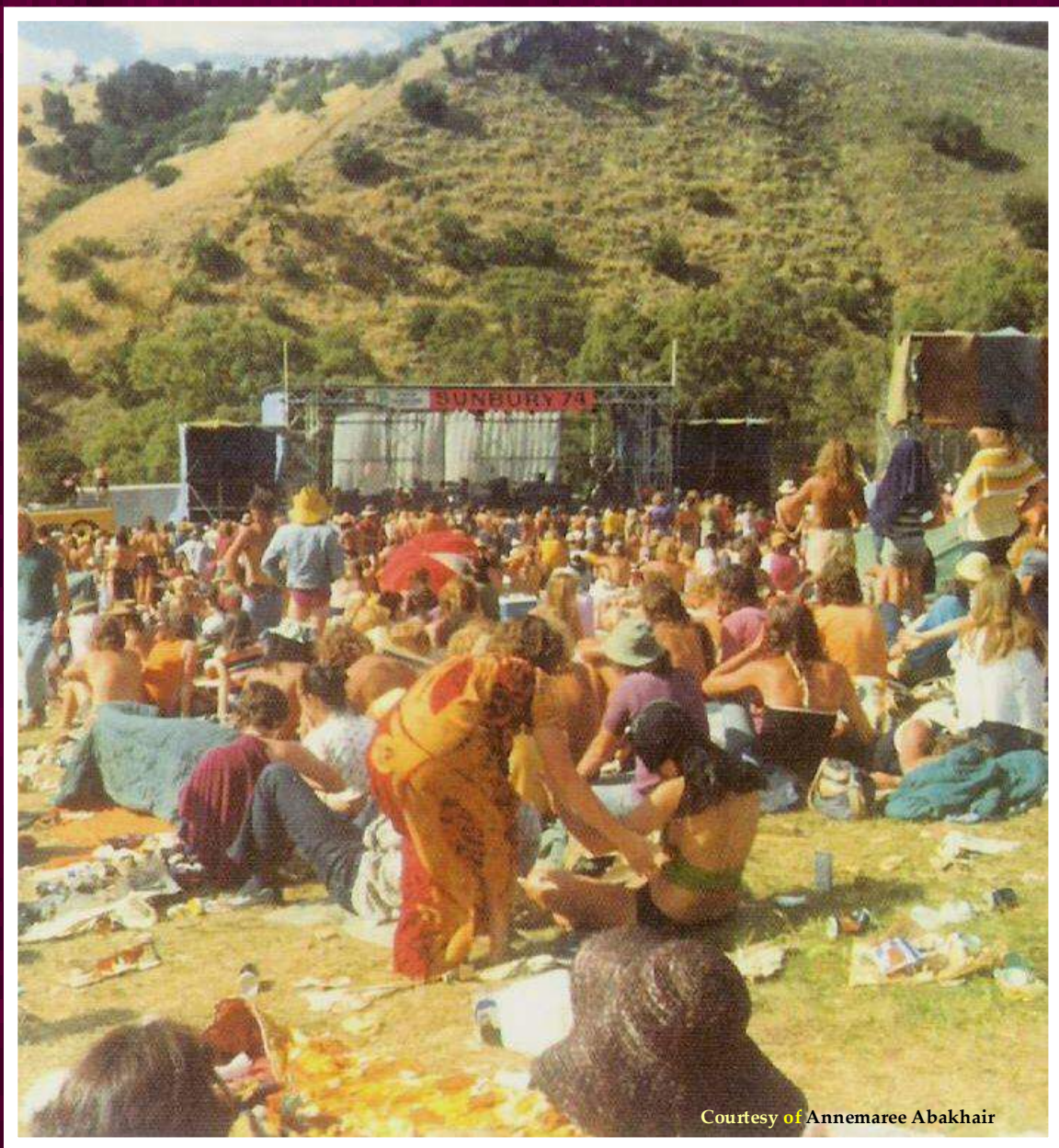


THE
MELBOURNE AND THE ROCK 'N' ROLL REVOLUTION 1965-1976

the thumpin' tum berties sebastians
garrison the catcher/traffik the t.f.much ballroom
the biting eye opus/the reefer cabaret
suburban discos sunbury music festival and much more

Jeffrey Turnbull



Courtesy of Annemaree Abakhair



EDGEWOOD PUBLICATIONS

THE WHOLE FRUGGIN' SCENE - MELBOURNE AND THE ROCK AND ROLL
REVOLUTION, 1965 TO 1976

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**THE
WHOLE
FRUGGIN'
SCENE.**

**MELBOURNE
AND THE ROCK 'N
ROLL REVOLUTION -
1965 TO 1976.**

JEFFREY TURNBULL

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO MY LONG-SUFFERING WIFE,
KAYE,
TO OUR CHILDREN,
GLENN, BRONWYN AND JENNIFER
AND OUR GRANDCHILDREN,
KYLE, BRIANNA AND BRODIE.**

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Foreword

Discotheque

Pronunciation. (Dis-ka-tek)

-n.,

French - record library, *discothèque*, from Italian *discoteca* - record library. Coined from *disc* + *bibliothèque*.

“A nightclub that features dancing to recorded or sometimes live music and often has flamboyant decor and elaborate, sparkling lighting.”

It might just surprise you that the “discotheque”, (or later “disco”) wasn’t invented by The Bee Gees or John Travolta for Saturday Night Fever in the mid ‘seventies. Nor were these clubs invented in the early ‘sixties when beat music took hold in London and Paris. The first Discotheques were opened in Paris as far back as 1929 and they acted as places where both records and live music could be played. American jazz, in particular became popular during World War II, until the musically uncool Nazis occupied Paris and shut the discotheques right down. It then became downright dangerous to be seen on the streets carrying American jazz records. All this repression tended to drive discotheques underground where they shifted locations and times frequently, until the end of the occupation in 1944.

Skip along to 1964 when a whole new era of discotheques was launched. The famous Whisky-A-Go-Go Discotheque opened up in Los Angeles’ Sunset Strip in an old, three storey former bank building. The place featured Go-Go girls dancing in cages as in similar clubs which had already appeared in Paris. This created somewhere new for people to congregate after dark. Johnny Rivers was the opening act at The Whisky and The Doors, with Jim Morrison – the house band!

