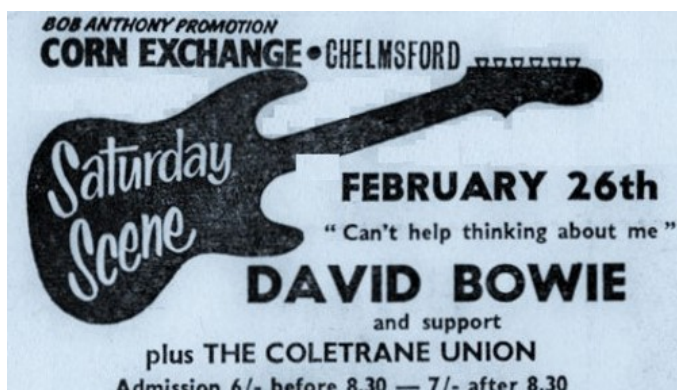
1963

FEBRUARY 1963 - At the Corn Exchange, 'Rock'n'Twist every Saturday. Grand opening on Saturday March 2nd with The Bachelors plus Dave Martin & the Martells. Open 7.30 admission 5/-. ENH 5TH March 1963, includes photo.

APRIL 1963 - American recording artiste Chris Montez to play at the Corn Exchange on 13th April. Will be supported by Mark Douglas & the Prowlers.

SEPTEMBER 1963 - At the Corn Exchange, Do the 'Blues' every Saturday. 28th September with Bernard Delfont artistes 'Alex and the Blue Strangers'. Admission 4/- or 3/- with advert.

OCTOBER 1963 - At the Corn Exchange the 'Blues' with The 'Classmates', TV and recording artistes. At the Corn Exchange 'Twist 'n Blues every Saturday



1964

APRIL 1964 - The Interns, an international recording group, at the Corn Exchange. They have a TV appearance at 6.30 and play in Chelmsford at 8.30. 'Their Saturday spot heralds the entrance of a new session of beat night at Chelmsford Corn Exchange for the 'Mods'. Anthony Archer, the organiser, is bringing artistes from London and well-known groups to town – all helping to establish Chelmsford as a regular "pop" minded town with the modern trend. 'Danny Storm and the Strollers at the Saturday Scene, supported by Chelmsford group The Roulettes.

JUNE 1964 -Chris Farlowe & the Thunderbirds at the Saturday Scene with Dean Austen also Saturday Scene to have R&B group The Cherokees supported by The Plainsmen

JULY 1964 - The Gravediggers and Mark Shelley & the Deans at the Corn Exchange

SEPTEMBER 1964 - 'It's back the Saturday Scene re-opening on 5th 'with your favourite raving R & B group The Fairies new on Decca 'Don't Think Twice It's Alright' Plus 'Record Scene DJ spot – with the most on discs. On 12th. Sept 'He's back Plus one Sax – Big, Big Sound Zoot Money. John Mayall and the Blues Breakers 5/- only before 8.30. Mark Four (On Mercury 'Rock Around the Clock)

OCTOBER 1964 - **The Clique** – wild R & B outfit. Also this month **The Wild Ones** and **Georgie Fame & the Blue Flames** plus **The R.B.Q** and **Zoot Money & the Big roll Band** and on the 31st **The Pickwicks**

NOVEMBER 1964 - The Great **John Lee Hooker** and John Lee's **Groundhogs** and **Zoot Money** also the most mod group on the Scene **The Who**

DECEMBER 1964 - Now holding me to ransom since they took up climbing fountains = **The Fairies**, also From the USA **Howlin Wolf** also **Rufus Thomas** and for Boxing Day, **The Fabulous Mojos**.

1965

JANURAY 1965 - **Spencer Davies** also this month **Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames** plus **The Plainsmen** also at the Corn Exchange **The Roulettes** plus **RVQ** (RBQ?) . The electronic most mod group **THE WHO**. At the end of the month **Dave Berry** and **the Cruisers** to top the bill at the Saturday Scene.

