



Essex Bands



ESSEX BANDS 60s & 70s BY JOHN POWER



Intro:

Essex Rock Bands Intro: I think I have included all the best know artists to have emerged from Essex since the 1960s onwards. Sandie Shaw, from Dagenham, began her career as a Popsongstress and fashion icon in the early '60s and was then steered into becoming primarily an entertainment act by her management. But as years rolled by she made her mark with music of her own taste which often crept into a more recognisably rock format. In 1994 she opened up a parallel career when she qualified as a psychotherapist and opened her own clinic, but should certainly be given credit for her contribution with a varied musical career.

A case could also be made for including Billy Bragg, who is from Barking, and who's music verges on Rock, but I've always regarded him as an Electric Folksinger, in the political protest mould, so didn't go there in the end. Also in the Folk Singer bracket was Paul Simon, who arrived in England in 1964, and lived in Brentwood for a few years, playing the local Folk Clubs and writing songs like 'Sound of Silence' and 'I am a Rock', released on the album 'The Paul Simon Songbook', before he took them back to the States and rocked them up with Art Garfunkel.

Looking through the names that did emerge it is clear that the Thames Estuary was London's answer to the Liverpool musical explosion of the early '60s and that the Southend scene easily comes out tops for successful acts. It also proved to be a bit of a retirement home for old blues and soul singers, firstly in the shape of Peter Green, who retired to be near family there, eventually, after fairly barbaric treatment for his mental health problems brought on by some badly contaminated L.S.D. he was given in Germany in the early '70s. His career had seen him in the Cheynes, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, and go on to form the group that was, after many personnel changes, to create Rock's greatest soap opera with its longest lasting transatlantic group member's love lives, Fleetwood Mac. Peter also briefly came out of retirement with the help of friends around the Southend area who got him to form a blues band they called Peter Green's Splinter Band. Chris Farlowe, arguably England's finest white Soul singer also now resides in the Southend area too. He emerged from London's Flamingo Club in the early '60s R&B boom, with his excellent band, the Thunderbirds, who spawned other musicians that went on to acclaimed careers while Chris gained recognition by Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham, who put him on his Immediate label to record, amongst others songs, some by Jagger and Richard. He went on to be vocalist for Colosseum and in the Psychedelic era, Atomic Rooster, but has continued a solo career on and off into his 70s, besides running a military memorabilia shop.

The county thrives on pub rock and great musicians are too numerous to hope to mention, but I asked Ian Fortnam of Classic Rock Magazine, himself an Essex boy from Chelmsford, what young talent he would identify, he named Ben Drew and Plan B, Crass, Nitzer Ebb, Sunscreen, and the Horrors, again out of Southend. May be some day someone will be writing up them, or their members. They're sure to: it's an on-going story.

John Power 2016

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The Paramounts.



The first incarnation of Southend band, the 'Paramounts' was as early as 1959, as 'the Raiders' doing early Rock covers around the local Youth Centre circuit, with a variety of drummers until B.J. Wilson took over that stool right through until they morphed into 'Procul Harum'. When the 1960s Beat and then Blues booms arrived they became the Paramounts in 1961. Keyboardist Gary Brooker and guitarist Robin Trower were the two long term members of the band. Chris Copping came and went and returned on bass and then later, on the organ. Diz Derrick took over the bass for a second Paramount line-up in 1963.

The Rolling Stones played on the same bill as the Paramounts in Deal, Kent on one occasion and on the Saturday evening music T.V. Programme of the '60s, 'Thank You Lucky Stars' they announced their opinion that the Southend boys were the "The finest R&B band in England", and gave them guest billing on many of their subsequent gigs, all of which helped to bring them to public notice. EMI signed the second line-up in 1963 and their debut single 'Poison Ivy' / 'I feel Good All Over' reached a modest 35 in the charts. That was followed by 'Little Bitty Pretty One' / 'A Certain Girl'; 'One Who Loves You' / 'It Won't Be Long'; 'Bad Blood' / 'Do I?'; 'Blue Ribbons' / 'Cuttin' In'; and 'You Never had it so Good' / 'Don't Ya Like My Love?' A lot of the blues and soul standards that the group had borrowed from black American artists were being used by many

bands by then and they lost their advantage, having to resort to backing gigs for Sandie Shaw and and Chris Andrews, another Essex pop singer, for bread and butter money and so eventually split in to other groups: Robin Trower into a band called 'the Jam', not to be confused with the '70s post-Punk Mod revivalists.

Gary Brooker decided to concentrate on song writing and teamed up with fellow writer Keith Reid. They then decided to form a group to perform their songs. That group, in 1967, became Procul Harum and all the members of the Paramourts came and went through the group. The original line-up was Gary Brooker on piano and vocals, Matthew Fisher on organ, Dave Knights on bass, Bobby Harrison on drums and Ray Royer on guitar. They only did half a dozen gigs and put out one single, but that was of course the world best seller 'A Whiter Shade of Pale', backed by Limestone Blues.'

After July '67 Harrison and Royer were replaced by old mates B.J. Wilson and Robin Trower and that line-up cut three albums: 'Procul Harum' and 'Shine on Brightly' in '68 and 'A Salty Dog' in 1969. The surreal lyrics of 'Whiter Shade' didn't provide a formula for repetition and with management problems too they went into eclipse in England and fared better in the U.S.

The third line-up for the band, from '69 to '71 was back to the original Paramourts, after Chris Copping finished university and returned to the fold. They did one more album for contractual obligation: 'Home', and got a new deal with Chrysalis for the album 'Broken Barricade.' Then Robin Trower left in 1971 to form his own, guitar centred, group, 'the Robin Trower Band' and making way for Dave Ball on guitar in Procul. When this line-up set off on its next U.S. tour they worked with a symphony orchestra and choir which format recorded a live album: 'Live', in '72, and 'Conquistador' became their first single since 'Whiter Shade of Pale.'

Mick Graham replaced Dave Ball for a 5th incarnation of the group from 1972 to 76. Still at times featuring orchestral backing, this line-up produced three more albums: 'Grand Hotel', 'Exotic Birds and Fruit', and 'Procul's Ninth'. The U.S. President admired them so much that they played a gig in Mexico City at his request.

One further line-up change occurred to the band before the 1977 Punk shakeup of the music scene, when Chris Copping vacated the organ stool for Pete Solley who had played with Chris Farlowe, Arthur Brown, and Snafu. Chris stayed in the band but played bass. Their final album was 'Something Magic', in '77. Gary Brooker recorded solo and joined Eric Clapton's band for a while; B.J. Wilson joined Joe Cocker's band; and the Robin Trower Band carried on as it was.

Gary Brooker later joined Bill Wyman's star studded band, 'the All Stars', and brought about a renaissance for Procul, leading to a reformation of the group for special occasions like the yearly Cropredy festival organised by Fairport Convention, which they played twice, and a two day event to celebrate the band's 40th anniversary. In 2003 Gary Brooker brought another orchestra and choir to a packed Chelmsford Cathedral as part of the annual cathedral festival.

The Fairies.