The trend spread to Australia by 1965, and Melbourne found itself in a major discotheque revolution headed up by The Thumpin’ Tum, Berties and Sebastians. The phenomenon that was the British pop invasion created a fresh, new attitude toward going out. Therefore dancing once again took off!

Were these clubs and venues actually called discotheques here in the early days? Many advertised themselves in that manner, yet numerous Melburnian kids did not refer to them in that way at all. Certainly in the mid to late ‘sixties, no one referred to these places as “discos” – that terminology came later.

Fruggin’

Pronunciation: (frOOg),

—n., v., *frugged*, *frugging*.

—n.

A dance deriving from the twist.

—v.i.

“To dance the frug.”

I feel the need to explain this for the uninitiated. Taken from the opening night poster for The Thumpin’ Tum discotheque, *fruggin’* was literally the act of doing THE FRUG, a rather obscure dance which emerged in London about the time of the first discotheques there. It was one of many short-lived dance crazes which came and went with great rapidity. The Twist was its ancestor but The Frug came through another weird dance step, The Chicken, which in turn was a variation on The Twist.

The problem was that as dancers grew tired, their feet gradually came to a stop and only their hips moved. So to make it look like they were dancing, ‘teenagers began to move their arms, thereby inventing many new dances. In quick succession, along came The Swim, The Monkey, The Watusi and The Jerk – all with differing arm movements and all very short-lived.

However, The Frug and fruggin’ have left their marks not just on the opening day poster for The Thumpin’ Tum in Melbourne, but elsewhere. Based on an old French Art Nouveau print, this poster echoed the retro décor of some of these discotheques.

An appropriately obscure ‘nineties Los Angeles band, Rilo Kiley had a tune called, *The Frug* and the 1968, Shirley MacLaine movie, *Sweet Charity* contained a song called *The Rich Man’s Frug*. Even the B52’s monster hit, *Rock Lobster* contains the lyrics,

Everybody’s rockin’
Everybody’s fruggin’

So with that out of the way, we can get on with it....





The Thumpin' Tum

Berties

Sebastians

The Catcher

The T.F. Much Ballroom

Opus - The Reefer Cabaret

The Biting Eye

Garrison

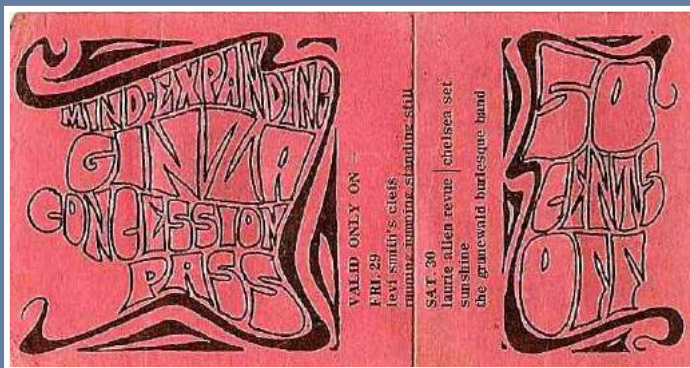
**GO GO TO BE SEEN
AT THIS SWINGIN'
FRUGGIN' SCENE**

**your very
personal invitation
to come to**

**THE
THUMPIN'
TUM
DISCOTHEQUE**

*The music is earthy and
scorching,
the dancing is expressive '65 time,
the dress is frug a-go-go.
Open Wednesday through Sunday from
8.15 p.m. till The Tum turns out
Melbourne's night lights.*

**50 LITTLE LATROBE STREET, CITY.
ADMISSION 10/-**



Introduction:

This book was written to pay tribute to those who pioneered the sounds which have come to characterise Aussie music and who played to the enthusiastic, young Melbourne crowds in the 'sixties and the early 'seventies. Melburnians have always loved to go out "on the town" – which often meant dancing the night away to orchestras and dance bands throughout wars and depressions: through the good times and the not so good times.

Unfolding within these pages is the story, or as much of the story as I could paste together, of the great era of musical experimentation which resulted in the establishment of literally hundreds of live music venues around town, in the suburbs and out in country centres.

Many of the legendary bands of the progressive rock 'n roll era emerged into the spotlight in these years from around 1965 to 1973, gave us their music and then disbanded – some have been all but forgotten, some will never be forgotten. The places they played at in a live context, became more than just four walls and a roof in this period – they were an integral part of the exciting and vibrant scene around town and these venues took on a life of their own. In many ways they shaped the lives, loves and futures of many of us without us realising it at the time. Many of the bands' stories have been documented – not so the venues and festivals they played at. I hope to make amends for this oversight with this book.

Prominent among the crowds of 'teenagers who spent their Saturday nights at the likes of The Thumpin' Tum, Sebastians, Berties, Garrison, The T. F. Much Ballroom, The Catcher and The Biting Eye, 10th Avenue, The Q Club or Opus were the individual musicians, many of whom are still active in the music scene in Melbourne in 2006 and can tell numerous stories – tall tales and true. Likewise the patrons – the ordinary punters - who enjoyed the scene and the music, can recount from memory many milestone events in their lives which revolved around the clubs and discotheques of this fascinating decade – truly part of the soundtrack of their lives. Without the fans who paid their dollars to experience this music live, the scene would not have happened at all. Mostly, I have tried to let those who were actually involved, tell their stories and much of what you will read is from THEIR words.

