

This Is Mersey Beat (3): Blues, Folk & Beatniks.

Extended sleeve notes.

1. Frankie Connor – broadcaster/deejay at BBC Radio Merseyside and former Hideaway introduces the Hideaways and the album.

“It’s incredible to think as I sit here at home in January, 2002, that I’m about to recall an obscure occasion that happened almost 37 years ago.

It was April 1965 and I played rhythm guitar with a local 5-piece R&B group the Hideaways. School friends Ozzie Yue, John Shell and John Donaldson formed the group some 18 months earlier; I joined just three months later. The line-up was then completed in early 1964 by the arrival of harmonica player Judd Lander.

During the spring of 1965 we met two gentlemen from the Netherlands. They were putting together a book to be titled ‘Beat in Liverpool’. The main focus of the book was to follow around two local Liverpool groups – mainly, actually, the Clayton Squares – and the Hideaways.

The pair came to several Hideaway gigs around the city, namely the Cavern, the Iron Door, the Way Down, the Mardi Gras and the Sink Club. I can’t recall if they recorded us at all of the clubs mentioned (I seem to remember the equipment being a tape recorder over the shoulder and a hand held microphone thrust into the air in the middle of the audience!) – but I think not.

Time moved on and my group turned professional, playing further and further away from our Merseyside base, looking for work in an ever-changing ‘60s scene. We eventually signed with RCA Records in 1969 and released our only single ‘The Brandenburg Concerto’ under our new moniker of Confucious. Locally, the record sold very well, but sank nationally.

If I may fast forward to the mid-1970s, when working as a sales rep. (a proper job), I heard about a book only available on the continent about the Liverpool scene of the mid-1960s. Of course, by this time there was nothing particularly unusual about that, but I also heard that a disc was included with this book containing a recording of previously unheard live tacks from the Clayton Squares and the Hideaways. I asked friends and fellow musicians to find a copy for me but all to no avail. It was not until the late 1980s that a good friend – Dave Carlyle – discovered one and purchased it for me.

I was a little disappointed to being with: the book was written in Dutch! However I eventually gleaned a great deal from the text with careful reading and the superb photographs in stark black and white were very atmospheric. There were many photos of the Clayton Squares, of course, but there were also several of the Hideaways. Of particular poignancy were the shots of our bass player John Shell in our favourite meeting place, the Kardomah Café in Whitechapel. John could be seen with his then girl friend Elaine Curtis. They were, in fact, married shortly after these photographs were taken. Sadly (tragically, in fact), John was to lose his life in the Vietnam War (he was born in Dallas in 1947) leaving Elaine a teenage widow.

There was also **that** recording (the real reason I am penning these notes now) – the only known live recording of the original Hideaways. The recording is rather primitive but to judge by modern recording standards is to entirely miss the point. We always enjoyed playing the Sink Club in Hardman Street, Liverpool. The owner, Neil English was also a very fair guy to us and in 1965 every Wednesday night was ‘Hideaways Night’. The recording captures a wonderfully distinctive vignette from one such night.

I sing the first number, the Arthur Alexander song ‘Black Night,’ and Ozzie Yue takes the vocal on Bo Diddley’s ‘Keep Your Big Mouth Shut’ (by this time a staple of R&B bands all over the country). I really do think that the recording captures the essence and the rawness of the kind of material the Hideaways enjoyed playing. It wasn’t ‘rocket science’, but we were only 17/18 years of age, we loved our music, we really were great friends, and, as you might be able to detect, we had a very loyal and vociferous following who shared our love of rhythm and blues.

To complete the circle, as I now sit here in 2002, I am delighted that all of these historic recordings have survived (now preserved digitally!) and I really do not believe I would have changed one thing about those days – except perhaps to wish that John Shell had been born, like me, in Liverpool.

I really do hope you enjoy all of the recordings within. Mayfield have taken great pains to collate some of the significant, yet curiously obscure R&B, folk and beatnick facets of the 1960s and early ‘70s Mersey sound – sounds that have previously been all but hidden from historical sight by that powerful shadow of Mersey Beat and the Fab Four. It is a musical and cultural story worth telling.”