Although Sandie Shaw, a Dagenham girl, had scored the first hit record for Essex in 1964, in the clubs of the day there was also at that time a thriving Beat and Blues scene in the wake of the Beatles and Rolling Stones. Colchester's finest were best known when they adopted the name 'Fairies', in a 'fingers up' to the nickname applied to the post-Mod generation of longhairs.

The group were originally called 'Dane Stephens and the Deepbeats.' 'Dane's' real name was Dougie Ord, and he was accompanied by Fred Gandy and John Acutt on guitars, 'Wimp' Weaver on bass, and John 'Twink' Alder on drums. You could see them in Youth Clubs or supporting other bands at the lost, lamented, Chelmsford Corn Exchange before the name change and a couple of singles: 'Any Time at All', backed by a then virtually unknown Bob Dylan's 'Don't Think Twice it's Alright', which many people regarded as the 'A' side, in 1964; and 'Get Yourself Home'/'Don't Mind'. Doug Ord sang on the first single but was replaced on 'Get Yourself Home'/'Don't Mind' in 1965 by Nick Wymer, from Nix Nomads, while Doug spent time in jail for manslaughter after a road accident. When he emerged Doug became a scenery painter for Colchester's Mercury Theatre.

The member of the band who made the biggest impact on the music scene was drummer John Alder, always referred to as 'Twink'. The group's management, which included a couple of Chelmsford lads, also managed the 'Pretty Things' formed by early Rolling Stone Dick Taylor [not to be confused with the later Mick Taylor] and Sidcup Art School mate Phil May. Keith Richards had been another 'Stone' at Sidcup Art School. Dick finished his Art Studies rather than risk the precarious life of a rock musician. Not the best career move as it turned out! Twink was to join the Pretty Things in 1968 after their third line-up change, and had previously played on their second album 'Get the Picture' in 1965. He stayed until 1969 and played on their [first ever, pre 'the Who's Tommy'] rock opera 'S.F. Sorrow'. En route he had been in 'the In Crowd' and 'Tomorrow'. The latter group with singer Keith West had had chart success with 'An Excerpt from a Teenage Opera' with a backing choir which lost the band support from the rock audience, and never resulted in the projected 'opera.' Previously, and more importantly, Tomorrow were the centre of the cyclone which was the emergence of London's psychedelic underground as it emerged into daylight, playing at the launch party for 'International Times' and became regulars at the earliest psychedelic nightclub, the U.F.O. Club in Tottenham Court Road. They released a couple of singles 'My White Bicycle', about the free bicycle system organised by their contemporary Amsterdam Beatniks/Hippies, and 'Revolution', as well as an album. Tomorrow guitarist Steve Howe went on to be a virtuoso with best selling 70's band 'Yes' and then 'Asia.'

Twink was by then well established in the underground bands scene, and apart from the work with the Pretty Things jammed, and recorded with various groups including the 'Deviants' until they morphed into the 'Pink Fairies', where he occupied the drummers stool full time after line-up changes. He joined ex- Pink Floyd genius and founder Syd Barratt in 'Syd Barratt's Stars' for three gigs before it became clear that Syd's mental health had become so bad from over use of L.S.D. that he could no longer perform live. Twink also played in lesser known bands like the 'Fallen Angels' and the 'Rings', as well as 'Twink and the Fairies' and doing crossover gigs with Hawkwind and Motorhead too. He 'retired' in 1977 and spent many years in Morocco studying the local culture.

The Pretty Things continue to gig into 2015, with Phil and Dick from the original line-up chasing their 70th birthdays. A planned Pink Fairies reunion in 2012 failed to materialise, but a collection of their songs was published in 1998 as 'Mandies and Mescaline at Uncle Harry's'. Unreleased studio recordings and the live recording of Tomorrow's contribution to the 1967 'Christmas on Earth' event headlined by Jimi Hendrix at London's Olympia also appeared in 1998, as the '50 Minute Technicolour Dream', taking its name from another International Times Free Speech benefit gig in 1967 at North London's Alexandra Palace, with a cast of thousands and called 'The Fourteen Hour Technicolour Dream', described by the news of the World as being like the last rites of a dying tribe, but which actually turned out to be the birth of the Hippie Generation. John Lennon attended

The Graham Bond Organisation.

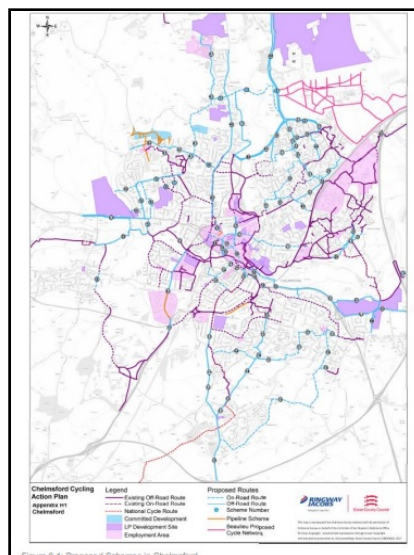


Figure 8-1: Proposed Schemes in Chelmsford

The name Graham Bond is unlikely to mean anything to anyone under the age of fifty, but the musicians that passed through his rhythm and blues bands were linked to some of the most prominent groups of the 1960s. There were three groups that served the function of providing early training grounds for the most talented musicians of the post beat boom era created by the 'Beatles' and other groups that grew out of the wake of the Merseybeat sound. Firstly there was 'Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated', who themselves had grown out of 'Chris Barber's Jazz Band' and his interest in American blues music. Bond and all the musicians he fostered played with Alexis at one time. Korner's harmonica player, Cyril Davis, was the man who taught Mick Jagger to play harmonica. Jagger, Keith Richards, Brian Jones and Charlie Watts all did stints sitting in with Alexis and his band before the 'Rolling Stones' emerged. The second band where '60s blues musicians cut their teeth was 'John Mayall's Bluesbreakers'. John came from Manchester, but it was when he arrived in London that blues purists were drawn to join his ever changing line-up to make a name for themselves. The biggest purist, when he first arrived from the commercially successful, and he thought, thus compromised, 'Yardbirds', was Eric Clapton. When Eric left to form 'Cream' in 1965, he was replaced by Peter Green, founder of 'Fleetwood Mac', already known for his work with Van Morrison's 'Them' keyboardist Peter Bardens in the 'Peter Bs' and Rod Stewart/Beryl Marsden's 'Shotgun Express'. Peter Green in turn was replaced by Mick Taylor, who became a 'Rolling Stone.'

Both the aforementioned seminal groups were largely guitar orientated, with occasional brass horns playing a less important role, but Bond's breakaway group from Korner was formed of musicians with a jazz background. At first, after the split, they were known as the Graham Bond Trio, although that should have been 'and his Trio' which consisted of Bond on keyboards and vocals, Jack Bruce on bass, Ginger Baker on drums, and John McLaughlin on guitar, whose style was of modern jazz improvisation which led him to form his own 'Mahavishnu Orchestra' with shades of Eastern mysticism thrown in. When John left later in 1963 he was replaced by Dick Heckstall-Smith, also from 'Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated,' on multiple saxophones, and the band changed its name to the 'Graham Bond Organisation.' Whereas the 'Blues Incorporated' stream of musicians had arisen out of London's Marquee Club, then in Oxford Street, a style of Rhythm and Blues centred around another nightclub, the Flamingo, in Wardour Street, with jazz routes, exemplified by 'Georgie Fame's Blue Flames' and 'Zoot Money's Big Roll Band,' featuring not only keyboards and rhythm section but large brass sections too. The 'Bond Organisation' straddled the gap between the two styles.