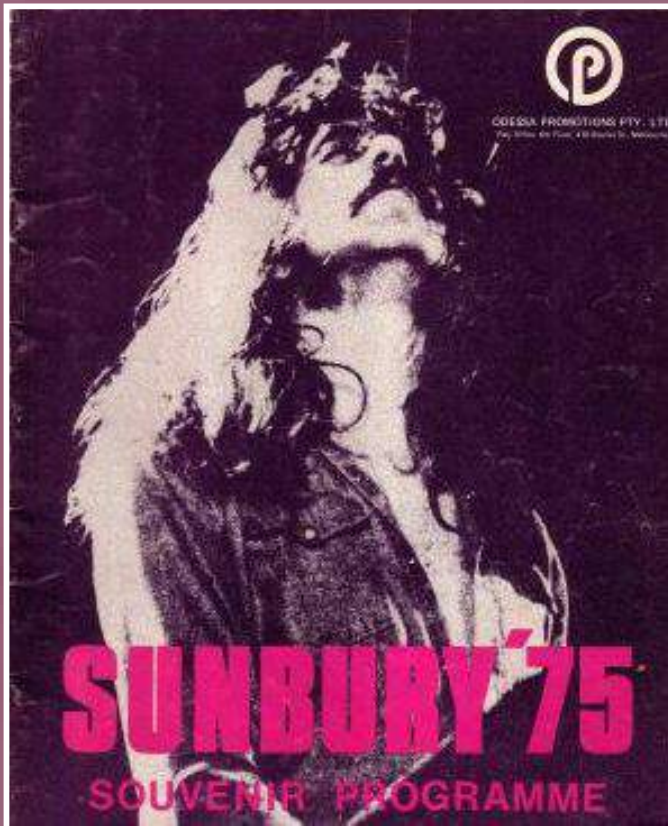
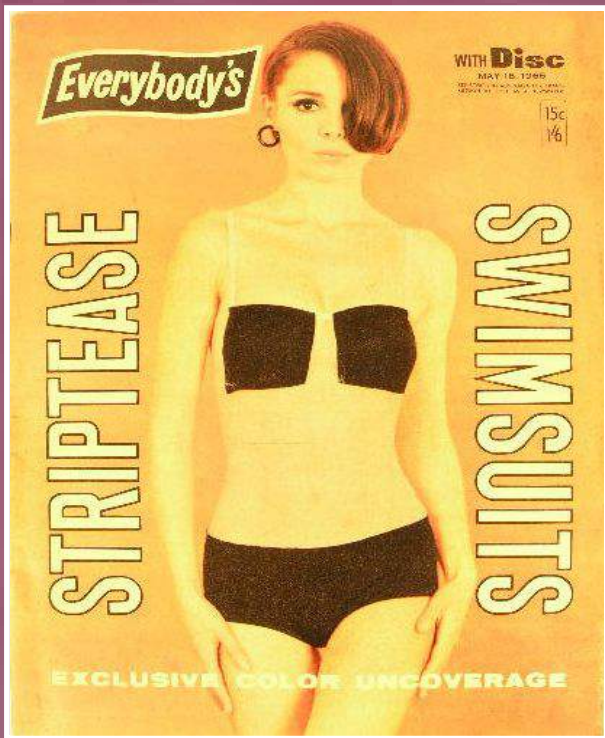
I've set out firstly to tell the stories of these venues but equally, I have tried to place this era in the context of the Melbourne music scene over many years in order to draw the connections and visualise the progression over time. From the Charleston era of the 'twenties, through the Big Band age, early Rock 'n Roll, the Jazz Revival/Folk music, Progressive Rock to the final stage for this book of the Suburban Beer Barns – the tradition which led to the establishment of the inner city discothèques is viewed as a continuum.

It is necessary to set the discos and dance venues against the thematic backdrop of social change and growing up in the 'fifties, 'sixties and 'seventies. However, this book is not intended as a complete social history of Melbourne at the time. I have, on the other hand inserted some of my own limited experiences to compliment the many contributors who have willingly offered their stories. They stimulate far more interest in the times than I am able to.

There will always be a degree of nostalgia for something which has shaped our past and should not be lost to the future – the life and times of the great discotheques of Melbourne is no exception. The journey through these pages is uniquely Melbourne, from the influences which created musical experimentation to the outdoor festivals which sprouted and blossomed under a truly pulsating music scene.

Jeffrey Turnbull, 2006





MELBOURNE – BEFORE ROCK AND ROLL.

Melbourne has always been known as the capital of live music in Australia. (Well.. I think so anyway!) If it's anything to go by, the international novelist **Anthony Trollope** who visited Melbourne way back in 1871, described Melbourne as not only the capital of Victoria but of all Australia! I like to think we can also lay claim to being the undisputed entertainment capital of the nation as well. Our citizens have flocked to see great and (sometimes not-so-great) acts from lands far across the seas and our classic and popular theatre industries have been – and still are - as vibrant as any in the world.

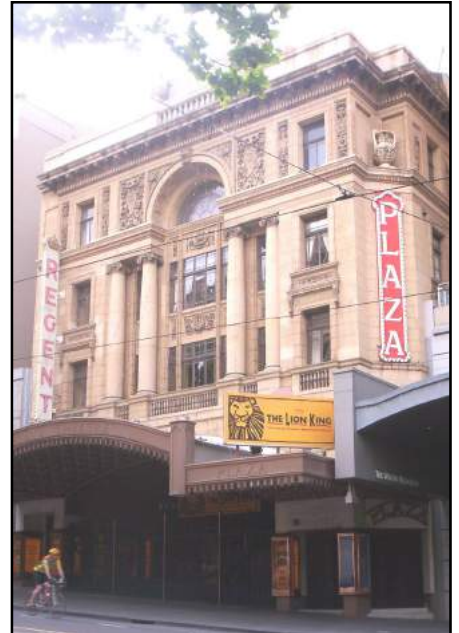
Probably further back than anyone can now remember, Victorians have been turning out in their droves to see and hear acts from America, Britain and Europe in all types of venues from beer halls in Ballarat to classic Melbourne Baroque theatres such as **The Princess** in Spring Street, **Her Majesties** in Exhibition Street or **The Regent**, Collins Street. Diggers downed their shovels and picks and joined the crowds from nearby goldfields that turned out to see songstress, **Lola Montez** when she visited Ballarat at the height of gold-fever in 1855. She was the mistress of classical composer, **Franz Liszt** and her 'Spider Dance' was considered a sensation in its time.