Regards,

Frank Connor

B.B.C. Radio Merseyside.

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Alan Peters of Groovin’ Records and the Lawnmower R&B provides details of the Almost Blues.

The Almost Blues 1964-1969

Recording Details.

‘Just Wont Do Right’ (Brown) c/w ‘Jerk’ (Eddie Williams). Unicorn label, matrix no. UP 655A, 45rpm single.

Personnel:

Eddie Williams a.k.a. ‘Jerkin George Paul’ (vocals), Al Peters (trumpet), Mike Haralambos (guitar), Ray Fowlis (alto sax), John Beesley (bass), Ronnie Wison (drums).

Recorded by Charles (large man in white overall) Weston at CAM Studios, Moorfields, Liverpool, 1965 (not exactly sure of the date).

Engineered by Charlie and released as a demo record for distribution to major labels. This eventually brought The Almost Blues to EMI Abbey Road Studios, London.

'Love-it is' (Harvey Scales) rearranged as 'Lovitis' (Scales – Peters).

One-sided acetate recorded at Abbey Road Studios, London, 8th January 1969 for EMI Records.

Personnel:

Tommy Brown (vocals), Al Peters (trumpet, vocals), John Hodgson (guitar), John Beesley (bass), Peter Harvey (tenor sax), Derek Marl (baritone sax), Barry 'Basher' Robinson (drums).

Engineered by Bob Barratt.

This session was recorded in Studio 2 at Abbey Road, apparently sandwiched in between the Beatles and Englebert Humperdink. The reason I remember this session in particular is due to having to move Ringo's drums and John's amp to one side so that we could set up!

This was our second visit to Abbey Road Studios, the first being with vocalist Colin Areey. We recorded four tracks with Colin but he absconded with them immediately after the session - I have never heard or heard of them since!

General Facts.

All the demo recordings undertaken by The Almost Blues were performed live with no overdubs. They were normally completed within one or two takes. This was general practice at the time due to recording costs and limited studio time. Most of the sessions were spent adjusting the microphones etc. in order to achieve the most representative sound of the band for prospective major label A&R departments.

The late, great Bob Wooler: Whenever Bob booked the band to play the Cavern All-Nighters he would always complain about the band's habitual wearing of 'shades' saying

"so, how do you expect to communicate with the audience if they cannot see your eyes?"

To which I would usually reply

"It's the music - the blues- that communicates, Bob" (while handing him another pink gin).

I'd also continually remind Bob that my great hero Ray Charles wore shades. Bob would reply, gesticulating like some Shakespearian actor, "but he's blind".

I would reply in best cod-Stratford "'tis right, but it is part of the cool".

Bob would retort

"bloody musicians! you young men are so exasperating at times...what's that? You would like another booking at the Cavern? Well, another pink gin would seal the deal!"

These 'deals' were usually done in either the Grapes or the White Star public houses in Mathew Street prior to bob's m.c.-ing another 'Rave at the Cave'. Innocent times, to be sure.

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Joe Flannery of Carlton-Brooke Enterprises and former manager of the Liverbirds writes exclusively for Mayfield Records:

The Liverbirds.

By Late 1963, the Liverbirds, formerly a folk group in Liverpool were making ready to travel to Hamburg courtesy of my agency, Carlton Brooke. By this time I was also Manfred Weissleder's right hand man at the Star Club in Hamburg. Visually, the Liverbirds were probably years ahead of their time for they were a four-piece R&B group, not (as one might expect in those days) a vocal group. They wore their hair in a cross between a Beatle cut and a mod bob and sported leather jerkins and tight fitting slacks with winkle pickers on their feet...quite a shock for the male-orientated scene in Liverpool!

Actually, they had found things very chauvinistic back in Liverpool and it had taken a successful support gig with German band the Rattles to bring them to our attention at Carlton-Brooke. The Rattles, incidentally, had spent most of December '63 in Liverpool and had become quite a draw at the Cavern. They returned to Germany just before Christmas '63 to promote their recording 'The Stomp', which was a massive hit on the Continent.