Bond himself had previously been an alto sax player, from 1960, in 'Goudie Charles Quintet', then the 'Don Rendell Quintet'. He was born in Romford in 1937. It seems that his father was a lorry driver, it later emerged, and his single parent mother, as was usually the case in those days, put him up for adoption via a Dr. Barnardo's Home. He went to school in Guidea Park and discovered his talent for music. In later life he became obsessed by the Western Quabalistic Magical Tradition and came to believe that he was an abandoned son of Victorian Occultist Aleister Crowley. Posthumous investigation revealed his true parentage to be otherwise.

Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker became best known for their teaming up with Eric Clapton to form 'Cream' a trio melding jazz improvisation with traditional blues songs and those penned by Bruce and poet Pete Brown. Baker was replaced on drums by John Hiseman who went on to form a heavily brass sectioned outfit called 'Colosseum' with Heckstall-Smith on saxes, often two at once, and Chris Farlowe on vocals, whose band had been the 'Thunderbirds', and who recorded later with Mick Jagger's support, on his manager Andrew Loog Oldham's Immediate label, scoring a couple of chart successes with his deep soulful voice. 'Colosseum' unashamedly used numbers from Bond's repertoire, even songs that he had written. Jack Bruce had often squabbled with Ginger Baker and left Bond before 'Cream' formed, doing short stints in 'Mayall's Bluesbreakers' and even chart successful 'Manfred Mann.' Baker again teamed up with Clapton and soulful singer and keyboardist Steve Winwood from the 'Spencer Davis Group' and 'Traffic', along with Rick Grech from Leicester band, 'Family', to form 'Blind Faith'. Despite the musical expertise, 'Blind Faith' lasted less than a year and only produced one album.

Bond was an innovator, who built one of the first electric pianos, and was the first musician to embrace the new technology of his day, in the form of the Mellotron, a keyboard 'organ' with earliest tape recorded sounds that made it possible for one person to create a whole orchestra, and which developed into 21st century synthesizers. He demonstrated it on cult '60s music T.V. Programme 'Ready, Steady Go' in 1965. Like so many musicians he suffered poor management and understanding from record companies, who failed to see that there was an 'underground' club culture which was emerging which paid little attention to Top Twenty singles charts. His massive build was never going to make him a popular figure with teenybopper girl fans. He knew his own worth and was often frustrated that he never received the recognition he deserved. Combined with the effects of drink and drugs it even led to nervous breakdown. His first album 'Sound of '65', featured mostly studio recordings of his stage act, which hence lacked the sparkle of the live performances, and there was even a ballad cover of a movie theme, 'Tammy' that was used as a single and which missed the mark with his audience completely. Also in '65 was the 'Organisation's' second album 'There's a Bond Between Us', of more studio recordings of live material. But featuring the Mellotron. A 'Live at Klooks Kleek' album did actually manage to catch the stage performance sound. 'Solid Bond', a double album, was recorded with guest musicians in '66 but was released later after tussles with record companies.

By 1967 there had been a seismic change in underground music as the Psychedelic era kicked in and suddenly Bond was 'old hat', so he pulled up sticks and went to camp out in America, where he did session work with Harvey Mandel and Creole voodoo man Dr. John. Whether it was the Dr. who ignited Bond's interest in Magic or just caused him to re-examine an earlier interest in the English strain of the occult, history will remain silent on, but 1968 saw him release an American album 'Mighty Graham Bond' which included Egyptian invocations, and in '69, 'Love is the Law', a catchphrase of Victorian Magus Aleister Crowley, who because of Bond's own 'Dr Barnardo's' estrangement from his parents, he came to believe was his father. Back in England with a wife, Dianne, and fronting a line-up called 'the Graham Bond Initiation' this trend became full flood as he released 'Holy Magick' in 1969, with a cover replete with magical symbols and pictures of Bond in magical postures at 'power centres' of the British Isles. The lyrics reflected magical matters, and on one side was a single track, with Bond returning to saxophone, for yogic breathing, and intoning Egyptian and 'Atlantean' invocations to 'build an astral temple of protection around the listener' The 'Initiation' line-up soon followed this with 'We Put Our Magick On You'. In 1971 the 'Mighty Graham Bond' was released in the U.K. as 'Graham Bond in America.' Post-psychedelic mysticism had spawned groups like 'Black Widow', advised on their stage act by Witch leader Alex Saunders, and the less authentic 'Black Sabbath'. The term 'Roccul' had been coined but the trouble was occult paranoia was so ingrained in the media and Hollywood no one wanted to know, and Bond's great, if somewhat delusional plans for his music flopped. In 1970 to make a living he turned to old mate Ginger Baker, who was by then running an outfit called 'Ginger Baker's Airforce' for work, then briefly did the same in 'The Jack Bruce Band' as Jack also cashed in on his post-'Cream' fame, and finally teamed up with 'Cream' lyricist and poet Pete Brown in 'Bond and Brown', after Brown's 'Battered Ornaments' was reconfigured. They recorded 'Two Heads Are Better Than One', which failed to impress anyone, and in 1973, fuelled by musical and marital failure, drink and heroin dependency he was hospitalised as a result of a breakdown. Upon release he was involved with a folk rock duo that they called 'Magus', but whether they would have created any interest became only a matter for speculation as the mighty Bond wound up under the wheels of a tube train at Finsbury Park station in 1974, at the age of '37. Owing to the depression he suffered as he went out of fashion with the music buying and supporting public it was assumed to be suicide, but no one knows for sure if he fell by accident: he carried a lot of weight and although thought to have been clean of heroin had experienced many forms of intoxication than might have contributed to such a eventuality. Long John Baldry, who had worked with Bond in 'Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated', before forming his own breakaway group 'The Hoochie Coochie Men', and subsequent bands with Rod Stewart, added a further possibility into the pot boiler of possibilities when he said in the 'News of the World' at the time that he had lived in a house that he thought was haunted, and knowing of Bond's interest in the occult asked him if he could exorcise it. Bond turned up with some acolytes and did what was asked of him. Baldry said that after that there were no signs of hauntings in the house, but it seemed to him that afterwards Bond himself was possessed!

The Small Faces 1965-69/Faces,'69-'75 and a couple of reunion versions.



The border between London's East End and Essex is a conurbation in which only local government officials would find any boundary noteworthy. It all changed in 1965 with the creation of the Greater London Council. Before that Ilford was part of a municipal borough, which originally had been an Essex village on the road to Colchester. It was in this urban limbo that one of the bestselling groups, the Small Faces, came together. 'Itchycoo Park' is in Ilford, although that's not its real name. The effects of its stinging nettles on Mod love makers in its hidden corners gave it its hit single title. Lead singers of the two main versions of the band, Steve Marriott and Rod Stewart chose to retreat to Essex to live when in this country: Steve to Arkesdon, near Saffron Walden, and Rod to Epping.