FEBRUARY 1965 - Double attraction at the Saturday Scene **The Cops 'N' Robbers** plus **Dave Davani** and **the D Men**. **The Animals** at the Saturday Scene. '**Anthony Archer**, organiser of the Saturday Scene at Chelmsford Corn Exchange, seems to have excelled himself on this occasion. He has recently booked the **Mojos**, **Dave Berry**, **Howling Wolf** and many other rock and R&B artistes. Many fans bought their tickets at last Saturday's Corn Exchange when **The Cops and Robbers** appeared, but it is a fair bet that there will be a queue stretching along Tindal Street this week. Chelmsford it seems is becoming really R&B minded. Artistes such as **Georgie Fame** attract full capacity crowds, and even **The Who**, an excellent rhythm and blues group, who have not yet made the hit parade in a big way, attracted 600 people. Yet **Adam Faith's Roulettes**, who have had several TV appearances, drew several hundred less.

Over 400 people crowded into the Corn Exchange which, less than a month ago, was the scene of a packed **Georgie Fame** Show. The concert was to launch **Alex Campbell's** book 'Frae Glesga Toon'. Internationally-famous **Shirley Collins** "First Lady of Folk Music" at Chelmsfor Folk Club. Essex Chronicle 12th February 1965 Saturday Scene the soul-digging **Animals** plus! plus! **The Stormville Shakers**. Local newspaper report 16th February 1965 'They Came in Thousands' = headline. 'Britain's top group, **The Animals**, were topping the bill'. The crowd was mainly 'Mod' with just a sprinkling of 'Rockers'. Organiser of the Saturday Scene, **Anthony Archer**, said 'The response was fantastic...It's good to know that when I book top-line groups the fans appreciate it and readily turn out to see them' Also listed TV Record Stars **The Riot Squad** and **Mark Shelley & the Deans**.

MARCH 1965 – add quote - Saturday Scene Your own fabulous, **The Fairies** plus the **Nite Beats**. Also this month **Zoot Money**.

Zoot Money and the Big Roll Band at the Corn Exchange, 'their reception by the fans proves once again that R&B is IN' Fame Again Please. **Georgie Fame** makes a comeback at the Corn Exchange. Fame, whose latest record 'In the Meantime' has reached the charts, has achieved tremendous popularity in Chelmsford and always draws a capacity audience. **Anthony Archer**, 'Scene' promoter, told me last week: 'Georgie and the Boys really dig playing Chelmsford; the reception and atmosphere when he plays is truly something. The fans here are rhythm and blues all the way. **Owen Hand** at Chelmsford Folk Club **Dave Cronin** and **Neil Hornick** at White Hart Folk Club . Essex Chronicle 12th March 1965 Saturday Scene - **Georgie Fame & the Blue Flames** 16th March 1965 All girl group **Goldie & the Gingerbreads** top of the bill at the Saturday Scene. Their disc, 'Can't you hear my heart beat' has soared into the top charts.

APRIL 1965 - The drummer who backed **Georgie Fame & the Blue Flames**: The sound of **Jimmie Nicol** plus **The Objects** at Saturday Scene on 10th = **Spencer Davies** on 15th April 1965 Saturday Scene = **Zoot Money** Essex Chronicle 23rd April 1965 Saturday Scene = **The Yardbirds** 27th April 1965 **The Yardbirds** played at the Saturday Scene. Interviewed by Rodney Andrews in the saloon bar of a public house by the Corn Exchange. Previous week **Spencer Davis**. (local press).

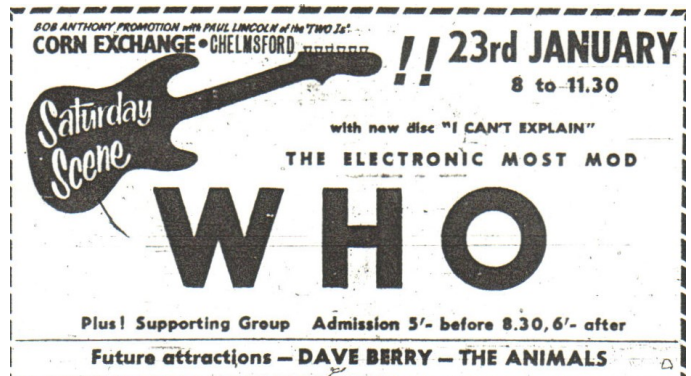


Photo (left) The Coletrane Union

MAY 1965 - **The Moody Blues** will play at the Saturday Scene on 1st, **The Moody Blues** also at Corn Exchange Saturday Scene. **Memphis Slim**, the coloured American R&B artiste with **The Alex Harvey Soul Band** . Saturday Scene = **The Night-Timers** with Coloured American Great **Herbie Goins** . (quotes from local nespapers)

AUGUST 1965 – After a summer break **The Hollies** Re-opening of Saturdaty Scene 28th August.