She had toured Europe, appeared in New Orleans and on the Californian goldfields, building a hefty reputation before landing here. Irishman **William Craig**, in his memoirs, *My Adventures On The Australian Goldfields*, (1903) made the following comments about her audience after one particular performance:

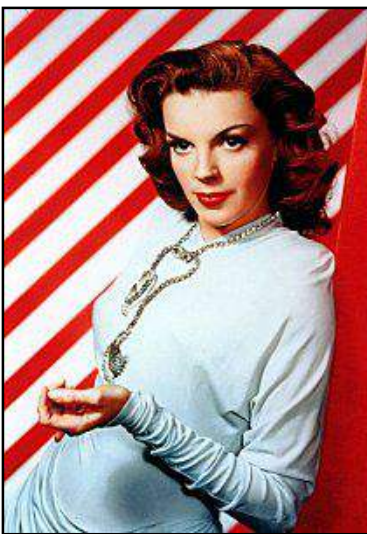
"The burst of applause that greeted Lola's appearance has subsided and scarcely a sound is heard ... The diggers are intently watching her. ... Lola's delivery is somewhat imperfect and not understood by many of her patrons. But they are in a good natured mood. ... they exhibit an amount of forbearance for shortcomings ..."

Clearly, the desire to hear the best from overseas had been the catalyst for the diggers – but she wasn't necessarily that good after all. Somehow though, they would tolerate it. This attitude was to change over time as home-grown talent sprouted in this country and acts from overseas – the 'flavour of the month' if you like, regardless of the era – were matched on equal terms with the best we could muster.

The belief that 'because they were stars on the world or American scene, they MUST be good' was evident for a long time – but some overseas acts were not able to live up to that reputation, (can anyone remember **Fabian?**). The great **Judy Garland** was at the end of her career when she toured Australia in May, 1964. In fact, this tour virtually brought the curtain down on her turbulent career - and life. Clearly not well, Miss Garland had been suffering the affects of pills and booze and her appearance at Melbourne's Festival Hall developed into total farce. **Chuck Berry** had toured Australia and on the return plane to America, wrote *Back In The USA* making it clear that he was very happy to be out of Australia



The restored Regent Theatre building in Collins Street.



The great Judy Garland at the height of her popularity. (Studio Publicity photo)



Theatre program from The Princess Theatre, 1928.

– thoughts echoed later by **Joe Cocker** when his 1972 tour ended in disaster and his arrest for marijuana possession. The Who's **Pete Townshend** vowed never to revisit this country again, after a disastrous 1968 tour where the



Dame Nellie Melba –
(Photographer
unknown)

band's behaviour, manners and complete lack of respect caused them to be sent home in disgrace. But by 2004, Townshend had had over thirty-five years to think through his decision and finally returned – perhaps all was forgiven.

There was clearly something about our laws, our police and our press which grated on some overseas artists or was it just *their* attitudes, their drug use and their wild, unbridled behaviour which ran against our character? Maybe it was the challenge for them to bring a little anarchy to such a staid cultural backwater.

Maybe it was the inane questioning by the media on their arrival which usually commenced with asking visiting rock stars

what they thought of Australia, just minutes after landing in the country for the first time. During the same **Who/Small Faces** tour in 1968, one Sydney journalist directed his question to **Faces' Ian McLagan** – “Mr. McLagan. Is it true you're a drug addict?” How tactless can that be? Maybe it was the cult of celebrity whereby rock 'n rollers felt safe once beyond their own shores to behave like... well.. tourists! Whatever the reasons, these overseas “stars” and their attitudes contrasted sharply with the harder-working local bands that had something yet to prove and they set out to do just that.

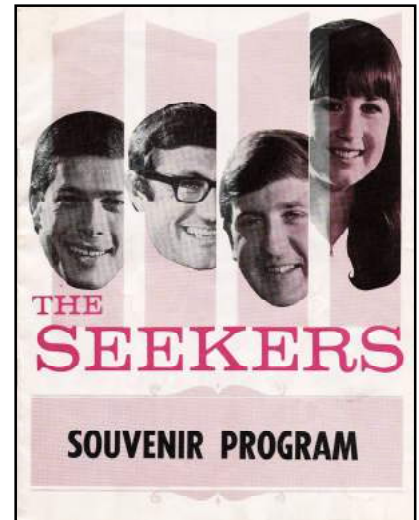
On a number of occasions, particularly in the post-World War II era, when Australian acts were relegated to support status on the bills for visiting stars, they were sometimes able to equal them or even outshine them on stage. Those who were at the Sunbury Festival in 1974 would remember how an unknown British group named **Queen** was booed off stage because the crowd wanted to see **Skyhooks** go through their antics and not some second-rate Pommy band. (Okay... okay, so Queen was *never* second-rate – but at this time Aussie bands ruled!). At the Mulwala outdoor festival, Australia's **Carson** served it up to visiting American boogie band, **Canned Heat**.



**The swashbuckling
Tasmanian,
Errol
Flynn.** (Studio
publicity photo)

Likewise there was the belief that to “make it” in the big time, an Australian artist or act had to do well on the overseas stage, namely Britain or America. Witness those over the span of time who have – **The Seekers**, **Russell Crowe**, **Men At Work**, **Dame Nellie Melba**, **Sir Robert Helpmann**, **Rolf Harris**, **Peter Weir**, **Barry Humphries'** and his constant companion, **Dame Edna**

Everage, **Kylie Minogue**, **The Bee Gees**, **The Little River Band**, **Errol Flynn**, **Keith Urban**, **Geoffrey Rush**, **Nicole Kidman**, **Guy Pearce** and **Hugh Jackman** (now there's a interesting mixture of characters and talents!) – but remember those who tried but didn't quite get the breaks they needed to catapult them to international fame – bands like **The Easybeats**, **Normie Rowe**, **Procession**, **The Groove** and **The Masters Apprentices** to name just a few. This doesn't mean that they weren't good enough – we all know that they were – it's just that the breaks didn't come their way and often the lack of solid planning or just the sheer incompetence of those whose job it was to promote and manage them, critically diminished



The Seekers – our first great
pop music export group.
Cover for their back-home
tour of 1968. They appeared
at The Palais, St. Kilda – 8 to
13 January. (Courtesy of
Graeme Eadie)



**Strike me Lucky – It's
Mo! (alias Roy Rene.)**
(Publicity photo)

their chances. On arrival in London, many Australian bands and solo artists who were “stand outs” at home found that they were just one of literally hundreds of similar acts all trying to achieve the same goal – to become rich and famous pop stars.