Steve Marriott had shown early musical talent and become a child star when he performed in 'Oliver', the West-End musical. He met fellow founder member of the Small Faces, Ronnie Lane, when he was working in a music shop in Manor Park. The original line-up that they gathered around themselves consisted of Marriott, guitar and vocals; Lane, bass and vocals; Kenney Jones on drums; and Jimmy Winston on organ. But after their debut single Winston was replaced by the more experienced Ian McLagan on Hammond organ. Ian had played with the 'Muleskinners' and 'Boz People' previously. In Mod parlance a 'face' was a prominent figure in that youth movement, and as the band members were all of smallish stature, a girl fan soon supplied the suggestion for the name. Infamous entrepreneur, Don Arden, was soon attracted to Marriott's belting, soulful voice and had the band signed to a contract within four weeks of their formation, and within four months the first single 'Watcha Gonna Do About It?' was released, and became an instant hit.

Arden was after quirky singles and he started the group on a trail of 10 top ten hits out of 14 releases, as well as three albums, while the band were under his management and after. Where Arden's knowledge of the music business benefited the group his control of finances didn't, and lengthy legal wrangles over dues owed carried on for decades after the band had broken up. Only in 1996 was repayment for lost income achieved by band members. At the time he put them on a low weekly wage but opened accounts in Carnaby Street boutiques for them to insure that their trendy image was met for the fans. So to bump up their wages they ran up the accounts to the full and sold on clothes to fans, and friends. 'I Got Mine', a Marriott/Lane follow up to 'Watcha Gonna Do About It?' was far less successful in the music charts, so Arden got two professional writers to come up with their next single. That was 'Sha la la la la le' and it reached number 3 in the charts. The band's first album, 'Small Faces' was a mixture of commissioned and self-penned songs, but managed to capture the band's vital live stage act sound. 'Hey Girl', the next single, reached number 10 in the charts. Then came 'All or Nothing' which reached number 1, and knocked the 'Beatles' off of the top slot. At that stage the group managed to wriggle out of the Arden and Decca records contract thanks to 'Rolling Stones' manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, who promised them more studio time and creative freedom on his Immediate label without a punishing gig schedule. Arden released 'My Mind's Eye' and 'I Can't Make It' on Decca to fulfil contractual obligations, but the band did not promote 'I Can't Make It'.

'Here Comes the Nice' [about an amphetamine dealer] was the first single on Immediate in June 1967. It reached number 12. 'Itchycoo Park' reached number 3 in August of that year. 'Tin Soldier' got to number 9 in January '68 and 'Lazy Sunday' reached number 2 in May '68. 'Lazy Sunday' was taken from the album 'Ogden's Nut Gone Flake', with a round sleeve displaying graphics in the style of an Art Nouveau style tobacco tin. One side of the album was a single piece of music, 'Song of a Baker' with a narration performed by Stanley Unwin, in his characteristic gobbledygook invented language. Within three years of the band forming the album reached number 1 in the charts.

Marriott's virtually solo rendition 'The Universal' failed to chart and on New Year's Eve 1968 he left the band in order to form 'Humble Pie', a band with ex-'Herd' frontman Peter Frampton, Greg Ridley from 'Spooky Tooth' on bass and Jerry Shirley on drums. This outfit lasted until 1975 and did best in the U.S. There was a short 'Small Faces' reunion from '76 and '78 where Marriott, McLagan, and Jones were joined by Rick Wills and Jimmy McCullough instead of Ronnie Lane who had reformed 'Slim Chance', the name the Small Faces had used after Marriott left. When the reunion broke up Marriott went back to the U.S. with a different line-up of 'Humble Pie', when that didn't work out he returned to England doing pub rock gigs with 'A Packet of Three' or similar pick-up bands until his tragic early death in a house fire in Arkeston in April 1991.

Meanwhile, after Marriott's departure from the Small Faces, the first 'Slim Chance' approached Ronnie Wood, who had recently left Jeff Beck's band, after a career in his brother's 'Artwoods', 'Creation', and the 'Birds' [not to be confused with the American 'Byrds']. Another of Ron's mates who had been the singer for Beck and who had left at the same time was Rod Stewart. Rod started to hang out with the band and the group became a five piece, which revived the 'Faces' name but dropped the 'Small' as Ron and Rod were not of that physical stature. Rod had a long pedigree of being in well thought of nightclub bands: Jimmy Powell and the 'Five Dimensions', [1963], Long John Baldry's 'Hoochie Coochie Men', [64-'65], 'Steampacket' [a Tamla Motown review style outfit with Julie Driscoll and 'the Brian Auger Trinity'-'65-'66], 'Soul Agents' [65-'66], and 'Shotgun Express' [with Liverpool's Cavern Club survivor Beryl Marsden and Peter Bardens' band 'the PeterBs' in '66, making a similar line-up to 'Steampacket'], before joining Beck from '66 to '69. In all these bands he had demonstrated a deep soulful voice that had the best chance for anyone to take Marriott's place. The reformed outfit were slow to take off with the public but soon took on its own character, especially on stage where shows turned into drunken party revels often involving the fans. The first 'Faces' line-up from '69 to '73 was McLagan, Lane, Jones, Wood and Stewart, who recorded the albums 'First Step' [70], 'Long Player' [71], 'A Nod's as Good as a Wink to a Blind Horse' [71], and 'Ooh La La'.

Ronnie Lane left the 'Faces' with a new line-up of 'Slim Chance' and a fantasy Gypsy lifestyle touring with a 'Passing Show' marquee leading to financial disaster. The gradual decline in his health due to multiple sclerosis caused him to move first to Texas in pursuit of treatment and a better climate. He died in Colorado in 1997.

The second 'Faces' line-up from '73 to '74 saw Ronnie replaced by Tetsu Yamauchi on bass. But Rod Stewart had started a solo career with an album called 'An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down' followed by 'Gasoline Alley', and when he followed this with 'Every Picture Tells a Story', the single from it, 'Maggie May' was a big chart success and even though the band that recorded it was mainly the 'Faces' the writing was on the wall for the group. One more solo album appeared while the band was still together, 'Never a Dull Moment', but the final straw came when Mick Taylor left the 'Rolling Stones' and Mick Jagger asked Ronnie Wood to play with the 'Stones'. At first he said he would play in both bands but this soon proved to be logistically impossible, which with Rod's solo success meant that the band inevitably ground to a halt in 1975.

Ian McLagan became a Los Angeles session musician and recorded and toured with the 'Stones', Bob Dylan and Bonnie Rait. Back in England he did the same with Neal Sedaka and Billie Bragg. Sadly he died in December 2014 leaving only Kenney Jones alive from the 1965 line-up. Kenney Jones took over Keith Moon's drum stool in 'the Who' for a while after the 'Faces' split [enviable job!] but didn't replace Moon in Roger Daltrey's eyes. So he joined Paul Rodgers, previously of 'Free' and 'Bad Company' in a group called 'the Law' and later drew members from there and other groups he'd played in to form 'the Jones Gang', who were very successful in the U.S. Wood remains a 'Rolling Stone', and although the Glam Rock era caused Rod Stewart to lose a lot of credibility to his old fans, record sales show that there is still a big fan base out there, who even put up with his crooning 'The Great American Song Book' of yesteryear classics while his throat recovered from a cancer operation. In 2014 he returned to displaying his own songwriting talents.