SEPTEMBER 1965 – The return by popular demand of **The Alex Harvey Soul Band**. Local paper has review of what's coming up at Corn exchange **Georgie Fame**, **The Moody Blues**, **Bo Diddley**. Also this month **The Mark Four**, **Sean Buckley** and **the Breadcrumbs**.

OCTOBER 1965 Saturday Scene - **The Fortunes** + **The Essex 5** also **Sean Buckley** and **the Breadcrumbs**, a group from Dagenham. They are a big success and have turned professional. (local press quote) Also this month **Goldie & the Gingerbreads**. On the 19th October 1965 Interview with **Georgie Fame** in his dressing room at the Corn Exchange. "We are continuing doing the clubs in London and dates such as this one. These are all right but normally in these large halls the ceilings are too high and we cannot create the atmosphere we like".

Also at Saturday Scene - **The Nitetimers** , **The Objects** plus **The Coletrane Union** and **The Cops'n'Robbers** plus **The Basic Five**

NOVEMBER 1965 - **Sir Douglas Quintet** plus **The Next Move** also **Wilson Pickett** and backing group plus **The Basic Five**. Also **The Mark Four** plus **The High Numbers**

DECEMBER 1965 - Chart-toppers **The Who** star at the Scene on Saturday. "Promoters reminded me that they were one of the first to book this group before they achieved the much-envied position of A.1 money-earners. A sell-out is expected. Advert for 'My Generation' **THE WHO** plus **The Coletrane Union**. Tickets 10/- Essex Chronicle 4th December 1965 Saturday Scene add has = **The Who** plus **The Coletrane Union**, 7th December 1965 Interview with **The Who**. "Then they went back on stage, to give a rocking performance, the unusual dynamic sound thrilling the audience and living up to their "wild" reputation. Next week at the Saturday Scene **The**

Objects backed by Sean Buckley and the Breadcrumbs. Future artistes Zoot Money and the Big Roll Band and Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds. Zoot Money plus Grant Tracy and the Sunsets. Also Zoot Money.

1966

JANURAY 1966 - **Georgie Fame**, also this month **Ronnie Jones and the Blue Jays** and **Chris Farlowe & the Thunderbirds**. January 1966 Advert for **The Shevelles** and **Dave Anthony's Moods** at the Saturday Scene . 1966 R&Bs Fling. **The Coletrane Union** played well and showed some versatility. The stand-in drummer was **Brian McAllister**. Attendance was a little disappointing.

FEBRUARY 1966 - **The Roulettes** also **Phase Five** also **The Statesmen**. Advert for **The Action** at the Saturday Scene .and **Beryl Marsden and the Crew** . Advert for **Cops 'N' Robbers** at the Saturday Scene. Advert for **The Gass** plus **The Essex Five** at the Saturday Scene .

25th February 1966 Advert for **David Bowie** plus **The Coletrane Union** at the Saturday Scene. in the Essex Chronicle 4th March 1966 Advert for Goldie of the famous **Gingerbreads** with **Dave Anthony's Moods** at the Saturday Scene. Local newspaper reports 8th March 1966- Singer **David Bowie**, making his first appearance at Chelmsford, collapsed mid-way through his act on Saturday at the Saturday Scene. He was suffering from flu, bordering on pneumonia.