Sheet music for *That Certain Party* as featured at Melbourne's Green Mill on Princes Bridge. (Author's collection)

To succeed in the biggest markets and return home as heroes was of paramount importance at this stage – you MUST do well overseas to be fully accepted back home in Australia. Fortunately, that doesn't necessarily stand as a yardstick of talent anymore although it doesn't stop our artists from still 'giving it a go' overseas. Melbourne audiences have learned to stick closely with their local heroes – but it is still good to make it in the 'big time'. Back in the 'twenties and the era of Vaudeville in Melbourne, Australian artists such as comic, **Roy Rene (Mo)**, with his stage-paint beard and leering eyes, vocalist **Gladys Moncrieff** and slapstick comedian, **George Wallace** reigned supreme at the Tivoli in Bourke Street, yet they had no international profile. A few comedians and singers who tread the boards at "The Tiv" went on to make the transition to the new medium of television, in various roles – some did not.

Steppin' out with my baby...

Dancing and entertainment were high on the sometimes limited social agenda of Melburnians, probably stretching back to the days of the 1850's Gold Rushes at Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Ararat and Beechworth. Perhaps something can be made of the influx of Irish diggers who loved dancing and their subsequent contribution to the tradition of social dancing and drinking. During both the

Great Depression and then World War II, going to a dance was a great night out for servicemen on leave and their girls. During the 'forties, the numbers were swelled by American servicemen on leave from their respective Pacific theatres of war, who sought out local girls – "Liberty Belles" or "Victory Girls" to partner them in the new dance crazes they often brought with them.

There was no better place to go for a night out in Melbourne at this stage than the entertainment "complex" which developed just across Princes Bridge. Bounded by St Kilda Road to the east and City Road on the South Melbourne side, this wedge of land gained a reputation as the place for fun and games, enjoyment and dancing, circus' and merrymaking. Now the site for **Victoria's National Gallery** and **The Melbourne Concert Hall**, it once played host to thousands of dancers who flocked almost nightly to the glamorous, **The Green Mill** which had opened up its huge dance floor to an eager public for the first time in 1926. For over a decade, it was the highly fashionable Mecca for the "Jazz Babes" and "High Steppers" as the athletic young men and women of the era were known around town. With its mock Dutch windmill



The old Glaciarium skating rink – a full house in the 1930's – from a postcard of the period. (Author's collection)

entrance on the pointy, northern end of the strip facing the Yarra River and the city, **The Green Mill** often boasted world class local orchestras and dance combos as the decadent dancers swung their way through **The Charleston**, **The Quickstep** and **The Black Bottom**. Prominent among the orchestras, and now all but lost in time were **Martin Kett and his Green Mill Orchestra** featuring vocalist **Netta Rodney**, **Harry Jacobs and his Palais Pictures Orchestra** and **Art Chapman and his Rex Cabaret Orchestra** featuring vocalist, **Dick Cranbourne**. The

jitterbug, an enthusiastic and acrobatic dance craze, which developed from the Lindy hop, was only for the sharply dressed, extremely fit patrons – but what a way to show off your dancing prowess.



Renowned Australian Band leader, Frank Coughlan, 1936. (Publicity photo)

A mysterious fire destroyed part of **The Green Mill** in 1941 but it failed to damage much of the dance floor and the venue quickly re-emerged, phoenix-like as **The Trocadero**, (known to all simply as “The Troc”) serving the public until it eventually closed its doors for the final time in the late ‘fifties – seemingly a victim of the new

medium of television. As a timely spin off for the well patronised dance floors, many dance schools and studios sprung up in the suburbs to keep the suave, new high steppers up with the latest dance moves.

The Lido in

Collins Street boasted the best teachers and **Leggett’s** in Prahran took in the thousands of beginners and also offered them a dance floor and bands as well, to hone their skills. Further out, **Manressa Hall** in Burwood Road, Hawthorn held its Saturday night dance in a packed hall – with so many dancers it was difficult to actually know what went on in the middle of the dance floor where nobody could see! (Use your imagination here.)

As a result of the booming popularity of social dancing, it developed into a pseudo-sport and became regulated with the new associations conducting many exhibitions and dance competitions and establishing the “rules” for dress and etiquette on and off the dance floor. With the arrival of big bands, social dancing took on a new format



Manressa Hall, Burwood Road, Hawthorn, pictured in 2005 – one of the best suburban dances in the ‘forties!

inside the dance halls and clubs. Besides the swing orchestras at **The Troc** and **The Palais-de-Dance** there were trios and solo vocalists; male and female were featured. The Jazz Waltz, Foxtrot and Quickstep alternated with more exotic Latin, Rumba and Samba rhythms to create a seemingly never-ending array of steps to choose from. Later still, newer dance steps mixed it with the traditional and the concept of 50/50 dances was born and prospered through to the sixties. Essentially, one section of the evening’s program or one part of the dance floor could be set aside for new dance moves. In the case of **The Box Hill Town Hall** during the ‘sixties, the upstairs hall hosted a 50/50 dance and the lower ground floor simultaneously became **Peppers Discotheque**.



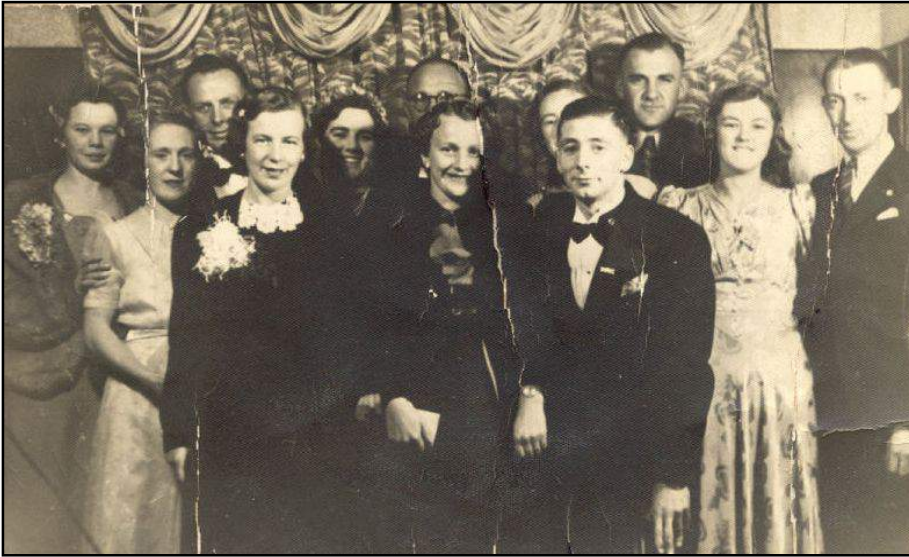
The Palais de Dance on the Lower Esplanade, St. Kilda with the Palais Theatre and Luna Park in the background. Taken in the 1930’s. The Palais de Dance has since been demolished. (A Rose Series Postcard – author’s collection)