There were simply no female group role models and few precedents for the Liverbirds back in the UK. Instrument-playing female groups have always been rare but back in the 1960s they were like proverbial 'hen's teeth'. America's Goldie and the Gingerbreads were knocking us out with their musical ability in early 1965, but the Liverbirds were a full twelve months before this. To compete, any new girl group not only had to contend with well-established singers such as Dusty and Co., but also the seemingly unassailable brigade of boys.

It was little wonder that so few women broke through. My business partner and I discussed this at length and decided at an early stage that, if the Liverbirds were agreeable, we should target Germany exclusively. The Germans were no less misogynists than the British, but we knew that the group would - by association - be described by the West German press as 'female Beatles' for the word 'Beatle' was an encryption in Germany by 1964, meaning any person directly associated with Liverpool, the appropriate sound and hairstyle. Tapping into this relationship would be superb publicity for the girls before they even played a note. We duly contacted the German music press prior to the Liverbirds leaving the UK in order to hype up the arrival of the girls in Hamburg.

Between the New Year 1964 and our departure for Hamburg mid-February the girls were heavily booked. Carlton-Brooke placed them in as many local venues as possible in order to expand their skills and repertoire. With the help of Bob Wooler we were able to get them regular gigs at the Cavern alongside the likes of Chick Graham, the Kubas, the Riot Squad and the Remo Four. Their most successful gig, however (and one in which they seemed to physically grow on stage) was supporting Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated one Sunday in January (26th). They were up against a very knowledgeable blues crowd that evening - all duffle coats and sandals - but they handled the gig well and were commended by Alexis. The hype certainly worked in Germany for there was a large posse of pop press and male fans at the airport on their arrival with Lee Curtis and the All Stars Mk 2 during late February, 1964.

The band were led by Pam Birch, who was not an easy client to keep happy and was something of an eccentric, but she was totally her own person and I admired her for that. I'd brought Pam into the group myself at a late stage after a fellow Liverbird - Mary McGlory's sister - had decided that the beat group life was not for her. Pam had been attempting to make a name for

herself on the folk scene in Liverpool during 1963 but has found it equally misogynistic and intransigent. She was, at times, rather unpredictable but was always willing to take musical risks – never following trends. She was fully aware of trends, however, for she had worked in the NEMS record department, buying imports. She was a mine of useful information, in this respect.

The aforementioned Mary McGlory was the bass guitarist – she was a very quiet individual. I always thought that she would have made the perfect nun. Instead she married Frank Dostill in Germany. I shall never forget Mary's first sight of the Reeperbahn. Our taxi dropped us off near the Catholic Church around the corner and Mary remarked that her parents would be very pleased. We then walked around that corner to view all of the strip clubs and prostitutes! She nearly fainted!

Val Gell played rhythm and I always thought that Val was quite butch, but she was as straight as they come. She eventually married a young fan by the name of Stefan who, having met the band at the Big Apple club in Munich, attempted to drive to Hamburg to see the group again. Sadly, Stefan was involved in one of those all-too-common 1960s car accidents, leaving him paralysed. Sylvia Saunders played drums. Syl was the mothering type and quite bossy and independent. She ultimately met and married a drummer from the Bobby Patrick Big 6, came back to Britain but then subsequently spent some time in Spain. I believe she has returned to the UK.

Of course, having a girl band in tow meant that both my self-perceptions about being a father figure and my paranoia about their welfare increased dramatically. I regarded myself as their overseer and frequently rang home to their respective parents to convince them all was well. I was also constantly sending telegrams and I even remember on one occasion sending back a little money to Pam's family to convince them that she was earning good money. She wasn't of course...the money was mine.