MARCH 1966 - (local newspaper quote) **Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers**, who had their first taste of chart success with 'One Way Love', are at the Saturday Scene next Saturday. March 19th is a big day for fans of real earthy R&B and soul when the famous **Steam Packet** from London visits town. This widely praised package show includes that fine organist **Brian Auger**, with his Trinity, famous for his jam sessions in the London clubs – the massive 6ft7in **Long John Baldry** – young attractive female singer **Julie Driscoll** – and Rod Stewart, the subject of a recent television documentary. Essex Chronicle 11th March 1966 Advert for **Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers** at the Saturday Scene on 15th March 1966. Saturday Scene to host the **Steam Packet** plus **The Coletrane Union**. The last time **Rodney Andrews** to write for the Chelmsford Newsman. Heading 'Time to Say Our Goodbyes "Well friends, all good things must come to an end. Today is the last time that 'Round the Soundtrack' will appear in the Chelmsford Newsman. For some time we have been introducing you to stars, national personalities and local figures. We have become known to a great many of you – and you have become known to us. Myself, I have worked at providing a lively interesting page for the youngsters – and I think it ended up being read by a good many parents as well. But I am moving on to pastures new, and 'Soundtrack' must at last come to an end. But even in finishing we bring you a packed page of pop interest. Our last edition includes: A local LP release, folk concert, disc jockeys in town, local singers, group news. As for me, as one lady is currently saying " These boots are made for walking" – and it's just what mine are going to do' The page includes an article about **Barry Peters**, a printer for the Essex Chronicle, once a singer with the **George Mitchell Singers** and a story about **Radio Caroline DJ Keith Skues** out on the streets in Chelmsford – say his catchphrase and you win a prize. CN 22nd March 1966 **The Shevelles** plus **The Objects** at the Saturday Scene. Add 29th March 1966 **The Big Soul Band Show Train** plus **The Dyaks** at Saturday Scene.



APRIL 1966 Saturday Scene local paper add 5th April 1966 **Zoot Money and the Big Roll Band** at Saturday Scene, Essex Chronicle 15th April 1966 Advert for **T.Bones** at the Saturday Scene, also 22nd April 1966 Advert for **Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds** plus **The Essex Five** at the Saturday Scene . 26th April 1966 **The Who** plus **The Coletrane Union**. Add for 10th May 1966 **The Graham Bond Organisation** plus **The Essex Five** at Saturday Scene.

MAY 1966 – Advert 17th May 1966 **Screaming!! Lord Sutch** plus the **Amboy Duke Big Band** at the Saturday Scene.

SEPTEMBER 1966 Advert for **Georgie Fame & the Blue Flames** at the Saturday Scene also Advert for **The Shevelles** plus **The Mooch** at the Saturday Scene also September 1966 Advert for **Zoot Money and the Big Roll Band** at the Saturday Scene also 23rd September 1966 Advert for The steaming **Brian Auger Trinity** with **Julie Driscoll** from **The Steam Packet** plus **The Coletrane Union** at the Saturday Scene 30th September.

OCTOBER 1966 Advert for **Geno Washington and the Ram Jam Band** at the Saturday Scene 7th October 1966 Advert for **The Chessmen** at the Saturday Scene ,14th October 1966 Advert for **The Who** plus **The Coletrane Union** at the Saturday Scene, 21st October 1966 Advert for **The Move** at the Saturday Scene , 28th October 1966 Advert for **The Carl Douglas Set** at the Saturday Scene.

NOVEMBER 1966 Advert for **Ronnie Jones & the Blue Jays** at the Saturday Scene, 18th November 1966 Advert for **The Eyes of Blue** at the Saturday Scene , 25th November add for **Cream** at the Saturday Scene.

DECEMBER 1966 Advert for **Gino Washington and the Ram Jam Band** plus **The Mooch** at the Saturday Scene, 9th December 1966, "The Surfin" **Summerset** plus **The Essex Five** at the Saturday Scene , 16th December 1966. The Big Sound 'Alan Price Set' at the Saturday Scene, 23rd December 1966 Advert for **Zoot Moneys Big roll Band** plus **The Coletrane Union** at the Saturday Scene , 30th Decemberr **Carl Douglas** and the **Big Stampede** plus **The Clique** at the Corn Exchange Saturday Scene.