Fashion was an essential part of the stepping-out ritual – high fashion for the blokes as well as the girls. **Wardrop My Taylor** created the suits for the

men; usually three-piece with long Gabardine overcoats for cooler winter evenings and polished, patent leather pumps were essential for “swanning” on the dance floor after handing the overcoat into the cloak room.

Fletcher Jones, in Flinders Street had established a reputation for supreme excellence in clothing and many young males left this tailor’s shop dressed “to the nines” after being personally measured and fitted with a single buttoned or double-breasted suit. Clearly, sartorial elegance was a key to a great night of dancing ‘til the wee, small hours. Girls dressed up for the occasion as well with flowing gowns of organza and taffeta with red roses and corsages of orchids being popular to wear.

The Princes Bridge complex also housed **The Glaciarium Ice Skating Rink**, where skaters could elegantly glide over the ice or struggle to keep their bums dry, depending on their level of expertise. **The Palais-de-Danse**, in St. Kilda was designed by renowned architect **Walter Burley Griffin**, whose best known creation is our nation’s



The author’s parents, Lesley and Bill Turnbull, (both far right) at a Palais – de-Dance Ball, 1937.

capital, Canberra. Built and opened in 1925 with a floor that could cope easily with 2000 dancers, **The Palais-de-Danse** reflected the enormous interest in social dancing which developed during the ‘twenties.

It was a favourite frequent destination for our most notorious gangster, “**Squizzy**” **Taylor** who loved dressing up (or down to his spats) for the occasions. Located on the beachfront and facing the Lower Esplanade, **The Palais-de-Danse** sat adjacent to **The Palais Theatre** (which it almost matched in design) and nuzzled close to **Luna Park**. The classical art-deco

Palais-de-Danse, later demolished to build the Palace Night Club (which now hosts thumping Techno dance beat)

was a building which ignited the desire to get onto a dance floor no matter what the ability of the individual, to shake a leg. Matching its next door neighbour in elegance, **The Palais-de-Danse** over the decades hosted too many dance evenings to calculate. Companies held their Annual Balls there and Melbourne Cup eve saw the magnificent Masked Ball prior to race day at Flemington.

Such was the popularity of dancing as a recreation in the Melbourne community that dances were held in these elegantly and elaborately, decorated palace-like ballrooms every afternoon of the week plus Saturdays. It should also be remembered that there were many other dance halls in the pre –rock ‘n roll era which were not so chic, yet still catered for the late night steppers in a level of elegance which has largely been lost over time.

To the north of the city, **The San Remo Ballroom** created a little bit of old Italy for the post-war Italian migrants who began settling in and around Lygon Street, Carlton. For city goers, **The Railway Ballroom**, located centrally at Flinders Street Station offered another venue although, by all accounts it was not as classy as the others and



The San Remo Ballroom – still functioning today in Nicholson Street, Carlton.

eventually it fell into decay and disrepair. Along with the movie houses and cinema entertainment, dance halls were at the peak of their popularity and it's impossible to say with any conviction that folks didn't have their fun times in an era when longer working hours, post-war austerity and family responsibilities were significant factors for most workers. This seems to be the key – it was just a matter of letting their hair down on the weekend after a hard week's work for the blokes and a way of attracting attention with that new dress for the young ladies.

MELBOURNE – IN THE 'FIFTIES AND 'SIXTIES.

Ava Gardner, sultry screen starlet in the post-War decades came to Melbourne with **Gregory Peck** and other Hollywood notables on location in 1959 to make the film version of Neville Schute's book, *On The Beach* about the last city standing in a nuclear conflict - definitely a product of the Cold War. She declared that if anyone wanted to



Lobby card from *On The Beach*, shot entirely on location in and around Melbourne.

make a film about the end of the world, there could be no better place than Melbourne – oooh.. Ava, how could you be so cruel?

But maybe she was right in some ways – she just didn't need to say it so tactlessly! Perhaps this is really what overseas visitors saw in us but we didn't immediately recognise ourselves – or want to recognise. We didn't like to hear that about ourselves, especially from a visitor who wasn't here long enough to blink her sassy eye lashes, let alone to get a good taste of the city.

True, Melbourne at the time had a degree of quaintness, a certain air of sophistication and an old-world conservativeness as borne

out in our buildings, our traditions, our laws, rules and regulations and cultural icons. Victoria's Premier

from 1955 to 1972, **Sir Henry Bolte**, a political cartoonist's delight, typified the "establishment" of the time – hard-nosed, arrogant, seemingly unfeeling, callous, arch conservative in nature and delivery and coasting along on the expanding, good times while generally being fully supported by the majority of Victorians who obviously liked it that way, (except for the more radical fringe-dwelling teachers and trade unionists).