The much loved group was treated to a celebrity revival line-up in 2009 with Kenney Jones and Ronnie Wood being joined by Glen Matlock from 'the Sex Pistols' and Mick Hucknall from 'Simply Red' to reprise some 'Faces' classics for a short tour. I never heard them, but wonder how well Hucknall managed in filling Rod Stewart's vocal parts!

Vivian Stanhall and the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band.



Vivian Stanshall and the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band Vivian, born Victor Anthony Stanshall [1943 to 1995] was born in Oxford in the Second World War, but when his father returned home from serving in the R.A.F. he moved the family to where his own family had originated in Walthamstow. A younger brother was born in 1949. A later move saw the family move to Leigh-on-Sea and Viv attended Southend High School until 1959. His first job was in Southend's amusement Park, the Kursaal, where he was a bingo caller in the summer and painted the fairground rides during the slack months of the winter.

From the Kursaal Viv returned to Walthamstow to attend Walthamstow College of Art, where Ian Dury was also a student, and they both fell in with a reactionary alternative student social group on the fringe of the academic mainstream, which comes as no surprise. Viv intended to extend his Art Education, but his father wouldn't fund him to do it, so he joined the Merchant Navy for a year and saved the money to fund himself, and so gained a place at Central School of Art in London. Whilst there he met Rodney Slater, Roger Ruskin Spear, and Neal Innes, himself an Essex boy from Danbury, who were also Art students, but at Goldsmiths College. Along with Viv these anarchic Surrealist musicians were to become the founders of the Bonzo Dog Do-Da Band. They actually met in New Cross in South London where Viv was noticed for his comic theatrical clothing.

The band was originally called the Bonzo Dog Dada Band. This was due to the group's interest in the Dada anti-Art movement that developed in Europe after the First World War and eventually gave birth to the Surrealist Movement. The Dadaists borrowed a Victorian parlour game which William Burroughs and David Bowie, borrowing it from him, both made famous. That technique became known as 'Cut-up Poetry' and consisted of cutting up lines of type and rearranging them in random order so that mental processes of recognition would find new meanings to the words in rearranged fashion. Rodney Slater and Viv used this technique to find a name for the band. But as the Dada part was unknown to those outside artistic circles, to avoid endless explanations, they changed it to something even more nonsensical. Many of the songs were parodies of old music hall songs and pre-war 78 rpm records they found, and usually used to send up middle-class values.

Surreal props, like large papier mache heads and dummies jostled for space with large instruments like tubas and the musicians in the van that took them to London gigs and then the working man's club circuit after they got a manager and turned professional. The songs became more Surreal and comic. I saw the group at around this time at North London's Rainbow Theatre supporting Cream, and considering what adept musicians Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker were I still had to feel sorry for them having to follow a stage show like the Bonzos put on.

Paul McCartney talent spotted the band and promoted them by giving them an appearance in the Beatles 1967 film Magical Mystery Tour backing a striptease routine in song, Surreally enough titled 'Death Cab for Cutie'. That in turn gave rise to them becoming the house band for satirical T.V. show 'Do Not Adjust Your Set', which also featured early appearances by figures who were to become members of the Monty Python's Flying Circus team: a marriage made in heaven! Paul McCartney also produced the single 'Urban Spaceman / Canyons of Your Mind' for the group, which became a Top Ten hit that led to the albums 'Gorilla', 'The Donut in Grannie's Greenhouse', 'Tadpoles', 'Keynsham' and a 'Let's Make up and be friendly' collection. Much touring on both sides of the Atlantic then followed that. While they were on the second U.S. tour Roger Ruskin Spear's wife had a miscarriage in England and he was not told by the management who thought they might cancel the tour, so with that and other issues like Viv's stage fright and a resulting dependence on Valium to deal with it, they decided it was time to split up the band while they were still winning. The Valium addiction, coupled with a drinking problem, was to plague Viv for the rest of his life. The Bonzos played their last gig in 1970. Viv had married fellow former Art student Monica Potter in 1968, and they had a son, Rupert, the following year. The marriage in the mayhem lasted until 1973.

Viv played in a variety of bands after the Bonzos, including the Sean Head Showband, Bonzo Dog, Freaks, and Big Grunt. Eric Clapton joined Sean Head for the single 'Labio Dental Fricative', while Viv continued to mix alcohol and Valium to deal with his anxiety problems. The result was quite the opposite, as he teamed up with the Who's manic drummer, Keith Moon, for wild pranks on and off stage, which can only have given more causes for anxiety. Moon did produce a mock crooning single, 'Suspicion' for him however. Viv also took over the John Peel radio show for a few sessions which he transformed into another comic caper. The B.B.C. repeated some episodes from their archives in 1996. A first solo album was released in 1974 entitled 'Men Opening Umbrellas Ahead' [parody title of the road sign for men working on the road.] It was a jazz-rock outing featuring Steve Winwood and Jim Capaldi from Traffic, Neil Innes, Ric Grech from Family and Blind Faith, and soul singers Doris Troy, and Madeline Bell. It was re-released in 2010. Viv's continued mockery of the [self appointed] 'upper classes' took the form of an oration about 'Sir Henry Rawlinson at Rawlinson End' which went out first on Radio 1. In 1978 it was released as an album, and then as a film in 1980 with Trevor Howard in the title role, and Viv as his younger brother. Then it was released as a book. Rawlinson's disastrous African expedition was the subject of the follow-up, 'Sir Henry at N'didi's Kraal', in 1964. Viv was living on a house boat moored in the Thames near Shepperton from 1977 to '83 and produced the recording for the album there. Sir Henry was dis-interred for a Riddle's Ale advert in 1994 with Viv and Dawn French.

In the '70s and '80s Viv was found guesting with live bands and on recordings by other artists, like Mike Oldfield, on 'Tubular Bells', and in 1975 on a rock version of 'Peter and the Wolf' featuring a host of stars. When Ronnie Lane left the Small Faces in 1973 for a 'gypsy' lifestyle and take to touring Rock Circus on the road, Viv was the Ringmaster. He married for the second time in 1980, to his long time girlfriend Pamela 'Ki' Longfellow. In 1981 his third solo album was 'Teddy Boys Don't Knit'. Pamela helped him to write 'Stinkfoot, a Comic Opera'. In 1982 he added spoken word to the single, 'Lovely Money' by he Damned. When Viv and Pam's houseboat sank they bought a bigger boat that was moored at Bristol Docks, which Pam turned into a floating theatre: 'The Old Profanity Showboat' and put on a performance of 'Stinkfoot' there. The play was moved unsuccessfully to London's Bloomsbury Theatre, but was revived again in 2010. In 1991 the BBC showed a 15 minute Biography 'Viv Stanshall the Early Years, a.k.a. Crank' and in 1994 a Radio 4 biography was entitled 'Viv Stanshall, Essex Teenager to Renaissance Man'.