1967

January 1967 Advert for **The Shotgun Express** with **Beryl Marsden**, **Rod Stewart** and the **Peter B's** plus **Staceys Circle** at the Saturday Scene , 13th January **Ronnie Jones and the Blue Jays**, Essex Chronicle add 20th January 1967, **The Small Faces** plus **Dave Anthonys Moods** at the , 27th January 1967 Advert for **Jimmy Jones and the Vagabonds**. 3rd February 1967 Advert for **Zoot Money and the Big Roll Band** , 10th February 1967, **Cotton** with **American Star Lucas**, 17th February 1967 Advert for **Psychedelic Freak Out** with the **Soft Machine** plus **The Mooche** at the Saturday Scene

February 1967 – Essex Chronicle - E24th February 1967 Advert for "Hey Joe" The Jimi Hendrix Experience plus **The Soul Trinity** at the Saturday Scene.

March 1967 3rd rd March 1967 Advert for **The Eyes of Blue** plus **The Good Time Losers** at the Saturday Scene, 10th March **The Summerset** at the Saturday Scene. Essex Chronicle 17th March 1967 Advert for **The Shevelles** at the Corn Exchange also on 23rd March 1967 Advert for **Geno Washingtons Ram Jam Band** plus **The Coletrane Union** at the Saturday Scene and on 31st March 1967 Advert for **Zoot Moneys Big Roll Band** plus **The Feel for Soul** at the Corn Exchange Saturday Scene.

April 1967 Advert for **Sonny Childe** and **The TNT** at the Saturday Scene. Essex Chronicle 14th April 1967 Advert for **King George & the Harlem Kiddies** at the SS 21st April 1967 Advert for **Bo Diddley** at the Saturday Scene and 28th April 1967 Advert for **Geno Washington** and the **Ram Jam Band** at the Saturday Scene.

May 1967 **Prince Buster** and the **Bees** plus **The Mooche** at the Saturday Scene

August 1967 After a summer break A **Flower Power Light Show** with **Zoot Moneys Dantalian's Chariot** plus **The Coletrane Union** at the Corn Exchange Saturday Scene



1968 - 1969

January 1968 'Mr Blues' **John Mayall** and the **Blues Breakers** plus **The Mooche** ,**The Yardbirds** add 'Back from big success in the States' also **Champion Jack Dupree** with **Black Cat Bones** and **Georgie Fame & the Blue Flames** .

February 1968 - **Savoy Brown Blues Band**,**The Webb** with **John L. Watson**, **Gino Washington** and the **Ram Jam Band** and **Simon K** and the **Meantimers**.

March - 1968 **Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac** , **The Mike Quinn Show** plus **The Reaction** , **Cliff Bennett** and his Band featuring 'A Rock 'N Roll Revival Show plus **The Precious Few** at the Saturday Scene 22nd March 1968 **Ten Years After** at the Saturday Scene 29th March 1968 **John Mayall** and the **Bluesbreakers** (local adds)

May - 1968 Article about redevelopment and demolition of the Corn Exchange. Quote from Cllr Tony Carpenter 'We have scrapped one plan for a hall to replace the Corn Exchange because it wasn't right for Bingo and wrestling. But don't let's fool ourselves – a new hall, for activities like these, is included in the plan'

October 1968 - Saturday Scene Chelmsford Corn Exchange 'Opening with a BANG! Saturday 26. Don't miss the unequalled **EQUALS** fantastic stage act plus **The Artists** (local add)

November 1968 - The Fantastic **Freddy Mack Show** plus **Apricot Brandi** at **The Troggs** unable to appear because of illness. 15th November 1968 Sweet Soul Music from that great coloured artist direct from the USA **The Conley Soul-Show** plus **The District Line** at the SS 22nd November 1968 **Geno Washington** and the **Ram Jam Band** plus **Apricot Brand** (local newspaper)

January 1969, **Boulevard Soult** supported by **The Haze** 7/6 Corn Exchange on 18th **Stephan Sobell**. 24th January 1969 At the Corn Exchange .

February 1969 Corn Exchange under new management **Blues and Souls Night** **The Joyce Bond Show** plus the exciting new **Peter Croft's Blues Band** Please disregard any 'cancelled' slips on any posters.

March 1969 -THE END

May 1969 - Demolition of the Exchange



Image title would go here.

September 1967 Advert for **The Soul Trinity** at the Saturday Scene Essex Chronicle 8th September 1967 Advert for 'Excerpt from a Teenage Opera **Keith West** and the **Tomorrow** , also **The Crazy World of Arthur Brown** and **Pink Floyd**. At the Saturday Scene 29th September 1967 Advert for **The Shevelles** plus **Alan sword** .