Once in Hamburg, the 'Livers' were given a slot at the Star Club supporting Lee Curtis. They were not officially booked in their own name, being part of the Lee Curtis 'show', as it were. This was similar to the arrangement that I had made for Lee Curtis in March of the previous year. I remember that the All Stars were not particularly pleased with the Liverbirds, thinking that they were a bunch of amateurs. I must admit that, although I knew the girls could play a little, I did have some reservations about their musical ability (mainly to do with lack of volume). They **could** play, but they had been folkies before entering the world of R&B and, despite the exhaustive pre-Hamburg gig schedule, were still not *aux fait* with the drive and volume demanded on the Reeperbahn.

I did feel, however, that their novelty value, alone, would fill the Star Club for at least a week and the musical ability stuff could take care of itself. Sure enough, despite a few rocky moments during that first week, they tightened up considerably – turning the amps up full blast along the way. Manfred Weissleder was duly impressed and over coffee and cake the following week, he retained them for the rest of the month.

After the Star Club booking had been successfully completed, I sent the girls home to rest and recuperate. They returned to Liverpool full of hope and with money in their pockets. Once back in Liverpool, however, they became anonymous and played only a handful of rather uninspiring

gigs – including one at the Cavern with the Kubas once again. They quickly wanted to return to Hamburg.

Weissleder was so keen to have them back that he offered the Liverbirds a recording contract with his newly formed Star Club label. Recording deals were not the same in Germany as they were in Britain. They were usually one-off affairs, but I was able to negotiate royalties for them. I can never work out whether I caught Manfred in of his rare weaker moments or whether he really loved the band. Either way, they recorded regularly for Star Club Records over the next couple of years and sold plenty of records in West Germany.

Which leads me finally to their repertoire. One of the things that attracted me to the group in the first place was their repertoire. The Liverbirds' set had moved one step beyond most of the Mersey Beat groups in 1964, playing R&B numbers that would not have been out of place in the Marquee or the Crawdaddy. I distinctly remember storming versions of Got My Mojo Working (on this album), Too Much Monkey Business, Diddley Daddy and Roadrunner – odd, if you think about it! Not unlike my other ward, Beryl Marsden, the Liverbirds did not necessarily associate with the sound that has been (retrospectively) described as 'Mersey Beat'. In fact, if one includes all of the bands on this album, one could argue that the very term 'Mersey Beat' is a rather over-used narrative. It has certainly deflected attention away from groups such as the Liverbirds, the Hideaways and the Clayton Squares - all because they did not sound like they were about to burst into a rendition of 'Some Other Guy' – what a pity!

Eventually the Livers settled in West Germany and they are still highly regarded to this very day. As for me? Well, the weight of caring for them, **and** Lee Curtis, **and** the All Stars, **and** the Star Club began to tell on me. Chiefly, once I had discovered that Lee Curtis (my already married younger brother) was enjoying secret liaisons with one of the Liverbirds – but that, dear reader, is another story!

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Bob Hardy of JJ Records and formerly of J.B's Bluesicians, the Fix, Supercharge and Gaz and the Groovers writes:

THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA MEETS THE GREEN LANE BUS SHELTER.

I was born in April 1943 in Liverpool. That's not Huyton, Kirkby, or Cantril Farm or any of those other places in Lancashire, but LIVERPOOL. I went to an average primary school in the Old Swan area where I grew up and spent the first 35 years of my life.

My memories of music in my infant years consist mostly of 'Workers' Playtime', Edmundo Ross, the Billy Cotton Band Show, the country music of Big Bill Campbell, the guitar playing of Elton Hayes ('Songs for a Small Guitar') and of course 'Two Way Family Favourites'. The only solo artist that I can recall having any more than a passing interest in before the age of ten (in that I would deliberately wait up to hear her) was that occasional boogie-woogie pianist Winifred Atwell.

I didn't listen to Radio Luxembourg much because the reception in Liverpool was lousy (another myth well exploded! – ed). Nobody in my family brought records home from abroad, either. I eventually did that for myself when I served in the Merchant Navy between 1960-62, but it wasn't the big deal that the semi-mythological Cunard Yanks would have one believe.