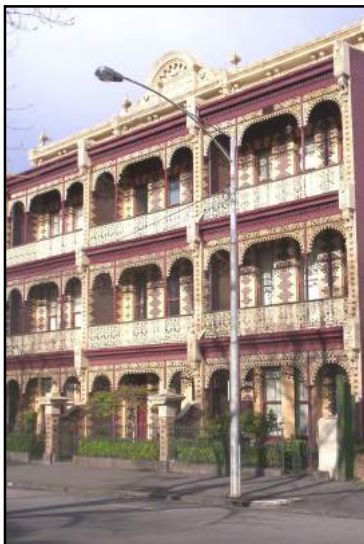
Delicate, nineteenth century, cast iron lacework and ornate brick and stone edifices built on indestructible bluestone foundations, fronted the wide streets and narrow laneways, typifying nineteen-fifties Melbourne and its inner suburbs when other cities around the world were erecting huge towers of glass, concrete and steel. Melbourne however, was beginning to undergo a gradual cultural change as migrants from Europe as well as from Britain

began to impact with their new ideas of food, living styles, dress and culture. Trams still ruled the city centre but traffic, in the form of the motor car was beginning to take hold. Everyone still religiously

shopped at **Myer, Foys, Coles** or **Georges** and ate upstairs at the **Myer Cafeteria**, met 'under the clocks' at Flinders Street Station and snacked on **Downeyflake Donuts**.



Victorian Premier, Sir Henry Bolte. (Source unknown)



Typical of Melbourne's stately late-Victorian houses – terraces in Carlton.

The sound of **Whelan The Wrecker's** jack-hammers, however, were beginning to transform the city skyline as



The face of Melbourne – Flinders Street Station on a quiet Sunday morning. It housed The Railway Ballroom.

particularly to the east, and the city virtually “closed for business” at 5 o’clock every weekday with an almighty rush hour, leaving the city silent and gloomy – something that left visitors from cosmopolitan Europe and America rather perplexed at this quaint ritual.

“Where can a bloke get a drink at this time of night?”...

We were still truly Victorian in name, tradition and outlook. Shops closed at lunchtime on Saturday and didn’t open again until Monday morning. Banks shut at 3pm, (4pm on Fridays – no ATM’s). Worse still – pubs shut at 6pm – the time of the infamous, “six o’clock swill” when drinkers would line up their drinks at 5 minutes to six because it was illegal to serve alcohol after 6pm – sorry... no drive-in bottle shops either! This was later changed to 10pm closing.

Okay, we were ascetically a city of “wowsers”, probably blissfully unaware that there was any other standpoint one could take on the matter and we were quite proud of it. Restaurants were limited in both the city and the suburbs to a few Chinese take-aways serving Chow Mien and spring rolls (you had to take along your own pot or saucepan) and at the other end of the scale, were traditional high-class dining establishments such as The Windsor which the vast majority of middle-class suburban families could never even consider entering.

Like the pubs, none of these establishments were able to serve liquor after hours. The great Aussie “counter tea” – a traditional “roast beef, lamb or pork, three veg. and gravy” meal for a few bob was still available – although only for the blokes when they sat at the bar and drank their pots of beer. Ladies and children, if they ever tagged along to these “watering holes” made the menfolk somewhat uncomfortable and were assigned to the Ladies Bar next door. Therefore the “little lady” was expected to stay at home, look after the kids at the end

much of the nineteenth century architectural heritage began to crumble and disappear forever in piles of rubble. Interestingly enough, when the live music of the progressive rock period began to take hold in the mid- to late- ‘sixties, a small number of enterprising businessmen took an interest in some of these dark, dingy and in some instances, derelict buildings which had not yet come under the destructive influence of Whelan and his wrecking crews. The old stone warehouse building which became **The Catcher** in Flinders Lane is one example. These places were appealing and potentially profitable to rent as music venues and some were redecorated to create **discotheques** – (as the new venues were called).

But Melbourne was still a city open only for work and leisure on weekdays from 9am to 5pm. Everyone lived in the burgeoning suburbs



GMH’s advertisement for its new 1964, EH Holden Station Wagon. It wasn’t recommended that you park on a beach, but look at the crowd you could draw!

of the school day and wait 'till her husband rolled home after a night out with the boys, often less than sober. But, the "wowsers" still ruled – Sunday in the city saw the pubs officially closed and it was nearly impossible for anyone to get even a half- reasonable breakfast because cafes were few and very far between. Only the 11 o'clock bells chiming from St. Paul's in Flinders Street, St. Patrick's at the top end of the city, St. Francis and other churches spread throughout the CBD would break the city silence, as they called the faithful to prayer and worship. All the VFL footy matches had been completed the previous afternoon as the game was played ONLY on a Saturday afternoon – without lights or a retractable roof – leaving the family to enjoy the Sunday roast dinner at home or to visit relatives. On better weather days they could pack a picnic lunch and the tether tennis set in the **Holden** and head off to the nearby Dandenongs or to Rosebud by the bay – the "Sunday drive" as the major occupation for the day, became known. At this time, an American visitor was prompted to describe Melbourne in the fifties as "about half as big as New York Cemetery and twice as dead." Bingo!

In 1959, **Mike Brady**, who was to go on to form **MPD Ltd** and write the huge sporting anthem, *Up There Cazaly* speaks about his first impressions of Melbourne after arriving at Port Melbourne's Station Pier. He remembers as an eleven-year-old, his first trip with his family into the city after arriving onboard the *Strathmaver* in July, 1959 from England. It was a Sunday and there were no petrol stations, restaurants or movie theatres open and no organised sport. He had his first hamburger at the only café they found open in the C.B.D. He did remember being impressed with the size of The ICI Building just opened in Albert Street, East Melbourne – at 20 stories the tallest building in Australia! He also remembers desperately wanting to return home to England. (Brady, author's interview, 17 may, 2006)



Mike Brady – publicity shot.

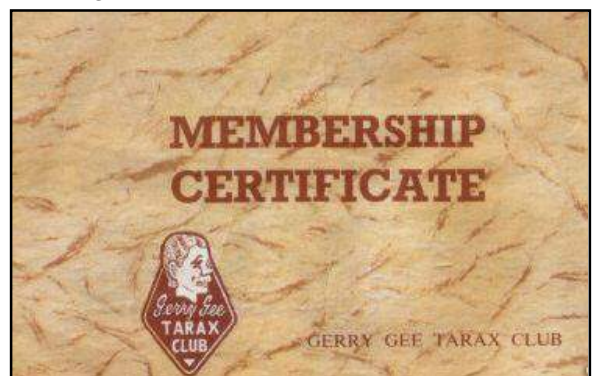
Milk bars, movies and nostalgia...