October 1967 – Essex Chronicle 6th Advert for **The Fleetwood Mac** with **Peter Green** plus **Alan Sword** at the Saturday Scene also Advert for **The Webb** with **John L. Watson** plus **Alan Sword** at the and Back by popular demand **Fleetwood Mac** with **Peter Green** also Advert for **Carl Douglas** and the **New Stampede** .

November 1967 - Advert for TV Stars **The Spectrum** also 'Mr Blues' **John Mayall** and the **Blues Breakers** and Advert for **JJ Jackson** plus **The Urchins** at the Saturday Scene

December 1967 Advert for **Glen Oakley Ruby James** and the **Stax** also **The Feel for Soul** plus **The Coletrane Union** .Advert for Ace Blues Guitarist **Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac** plus ex-Radio London DJ **Ian (Wombat) Damon** and Advert for Xmas Party Night **The Pretty Things** . December 1967 Advert for American R&B star **Ronnie Jones** and the **Q Set**



Peter Springett Memories (photo taken at Corn Exchange , Keith Moon)

I was heavily into the music scene, especially during the 60s and 70s and attended most of the gigs at the Chelmsford Corn Exchange. I read through your list of acts that appeared at the CCE and note that several of the major ones appear to be missing. For example: **Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames**, **Geno Washington** (what a huge following he had), **The Steam Packet**, which included - **Long John Baldry**, **Julie Driscoll** (This wheels on fire was her new release ie now the Ab Fab theme), **Brian Auger and the Trinity** and a very young **Rod 'the mod' Stewart** (he was dreadful!). Not sure if you know, **Long John Baldry** discovered **Rod Stewart** on Chelmsford railway station. Other acts included **Chris Farlow** and the **Thunderbirds**, I seem to remember **Emerson, Lake and Palmer** (Rondo and Fanfare for the Common Man) and **Roy Wood** and **Wizard** playing there, but can't guarantee that, as I would had had about 10 pints of light and bitter down the **Spotted Dog**, the **Fleece** (Golden Fleece) or the **Animals** (Lion & Lamb) by then. Without doubt, the star of them all, for me, was the



Roger Daltrey Photo taken at Corn Exchange

Q My brother in Law **David Freeman** who used to attend gigs at the Corn Exchange said there were many fights outside

You are right about there often being fights outside the CCE. This was right in the middle of the mods and rockers era and the CCE was mainly frequented by mods, as it was mainly 'mod' bands that played there. Sometimes the rockers would come up from the 'greasy spoon' cafe and cause trouble, but not that often, as they were heavily outnumbered. The trouble was more often than not caused by the same five or six guys, who were neither mods or rockers, but just liked a fight. I knew them all very well. There was also a big gang of mods that used to come down from Basildon. Their leader was a guy called S--- T---, who was a really nice guy really. Personally, I didn't get involved in all of that crap, as I was there purely for the music, a few beers with my mates and a lady for the night, if you were lucky. If you did manage to 'pull' a lady, you would normally take them down to where the market stalls were, at the back of the corn exchange, near the park. There were loads of scooters about, which were owned by the mods. They would usually have either chrome or bronze bubbles and looked quite spectacular. If you can still get it, check out a movie (DVD or video) by **The Who**, called *Quadrophenia*. That will give you an idea of what the 'mods' were all about. The rockers were the greasy haired guys who rode motorbikes and liked rock and roll ie **Elvis**, **Jerry Lee Lewis** etc. Personally, I never owned a scooter, as I always had a nice car from as soon as I was old enough to drive. There was only two of us that had cars at the time, the other was a guy called **Roger Wicks**, who had an old mark 10 Jag. Roger was about three years older than me and became one of the local lawyers. I think he still lives in the Chelmsford area, but would have retired by now. At the time (about 1968)