My dad purchased a TV in the mid-fifties. Early enough for me to connect watching 'Quatermass' with listening to 'Journey Into Space' on the wireless. The usual Saturday morning children's movies at the Regent cinema in Old Swan, together with the occasional trip midweek to the Curzon with my parents, exposed me to the fabulous 50s and 60s media machine – the 'flics'.

I passed my eleven-plus and went to the Liverpool Institute Grammar School in the same year as George Harrison and Les Chadwick; this type of schooling was, for me, a total disaster. However, as a young teenager I was fortunate enough to have close connections with the family of Alan Caldwell and Johnny Burn (a.k.a. Rory Storm and Johnny Guitar) and this connection was seminal in educating me in more practical matters, such as the politics of forming, structuring, and rehearsing repertoire for a band!

At the age of 15 I met my wife and, as a consequence, hung around the Green Lane area of Old Swan, nightly! My future wife, Jean, lived in 18 Derwent Road; in number 22 lived Lance Railton, who played guitar – he would soon move a little further down Green Lane and live in Moscow Drive. He had a group with Dave 'Gabby' Gore and Wally Shepard, both were school mates of mine, so it was easy for me to strike up a conversation with Lance.

Lance and I performed at the Saturday morning skiffle sessions on the Regent cinema stage sometime around 1958 (but so did what seemed like hundreds of others). Unlike Johnny Guitar, who played rock 'n' roll on a solid body guitar (his famous Antoria), Lance played semi-acoustic Harmony guitar and was also interested in a number of other exotic instruments such as five string banjo. He was definitely not interested in blues guitar at this stage but, rather, in white America folk music of the pre-Dylan variety – Pete Frame please note! I was the first of us to be interested in the blues through another completely different connection - soon to be explained.

Incidentally, as an aside, my family name is Robert Alan Hardy and everybody except Jean who decided that she preferred Bob, called me Alan. My nickname became 'Alan Blues' and some people have erroneously associated this with the amphetamine Purple Heart (actually Lance and I preferred Preludin, which is a white pill). My own flirtation with chemical substances came to an end within a year or so, but, sadly, Lance was never able to sever his addiction – with the inevitable tragic consequences.

Back to the story. During my last year at the Institute I began to 'sag off' and would generally use my entire week's dinner money on a Monday to buy a packet of cigarettes and to go to the Tatler in Church Street to watch the cartoons and serials. These programmes would often include an American magazine programme such as 'Disc Jockey Jamboree' and feature such artists as Jerry Lee Lewis, Charlie Gracie and Bill Haley. The programme was repeated every two hours or so and one could stay in the Tatler all day (by hiding in the bogs), so it became

possible to get a kind of rudimentary education in rock 'n' roll. We would often view the one programme four times a day.

So, some primitive critical faculty was at work. For example, it was not too difficult to understand the difference between the 'authentic' (?) American article and the middle class bollockless variety of Brit being paraded on the '6.5.Special'. This would soon change slightly for the better with the advent of 'Oh Boy' but already in large cities such as Liverpool it was possible to be something of an aficionado because of the medium of cheap news theatres. One could compare, for example, Don Lang and John Barry with Bill Haley and Freddy Bell or, more importantly (for me, at least) with Little Richard, Fats Domino and the Platters.

The latter three appeared to be doing something approximately in the same area as the others mentioned but I remember that they had a far greater effect upon me. I had probably discovered a certain backbeat and rhythm, I suppose – and things were never to be the same. Now, don't get me wrong, it never once occurred to me at that time that this 'effect' had anything to do with colour, although I would have admitted at the time that it certainly had something to do with them being Yanks! For young men such as myself at that particular time Count Basie and John Wayne were obviously the same – "they were both fucking Yanks, for Chrissake!". Any difference was over ridden by this cultural 'similarity'.

Perhaps unfortunately for me, I presumed that everybody else in the world must also be affected by this music in the same way. Of course, they were not; a position I failed to appreciate until I was well into my thirties.