Viv's death was the result of a house fire when he was staying in a flat in Muswell Hill in 1995. It was followed by a celebrity funeral. After the Bonzo's records, as a solo artist he had six singles between 1970 and '81, four albums between 1974 and '84 and guested on many other artists' albums. In 2015 in Camden the remaining Bonzos and guests reformed for a 50th anniversary gig, but without the charismatic lead of Viv it could only be rather lacklustre, even with help from Phil Jupitus and Ade Edmonson.

Curved Air



Where better to start the story of 'Curved Air' than with singer Sonja Kristina. She was an Essex Girl, but not in the later use of that term. No white stiletto-heeled shoes here...barefoot was more often the case. Sonja was blessed with musical and theatrical gifts from an early age, performing in folk clubs from the age of 13. Her parents were to insure that she had an unusual upbringing: her father was headmaster of a school for delinquent boys and a criminologist and even puppeteer in his spare time, while on her mother's side she was the granddaughter of a Swedish silent movie star. After school she also studied drama and my mate Jeff, at that time from Thurrock, met her at Grays Hall College where she travelled into from Brentwood. At the time she was still performing in folk clubs, alongside such talents as Sandy Denny and Buffy Sainte-Marie. Folk clubs in the '60s' were a hotbed of social discontent as the Vietnam War raged on, so Sonja got to mix with radicals, writers, poets, musicians, hippies and Hells Angels. In 1968 her combined musical and acting talents landed her the part of 'Chrissie' in the original London cast of 'Hair', with its taboo-breaking naked cast scene. In 1970, when she became the voice of 'Curved Air', much to the disappointment of the male members of audiences, she kept her kit on.

The band already existed in embryonic form before that as 'Sisyphus' after Darryl Way, who had studied at the Royal College of Music was getting his violin electrified at an Orange music store and was overheard by guitarist and experimental keyboard player Francis Monkman, who had studied at the Royal Academy of Music, and who suggested that they form a group, which they did with a drummer with the most Rock and Roll name ever, Florian Pilkington-Miksa. They were then lacking a singer when someone suggested Sonja, and the idea proved to be a fruitful one, Monkman suggested the new name taken from an electronic album by Terry Riley called 'Rainbow in Curved Air'. There have been many line-ups for the group since then, but Sonja has always remained the defining and permanent central figure. The term Prog Rock had hardly been coined by the time of the first album, but hindsight would have pundits place them in that category, due to the mix of classically trained musicians with folkies and rockers of various hues.

The first album, 'Air Conditioning', in 1970, was something of a gimmick, being the first ever picture disc, but by being first it suffered because the technology had not been perfected. The vinyl sides made a sandwich of a sheet of printed card, which didn't respond well to the heat treatment and began to degrade after a few plays to the detriment of the vinyl. It was re-released in plain format but left many fans who bought the original disc rather disgruntled.

In 1973 Eddie Jobson, who had worked with 'Roxy Music' and Frank Zappa's 'Mothers' replaced Monkman and Way. In '74 Stewart Copeland became drummer for two years before joining 'Police', and 'Curved Air' split up, for the first time, as 'Punk' became the flavour of the day. However, Sonja sustained a 16 year relationship with Copeland.

By 1989 Sonja had returned to her folk roots, with a brand of electric folk she called Acid Folk, staying true to her Hippie origins as well. In a T.V. interview in 2015 she was still promoting the value of Transcendental Meditation too. She was joined in 'Sonja Kristina's Acid Folk Band' by violinist Paul Sax and keyboard player Robert Norton in 1996. Both had been members of reformed line-ups of 'Curved Air' in the interim. Their tours included an appearance at Glastonbury Festival. Sonja has done duet recordings with cellist and violinist Marvin Ayres, who produced the recordings, which became 'Heavy Petal' and 'Technophobia', released under the joint performers' name of 'Mask'. In 2012 Ayres also produced a 'Curved Air' 'Live Atmosphere' C.D. Album.

Curved Air's other albums were '2nd' in '71; 'Phantasmagoria' in '72; 'Air Cut' '73; 'Midnight Wire' '74; 'Curved Air Live' '75; 'Airbourne' and 'Best of '76; 'Live at the B.B.C.' '95 [recorded in '70', '71 and '76]; 'Reborn' 2000 [some old songs and some new]; 'Retrospective' 2010 [an anthology from '70 to '76, with three tracks from 'Mask' as bonus tracks]; 'Live Atmosphere' and 'Airway' [recorded for the B.B.C. at the Paris Theatre] 2012; and 'North Star', a new studio album, 2014. 1971 also saw five singles, including 'It Happened Today', classically influenced 'Vivaldi', and 'Back Street Love'. Two singles were released in '72, two live singles in '75, and six singles in '76.

There were eight line-up changes before the '76 breakup, but it can be seen there have also been many reformations. The most recent line-up by 2015 saw Florian Pilkington-Miksa back in the band, along with Robert Norton, Paul Sax, Kirby Gregory and Chris Harris, and Sonja, as ever, upfront on vocals and guitar. Past members were Darryl Way and Francis Monkman, founders; and Rob Martin, Ian Ayre, Mike Wedgewood, Eddie Jobson, Jim Russell, Phil Korn, Stewart Copeland, Mick Jacques, Tony Reeves, Alex Richman, Andy Christie and Kit Morgan.

Suzi Quatro



Can we call a girl from Detroit an Essex girl? Well yes, when she has lived in Chatham Green, near Great Waltham, for 35 years by 2015, as Suzi Quatro has, and mixed with the locals keeping her musical hands in by gigging in local pubs like the Kings Arms in Moulsham Street in the '80s before the venue went through a few name changes: to the Wig and Mirkin, Cm2, Smiths and Maisons. She's still just as likely to turn up, as she did in 2015, at the Bassment Blues Club, which her daughter Laura runs and, ignoring superstar status, you're just as likely to bump into her at the railway station rather than in a limo. No promoter or manager has ever succeeded in telling her how to mould herself, and that independent outlook has shown itself in all facets of her life.

Suzi was born Susan Kay Quattrocchi to an Italian father and Hungarian mother in Detroit in 1950, and had three sisters and a brother. Her dad like many people from the Motor City, worked for General Motors. She had been a t.v. Go-Go dancer at an early age, having been inspired by Elvis and the leather garb of the Shangri-Las, an all girl vocal group, and had had straight musical training on percussion and piano, which skills she used to play in her father's jazz combo. She was self-taught on bass and got her first instrument, a Fender Precision, aged 14. That year, 1964, her sister Patti formed a group called The Pleasure Seekers after hearing the Beatles. Suzi and another sister, Arlene, became members. The third sister became a member when Arlene became a mother. Suzi played her bass and sang. The group changed their name to Cradle in 1969. They released three singles, and sister Patti later went on to be in all-girl rockers, Fanny.