Q Do you remember the Two Eys's Club

I hadn't heard of the Two Eyes Club, must have been after my time. We did used to go over to the US air force base at Wethersfield (out near Braintree). They would often get black American acts over there, which didn't usually come to Chelmsford. We used to go to a cafe which was downstairs in London Road, near the river. That was where all the mods used to hang out and there were always loads of scooters outside. The cafe was later taken over by another mate of mine called **Martin Havalin**, who turned it into the 'Pop In' record store. He used to get my imported records in eg Sca and blue beat music, I was also heavily into black R&B and spiritualist music and acts like **Curtis Mayfield**, **Chuck Berry**, Tamla Motown (only some were released in the UK), **Ray Charles**, **Little Stevie Wonder**, **Sonny Terry**, **Brownie Magee**, **Big Bill Brunsey**, **Jimmy Smith**, **Booker T and the MGs**, **Sam & Dave**, **Arthur Connolly** etc. You just couldn't buy this stuff over the shelf or 'on the net'.

As I mentioned, I used to knock about with **Bernard Doherty**, who is still heavily involved in the UK music scene. We used to go to loads of gigs around the Essex and London areas. There was a very good club in the back of the White Heart in Brentwood High Street, called *Bluesville*. I saw **Cream** do one of their first performances there. They had to carry **Ginger Baker** (the drummer) onto his stool at the start of the set and carry him off afterwards. They were the very first 'Super Group' with **Eric Clapton**, **Jack Bruce** and **Ginger Baker**. They also had most of the 'London based' bands that used to play at the **Flamingo** and **Marquee**, in Wardour Street, London. We used to go out to a hall in Sawbridgeworth to see **Roy Wood** and **Wizard**, **Emerson Lake & Palmer** etc. There were many, many other clubs around at the time. It was just a sensational time to be young.

great **Zoot Money's Big Roll Band**. The best showman of all. There are many others missing..

Another quick memory that I have of the CCE, was when **The Who** first played there. For some reason, I had to go into the room where the Who were getting ready for the set. The room had old church pews around the edge, for the artists to sit on and get changed etc. I met **Keith Moon**, who was sitting on one of the pews and was hacking at it with a small tomahawk. He was so nervous. Needless to say it was a sensational show, **Keith** smashed up his drum kit and **Pete Townsend** kept ramming his guitar into the amps and speakers etc and eventually smashed his guitar up on stage. The stage was covered in smoke and the place went black. No one was sure what had happened!! Needless to say, that was the start of them becoming an all time super group.

As the CCE was a council building, everyone had to be out of the building and the doors locked by mid night. After the CCE closed, we would then go to either the Studio in Southend or the **Flamingo** or **Marquee** in Wardour Street, in London's west end. As you would be much younger than me, to give you an idea of what the music scene was like in the 60s and 70s, a typical night at the Studio, you would 2/6 (two shillings and six pence ie half a crown) for the all nighter and would see **The Animals** (House of the rising Sun etc), **Yardbirds** (with a young **Eric Clapton**) and **The Paramounts** (I think they were), who became **Procol Harum**. At the **Marquee** and **Flamingo** you would see more of **Georgie Fame & the Blue Flames**, **Zoot Money & the Big Roll Band**, **Jethro Tull** (Ian Anderson would hand out ciggies and the end of a session, to keep the audience there), John Mayall's **Blusbreakers** (with **Eric Clapton**), **Alexis Korner's Blues Inc**, **Graham Bond Organisation**, **Chris Farlow**, **Tony Knights Chessman**, plus many more. I am sure that most of the above acts also performed at the CCE.



Memories from DickPowell and Dick Wiffen. (photo is Pete Townsend taken at Corn Exchange)

As an exiled Chelmsfordian of 30 years in Cornwall (which incidentally had its own **Flamingo Club** in Penzance) the memories of the Corn Exchange you provided were marvellous. Do you remember the ultra-violet marks that the doormen placed on your hand so you could go in and out? We worked out that because white shirts were so luminescent under the lamp they used to check the sign, that if you used a washing powder solution to put the mark on, you could get in free of charge. I carried a small bottle of the solution, asked a friendly spirit who had been in what the mark was, and me and friends put it on at the bar of the Saracens Head. We sometimes got bounced out when we got the sign wrong, but most Saturdays we had free entry to the greatest bands the world has ever seen. Fond memories.