I left the Institute after being allowed to take my O Levels. I had been threatened with expulsion during the final spring term but was able to hang on, as it were. I went to Riversdale Technical College to obtain my ticket as a 'sparks' in the Merchant Navy. During my time at Riversdale, I hung around with Rory's drummer, Richie Starkey, who enjoyed the stage name of Ringo Starr. We became good friends, so much so that we decided to migrate to the USA - Texas to be exact. Ringo remains very important to me because it was he who gave me my first blues LP - a sampler. He had got it from Gerry Marsden when, apparently, the latter was in Hamburg – I was hooked! And why did I want to go to Texas? Because that was where Lightnin' Hopkins lived. The only reply to that statement in the Liverpool of circa 1960 would have been 'Lightnin' who?'

You must understand that there was absolutely no information available on the blues and rhythm & blues at this time. Although some have made the most extraordinary claims for certain radio (e.g. Alexis Korner's, to which I didn't listen) and TV shows (e.g. Josh White's which I watched and loved), there was literally no body of work to which any budding Liverpoolian blues fan could refer. I eventually did, however, purchase Samuel Charters' The Country Blues the day it arrived in Phillip, Son and Nephew in Whitechapel. This book became my Bible and, with it, I introduced Lance Railton to African American blues musicians. There were now two of us...the rest appeared to be Buddy Holly fans.

The Terry Hines Sextet formed when Hines left the Clayton Squares in early 1965. The sextet comprised of Albie Donnelly and Bob Hardy (sax), Terry Kenner (?) (guitar), Geoff Workman

(organ), Pete Newton (bass) and Dave Irving (drums). In tenor sax player Albie Donnelly they included the nucleus of several of the finest bands that emerged in Liverpool over the next ten years or so. Bob Hardy has provided the following information about the (slightly different) Terry Hines Sextet line-up which recorded at CAM Studios, Moorfields, Liverpool "circa early 1965":

Terry Hines - vocal
Albie Donnelly - tenor sax
Bob Hardy - guitar
Terry Kennaugh - lead guitar
Pete Newton - bass
Dave Irving - drums.

The repertoire of the Terry Hines Sextet was very catholic. The band drew their repertoire from forties big city blues such as Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson, jump blues artists such as Louis Jordan through to sax specialists such as Junior Walker. They even played Horace Silver material and were including James Brown numbers when few people in Liverpool had even heard of him.

When Terry Hines was replaced by Eddie Cave, former vocalist with the Richmond Group early in 1966, the group became the Fix. Success eluded them, however, and Donnelly involved himself in a rather bewildering and sometimes incestuous permutation of musicians until the most stable Supercharge line-up emerged in 1973.

Supercharge consisted of the aforementioned Albie Donnelly, Ozzie Yue (lead guitar, vocals), Bob Robertson (tenor, baritone, guitar, vocals), Alan Peters (trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals), Tony Dunmore (bass), Dave Irving (drums) and - occasionally - Vinnie Parker (piano). More information on this fine group, along with a selection of their back catalogue, can be obtained from the JJ Records website: jjrecords.co.uk

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For information on the Leesiders and the Crofters, please see the sleeve notes/essay to 'This Is Mersey Folk Volume One' on this web site. For information on the Klubs, please see 'Midnight Love Cycle' Wooden Hill CD011 - highly recommended.

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The Clayton Squares

For many Liverpool groups of the mid sixties the dividing lines between soul and R&B was never clearly drawn and this was especially true in the case of the Clayton Squares. From its early beginnings in 1964 as the first local band to feature a two sax line-up, the Clayton Squares embraced a very broad range of music in their repertoire - as is evident by the presence of the Hank Williams track on this compilation. Pete Dunne (guitar and organ) had previously been with the Flintstones and bassist Geoff Jones had been with the Georgians - another Quarry Bank Grammar School R&B outfit. Les Smith (tenor) was fresh from art school, Terry Hines (vocals), Bobby Scott (drums) and Mike Evans (alto) completed the squad.