In 1970s Suzi was a sometime character in the t.v. Teen Rock soap opera, Happy Days, playing a leather-glad bass guitarist, which helped to form her early public persona, but may have also formed a teeny-bopper image that prevented American critics from taking her later Rock direction seriously, as she was always more popular in Europe and Australia. She moved to England in 1971, having been 'discovered' by Rock producer Mickey Most after her manager got him to watch her perform with Cradle, in the States. Her debut album was in 1973. Her name had been shortened by media pundits for ease of memory and pronunciation and gave the album its title. Her first solo single, 'Rolling Stone', backed by Peter Frampton, Alan White, and Duncan Brown went to number one in the charts in Portugal. Then she auditioned for a permanent backing group, which became Len Tuckey on guitars, Alastair Mac Kenzie on keyboards and Dave Neal on drums. Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman wrote most of the songs but Suzi co-wrote several album tracks with Len Tuckey and Shirley Roden. Her studded leather look fell right into the Glam Rock look of the era.

In 1972 she backed Thin Lizzy and Slade on tour, and in '73 'Can the Can' was number one in several European charts and in Australia. That single, '48 Crash' ['73], Daytona Demon ['73] and Devil Gate Drive ['74] all got gold discs for over a million sales. Her attempts to retake the U.S. Market, backing Alice Cooper on tour were marred by poor reviews from less Pop-oriented critics, despite her influencing more hard core rockers like Joan Jett. Also in '73 she guested on 'Dance with the Devil' with drummer Cozy Powell, and Len Tuckey's brother became their manager. She married Len in 1976. They moved to the mansion near Great Waltham in Essex in 1980. Daughter Laura was born in 1982, and Leonard Jnr. in '84. They were divorced in '92 and she re-married German promoter Rainer Haas in '93. Either in or out of the mansion she has always lived in the area.

Back in '78 the mode of the singles changed with a slower, more mellow single 'If You Can't Give Me Love' as she re-gigged her music after the string of hits tailed off, and she turned more towards album releases. In 1980 Suzi joined Mike Chapman's Dreamland Records and recorded the album 'Rock Hard', which went Platinum in Australia, while a Greatest Hits album from her old management was released too. In 1982 'Heart of Stone' was her last hit single although there were other releases. She also embarked on collaborations with Bronski Beat, the Kinks and Eddie and the Hot Rods in that year. A revived couple of singles were released in '87, back to back, as a result of charity gigs: 'Can the Can' and 'Devil Gate Drive'.

In 2005 Suzi was the subject of a documentary 'Naked Under Leather', and 2006 saw the release of a new album, 'Back to the Drive'. In 2007 she did a cover of the Eagles 'Desperado' as a single, and her biography 'Unzipped' was published. In 2010 she was part of 'Girls Night Out' at the Isle of Wight Festival. 2011 saw the release of her 15th album. In 2013 she was awarded a Distinguished Lifetime Award in Detroit and there performed her first U.S. gig in 30 years. In 2014 a boxed set of six C.D.s with mostly old, and some new songs, was released on Cherry Red Records. There is an Official Youtube Channel devoted to her music. She has sold over 50,000,000 records worldwide. As well as the singles and 15 studio albums there have been ten compilations and one live album.

Apart from her 'Happy Days' appearances she appeared in an episode of 'Minder' in 1982, in a horror film called 'Nightbreed' in 1990, an episode of 'Dempsey and Makepeace' in 1994 and an 'Abs Fab' cameo in 2006 as well as being in episodes of Rock School and Midsomer Murders. While in the theatre she played Annie Oakley in 'Annie Get Your Gun' in '86 and in the title role 'Tallulah Who', about Tallulah Bankhead, in 1991. She has also added another string to her bass, by presenting 'Rockin With Suzi Q' and 'Wake Up Little Suzi' for BBC Radio 2.....quite an all-round talent.

DR FEELGOOD



There are few groups to come out of Essex that exemplify the county's Rock spirit better than 'Dr. Feelgood', and those that do were mates of theirs anyway, as they orbited around the county's answer to that other great musical estuary city, Liverpool..... that is Safford-on-Sea.

Lee Brilleaux [because his hair looked like a Brillo pad, and it sounded more Rock and Roll than Collinson, the name on his birth certificate], singer, harpist, and occasional guitarist; John B. Sparkes ['Sparko', as he was often found reclining thus], bassist; and drummer, 'Big Figure', John Martin, had been playing around Canvey Island in jug bands, skiffle groups and various ensembles during the end of the early Rock era and into the Rhythm and Blues era made public by the 'Rolling Stones'. Then they were joined by guitarist busker Wilko Johnson, a rocked-up handle for the previously named John Wilkinson. It's generally recognised that 1971 was the year when the recognisable quartet emerged. A couple of lads from Westcliff-on-Sea, and a different drummer, had preceded Wilko's arrival, as the rest of 'Essex Five' who played such venues as the Thorney Bay Holiday Camp, while Wilko busked outside, or played inside, the Monico Amusement Arcade, the Canvey Club, the 'Admiral Jellicoe' or 'Oysterfleet' pubs. He also backed '50s rocker Heinz, who had previously been one of group, the 'Tornados', who gave the world its first top ten electronic instrumental, 'Telstar'. All this on an 'Island', with a couple of river creeks making up two sides with the River Crouch estuary, reclaimed from the water by Dutch engineers in the 17th century before it became host to numerous oil tanks, with the Shellhaven oil refinery for a backdrop. It inspired the band of R&B enthusiasts to think of it as Oil City, like the Mississippi Delta where all their Blues-singing heroes hailed from, in an era when they actually got to visit England and play at such venues as those in Romford or Chelmsford, at the Corn Exchange.

Wilko had been a typical child of the sixties, hitch-hiking across Europe to India and Nepal, being spokesperson for anti-oil tank expansion, a local cause that succeeded although the island was already peppered with tanks. He also went to University and tried his hand at teaching English, but like most of us got on better with the kids than school hierarchy that had been promoted out of the classroom because they didn't. He left after being carpeted by the Head over his appearance, which included shoulder length hair. One of his pupils later became the group's manager in a very estuary kind of way. Wilko's guitar style was very distinctive, as he was left-handed, but played his Fender Telecaster as if he was right-handed, without a plectrum, leading to a very 'choppy' action which combined rhythm backings with bursts of lead solos, a style which he had learned from Mick Green, guitarist with early English Rock 'n' Rollers, 'Johnny Kidd and the Pirates'. His liking for amphetamines gave him a manic bug-eyed appearance as he skipped around the stage forwards and sideways, with jerky head thrustings, which later went down well with Punks as their music found fertile ground with that era of fans. Dr Feelgood was a nickname originally for doctors who would give out dodgy prescriptions for drugs to patients, like the 'Beatles' 'Dr. Robert' on the 'Revolver' album. The Essex boys had come across the expression from American Blues pianist Willie Perryman, who called his group 'Dr. Feelgood and the Interns'. The expression came to refer to drug pushers generally, and Wilko's bulging eyes backed up the group's name in a highly visual manner, even though most of the band were usually happy with a few pints and the odd 'funny fag'. Wilko, who didn't drink and was married to wife Irene quite young, said that his intoxicant preference helped him when it came to writing the group's songs, a job that his English degree set him up well for.