Regards DickPowell

Bob Wiffen Memories - What a great site! Love all the 60's stuff as that was when I was playing drums with the Exchequers then with **Ray Ford and the Statesmen**. When **The Statesmen** were playing in the Essex/Suffolk area in the 60's we supported many of the big names at the Corn Exchange including **The Who**, **Chris Farlowe**,



Rufus Thomas and many more. In fact the memory listed on the site of **Keith Moon** in the 'dressing room' with the pews was the night we supported them. I too remember him offering pills to all and sundry. Wish I had kept the posters.

Of all the great acts at the Corno, my favs were **Zoot Money** (still going!) and **Georgie Fame** (still going!). Chris Farlowe is still great but Cliff Bennett not so. I remember **Georgie Fame** strolling along the queue in his trade mark sports jacket as we all waited to get in to see him. We played and also saw loads of good bands at the Odeon too. Anyone remember Jobsworth who was a real pain at the end of the night wanting to close up!

The big names are well represented on the site but what about the other good local bands like **The Roulettes**, **the Fairies**, **the Mooche** all great with a big following. Where is **John Gandy** (bass player with **the Fairies**) Where is **Dave Winthrop**(?) who played sax in the **Mooche** and Albert the singer. **Mike Clarke** who played bass with **The Mooche** is still playing with 60s band fat Old Dad. **Steve Marriot and the Moments** were almost local before Steve went onto join **Rod Stewart** and Co. Where is **Ted Speakman** drummer of **The Roulettes** now?

Trevor White who played dums before me then keyboards with **The Statesmen** is in Oz and played with Sounds Incorporated after **The Statesmen** packed up then played the lead in **Jesus Christ Superstar** in Sydney in the 70's. I could go on....

Keep it up. **Bob Wiffen** (now in Lincolnshire)

Q Were was the Corn Exchange

A Take a look at this photo below from pre 1945 taken from outside the Shire Hall. The Cannon is now at Oakland's Park but you can see Judge Tindals statue in front of the Corn Exchange. So its about were the Fusion night club and Ristorante on the Square (formally known as Gerrardos) is. Club Fusion is now hosting bands on the former Corn Exchang site.

The Two Eyes Club

Ref some comments The Two Eyes Club locally known as just "Eyes" was in a scout hut behind the swimming pool in what is now the car park. It was nearly opposite the Countryman Pub (which also used to put on bands)and also now gone.

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Name: Ray Nicholls Comments: Came From Maldon in the 60S to Chelmsford to see - **The Who** --- Had to stand on the radiator in the hall at the back it was that packed ,Chelmsford was a Mod town and so was I, came over sunday afternoons the High st was full of Scooters GREAT DAYS HAD BY ALL-- Cheers great Site.

Name: Kelvin Bullen JIMI HENDRIX CHELMSFORD CORN EXCHANGE Just fantastic what a buzz I was there 17 years old with my brother Hugh Bullen .as guitarist of **The Soul Trinity** the Reading based band,that was 43 years ago .What has stayed with me was backstage with Gentleman **Jimi Hendrix** coming to me and telling me he enjoyed my playing.what kindness humility encouragment and love.That evening Jimi won a special place in my heart forever.

Name: Patrick Vinet Comments: I like a lot your web site about chelmsford scene I search info about **Screaming Lord Sutch** and the Savages A friend of us, guitarist Ivor Tomlin told us that his band **The Big T Show** had backed **Screaming Lord Sutch** and **Wee Willie Harris** at Chelmsford Corn Exchange in summer 65. Do you know about it? In your web site, I have read that **Screaming Lord Sutch** played there with the **Amboy Duke Big Band**, in May 1966. Wasn't **Sutch** backed by his **Savages** that night? Have you got the ad, a poster or flyer of this gig? Do you know who were the **Amboy Duke Big Band**? Were they connected with the **Amboy Dukes**?

Albie Morhall Comments: To answer the question from my old mate **Bob Wiffen**. **Albert Morhall** is now living in France (since 2004) As lead singer with **The Mooche**, remember the gigs at the Corn Exchange and it's demise. Just before close down I remember we supported "the **Soft Machine**" who were at the start of the Physocodelic scene but were not received well on this night so we had to fill in for the rest of the session. Went down very well



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COMMENTS (new March 2010)

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