The aforementioned Terry Hines was an extrovert with a very distinctive jazz-inclined voice. According to alto player Mike Evans, Hines once sang an entire set with his back to the audience and without even removing his duffle coat and scarf! Their repertoire ranged from Buddy Guy's 'the First Time I Ever Met The Blues' and Bobby Parker's 'Watch Your Step' (featured here) to the Bacharach-David composition 'Always Something There To Remind Me'. In the spring of 1965 Terry Hines was replaced as vocalist by Denny Alexander from the Kinsleys and the repertoire of the band shifted accordingly to reflect the new singer's interests in Atlantic and Stax soul music. Songs by the likes of Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett were included and the band attempted to reflect a kind of Stax-cum-Muscle Shoals sound around the clubs of Liverpool. In fact, Mike Evans has even suggested that the 'Squares were one of the first groups in the entire country to play 'In The Midnight Hour'.

By 1965 they were playing the Cavern three or four times each week. Additionally they were a very popular club act throughout the North West of England. Under the guidance of Cavern disc jockey Bob Wooler, the group built a considerable local following and for a time in 1965 were regarded as the 'next big thing'. They released a single on Decca - 'Come And Get It', produced by Ian Samwell - which went straight to number one on the Liverpool charts. An appearance on 'Ready Steady Go' seemed to guarantee their future but the band then appeared to press a self-destruct button. Mike Evans simply remarks, "We blew it".

The 'Squares turned their back on Bob Wooler and signed with notorious London manager and entrepreneur Don Arden. In their search for glory, they upped sticks to London but soon discovered that London was full of "mod-style showbands". Within a comparatively short space of time they drifted into obscurity. Apart from one other rather average Decca single ('There She Is') nothing further was 'officially' recorded and the material on this album is the only footage of the group at their peak of their popularity (spring, '65). Within 12 months or so of this recording, the group had disintegrated.

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Jimmy Campbell was (and remains) a brilliant and offbeat composer. According to many experts on British psychedelia, his composition 'Michael Angelo' (sic) is one of the greatest testaments to the genre. The group recording this marvellous piece of English pastoralism were entitled 'the 23rd. Turnoff' and appeared to be, on the face of it, one of those Deram one-offs that were part of the '60s quirkiness of that particular label. This is not the case, however, for Campbell's (and the group's) history can be traced back to the early days of Mersey Beat. Names such as the Panthers and the Tuxedos (not of the Billy Butler variety) abounded before Cavern disc jockey Bob Wooler renamed the ever evolving line up into the Kirkbys. This line up recorded an excellent single for Decca ('It's a Crime') but it was Campbell's song writing skills that began to attract attention. The Escorts, for example, recorded his 'You'll Get No Lovin' That Way' as the flip side to 'C'mon Home Baby'.

The Kirkbys were very popular in Finland - where they scored two hits - and also spent some time backing the Merseys after their hit 'Sorrow'. They were also under the management of Kit Lambert for a short period of time. Campbell's talent was too strong to languish in a backing

band role, however, and, re-naming the group the 23rd Turnoff (M6 onto the East Lancashire Road!) embraced psychedelia. The aforementioned 'Michael Angelo' (sic) was the group's only single release (Deram DM 150) and its incomprehensible failure to chart eventually brought about the end of the group.

Jimmy quit music for a short while but then began, in 1969, a truly fascinating solo career. He was signed by Billy Fury's manager Hal Carter (Fury also recorded Jimmy Campbell songs during his days with Parlophone) and between then and 1973 produced three solo albums of immense beauty for Polygram (Fontana, Vertigo, Philips respectively). Jimmy has given his kind permission to use 'Forever Grateful' from his second recording 'Half Baked' on this compilation, but, in truth, his wonderful melancholia can be found spread across all three releases.

During this time, Jimmy Campbell also became a mainstay of session band-cum-recording outfit Rockin' Horse - alongside former Merseybeat and Mersey, Billy Kinsley. This very high quality band backed several rock'n'roll artists in addition to recording their own material for Philips (equally worthwhile). Any body lucky enough to find any Jimmy Campbell recording is in for a rare treat and Mayfield hope to reissue all of the above albums in due course. Jimmy is not in the best of health these days but occasionally plays with the original Kirkbys line up when he feels able. A lost prophet, indeed.