Drummer John had the van, borrowed from work, and off they went on a punishing couple of decades of gigging, at first sometimes straight from work with Lee wearing his suit from his day job in a lawyer's office. I was lucky enough to be at college with 'Kursaal Flyer/Eddie's Hot Rod/Graeme Douglas, from 1970 to '73, and being another Southend boy he managed to get the 'Feelgoods' to play at the college, in Brentwood [now subsumed into Anglia Ruskin Uni.] about twice per year at least it seemed. The music fashions of the time were either Progressive Rock, pop/Glam or Disco. The 'Feelgoods' were having none of it, not even Prog, but stuck firmly with their beloved R&B, and what a welcome change it was. When the Pub Rock era of groups like 'Ducks Deluxe' emerged in '72, the 'Feelgoods' found their niche as the Rock world discovered Lee's rasping blues-shouting voice and wailing harmonica, and Wilko's manic thrashing guitar, with their solid rhythm section. The advantage with the pub rock scene was that it was pretty ad hoc. You didn't need to be in with the music business managers or record companies, but the 'Feelgoods' became so popular that they caused a storm by getting on the front page of a major music newspaper, the 'New Musical Express', before they had a record deal. The deal soon followed as a result, with United Artists, along with an established manager, once he saw one of the live gigs at 'The Kensington' pub. Whereas they had performed cover versions of R&B songs up to then they were told they'd need to write their own material if they were going to sell records and Wilko rose to the challenge. Embryonic Punks like Joe Strummer, soon to be of 'the Clash', and future 'Sex Pistol' Glen Matlock became fans..... along with Lady Diana Spencer!

The first album was 'Down By The Jetty' in 1974 and was followed by 'Malpractice' in 1975. Live music was their biggest strength and so the pressure on Wilko was relieved a bit with the live album, 'Stupidity' in '76, which hit number one in the album charts. The following album saw a rift appear in the band as Wilko moved to London and became more withdrawn during tours, ostensibly to fill the songwriting role, but probably with an element of drug psychosis and woman double trouble. Lee especially didn't like the resulting songs and Wilko decided to leave the band. He was replaced by John 'Gypie' Mayo until 1981, when he also left to feature in bands that included a re-jigged revival of the 'Yardbirds', where he was filling the shoes of the grand trio of previous guitarists, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page. He also played with Rasta Blues-shouter and harpist Jeremiah Marques' Braintree bands, 'the Marques Brothers' and 'Bluetones'. Sadly Gypie died in 2013. 'Milk and Alcohol' became a top ten single for the 'Feelgoods' in 1979. Wilko on the other hand, ran his own band, on and off, between gigs with Ian Dury's 'Blockheads' in 1980 and generally jamming around with his mates. Further band line-up changes after 1981 left Lee Brilleaux as the only original member of the 'Feelgoods'. In the U.S., not everyone 'got it', about what the 'Feelgoods' were about, sending R&B back to where it came from. But in New York, where the Punk revolution had begun, they were very well received, and members of 'Blondie' raved about the album 'Malpractice' when it arrived, admitting to it being an influence on them. Lee's wife was American, and Johnny Guitar played lead for the band in '81 and '82 so appeared on the album 'Fast Women and Slow Horses', recorded in '82.

Tragically, Lee died of lymphoma cancer in 1994, after much chemotherapy, and working nearly right up to the end. This should have led to the final collapse of the Band, but before he died he told the other then members that he wanted them to carry on the name with Pete Gage as singer. Pete could do little but respond to the request and after a re-union gig in '95 the group, who had been 'Feelgoods' for at least five years began touring with Gage in '96 until '99 when he was replaced by Robert Kane, who had featured in one of the post Eric Burdon versions of the Animals. The present line-up has Kane backed by Steve Walwyn on guitar [since 1989], Phil Mitchell on bass [on and off since '83] and Kevin Morris on drums [since '83]. There have been 14 'Feelgoods' over the years, with another 21 albums and 25 singles after Wilko leaving. There is a Lee Brilleaux memorial gig every year on Canvey, memorial nostalgia sightseeing walks around the island, and there was a film about the band in 2009 called 'Oil City Confidential', such is their legendary cult status.

MICKEY JUPP



Mickey is a musician's musician. When he used to bring his band from Southend to the Kings Arms in Chelmsford's Moulsham Street in the '70s [now morphed into Maisson's Night Club] mates like Gary Brooker and Robin Trower of Procol Harum and Chelmsford's adopted daughter Suzi Quatro could be seen admiring his work and lending support. Southend bands of the era all name him among their influences. Yet the man himself was in it for the music and never pursued celebrity.

Mickey was born in Worthing in Surrey in 1944 but his musical talents came to the fore after leaving Art School and the relocation to Southend. His band from '63 to '65 was called the Orieoles, but they never made any recordings. In '68 he formed a band called Legend, and they recorded an album called 'The Red Boot Album' on Bell records, which was a mix of acoustic Rockabilly and Blues Rock, but they then soon split up. A new line-up with Jupp on guitar, piano and vocals, Mo Witham on guitar, John Bobin on bass and Bill Fitfield on drums recorded an album for Vertigo Records in 1970, also called 'Legend'. When Marc Bolan saw the band he poached Bill to be drummer for T. Rex and changed Bill's name to Bill Legend. He was replaced in the Legend band by Bob Clouter, who had been drummer with the Orieoles. A second album for Vertigo was called 'Moonshine' and was produced by Dave Knight of Procol Harum. Matthew Fisher, also of Procol Harum, and B.J. Wilson, joined Jupp and Witham to create the single 'Georgie George' also around that time. 'Moonshine' was re-released as a C.D. in 2007.

When Pub Rock arrived Mickey wrote 'Down at the Doctors' for fellow Safford/Canvey mates Dr. Feelgood. In '78 he signed to Stiff Records, who re-released a compilation from the first three Legend albums. Jupp played for a while with Dave Edmunds Rockpile, but also recorded a solo album called 'Juppanese' produced by Brinsley Schwartz's Nick Lowe, who was by then a solo Stiff artist, and Gary Brooker of Procol Harum again. A second Stiff album, 'Long Distance Romancer', was [over]-produced by Godley and Creme from 10cc and didn't do so well in the music tastes of the era. Jupp went on to record seven more solo albums, some released on Swedish and German labels. Ricky Nelson, Elkie Brooks, the Judds, Searchers, Chris Farlowe, Nick Lowe, Dave Edmunds, Gary Brooker, Hamsters, Dr. Feelgood, and Roger Chapman of Family and Streetwalkers have all recorded his songs. Chris East, from the first Legend group, Mo Witham, John Bobin, Bob Clouter, and Mickey released a collection of East's and Jupp's songs over 20 years called 'Never Too Old to Rock' in 2009. The 'Moonshine' era Legend members released a double C.D. 'Legend Live at the Riga' in 2015.

Jupp's biography 'Hole in My Pocket' by Mike Wade was also published by Amazon in 2015. He now lives in the Lake District. A list of all albums and singles Mickey has played on, and songs others have recorded would take up several pages.

More Essex Bands On The Next Page