For most, the local Milk Bar – our equivalent to America's Drug Store - sold everything else kids wanted, from Fags, Blue Heaven malted milks, Choo Choo Bars, Fantales, Sunny Boys, WhizzFizz, Jaffas and White Knights to crackers on Empire Day or Guy Fawkes Day – provided you could wait until it opened on Monday morning. They were more than just a convenience shop. Tarax soft drinks were the beverage of choice for youngsters and what's more, in a pre-recycling, pre-plastic bottle era, you could collect the empties and return them to the milk bar for money – which you usually took in lollies and not necessarily cash, unless you were saving up for something special. Each afternoon, after school, you could tune in to Channel 9's **Tarax Happy Show**, hosted by finger-snapping, "Happy" Hammond, with **Ron Blaskett** and **Gerry Gee**, **Uncle Roy** and "the girl next door", **Patty McGrath**.



Every kid's favourite TV show host – "Happy" Hammond. (Publicity photo)

It's difficult now to realise how regional and local our lives were at that time. Our whole existence was within walking distance of our houses or just a short bike ride away. Everywhere else seemed a whole universe away. Even our parents with cars only travelled to and from work and there was the



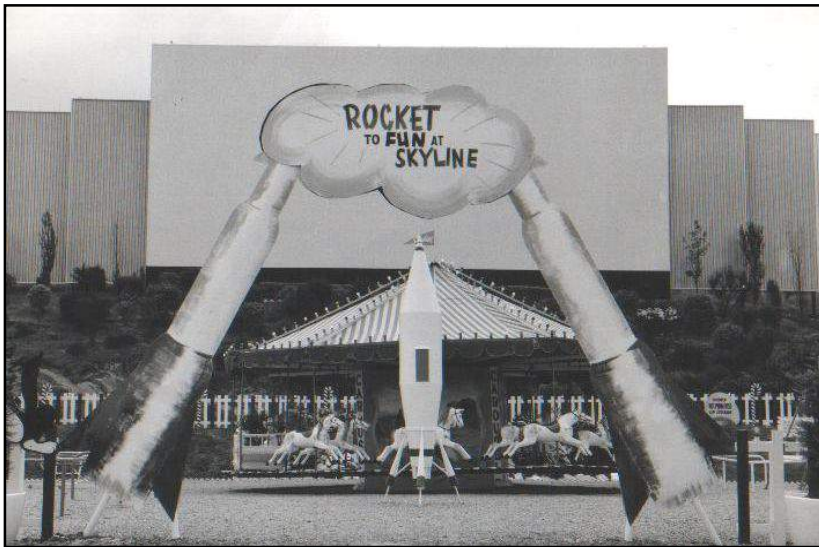
occasional weekend trip upcountry to visit relatives or to the beach on those hot summer days when on the way home, you got chaffing from all the sand left in your bathers and you had to put a towel over the blisteringly, hot vinyl seats in the FC Holden.

A trip to the city was an event. There was the Saturday arvo movie matinee at the local picture theatre. Unlike today with Hoyts and Village Movie complexes clustered together in many of the major suburban shopping

centres; it seemed that every suburb had its own single cinema complex with the usual flashing-bulb, Hoyts sign out front giving it an illusion of sheer Hollywood glitz and glamour. Mine just happened to be the Civic in Ashburton - an art-deco edifice which was demolished in the 'seventies to build a Shell petrol station and it has sadly faded to just a memory. But, in my childhood, it was a great way to spend an afternoon with your mates - no girls or baby sisters allowed. (Going to a movie to sit in the back row with a girl was a few years away yet). Yes - rolling Jaffas down the aisle DID actually happen.

It seemed that you got far more for your money than at "the flicks" - heaps of cartoons, serials like *The Blackhawks*, *Jet Jackson*, *Tarzan* and a feature or two - nobody cared that they were old, in black and white or that they were most definitely American "B" or "C" grade movies. No problems loudly cheering the goodies and "booing" the baddies. I remember marvelling at how many Indians fell from their horses usually from a single six-shooter pointed skywards with just one shot from a leather-chapped cowboy bouncing at full gallop on a white horse - now how did they do that? What's more, we could go out to the back of the theatre after the movie was over and find our Malvern Star bikes still there, leaning against the brick wall of the theatre exactly where we had left them.

Off in the other direction and not too far away from my home was the first drive-in picture theatre built in Australia, the spectacular Hoyts Skyline at Burwood, opened in 1954 on Burwood Highway near the intersection of Elgar Road. By the time we were old enough to ride our bikes safely along Damper Creek, we found that we could sneak in the back way at the Drive-In and sit in the bus shelter seating that was set up at the back near the fence and watch the movies for free. If the speakers were turned up loudly enough on the cars just in front, we also had free sound - and in multi-directional stereo. Drive-ins were an integral part of 'fifties and 'sixties culture with most drive-ins packed out in the summer months and they even got good crowds there in cooler weather.



Australia's first Drive-In movie theatre - The Skyline at Burwood showing the BIG screen. - (Photo courtesy of David Kilderry, Drive-Ins Downunder, photographer unknown.)

- does anyone remember doing that? No wonder the Holden Sandman eventually became such a hit on wheels. This was the time of Baby-boomer adolescence when everything was new and exciting - movies, cars and music and! Below is a list of things gone by - but how important were these as we were growing up. Can you remember them?

Cottees, Tarax, Marchants and Loys soft drinks



Lex Barker as Tarzan - hero of the Saturday arvo matinees at the local picture theatre. (Studio publicity photo)

As we got older and at least one of us got a car licence, like most youngsters we tried the trick of hiding in the boot of the car or even laying down low on the rear floor to avoid paying at the drive-in ticket box. I don't remember ever getting caught. Once inside, laying out on the car bonnet against the windscreen under the clear, starry skies on those clear, balmy nights was just the ultimate experience. If you could borrow the family station wagon you could back it up the little incline towards the screen, lower the tailgate and relax on the pillows and mattress you had brought for the occasion

bike clips for long pants when your bike didn't have a chain guard

9.

party phone lines and letter prefix phone numbers like BU 1234

Metro bubble gum and "Fags" lolly cigarettes

being forced to wear clean undies by mum in case you had to be taken to hospital

Catherine Wheels, Tom Thumbs, sky rockets in milk bottles, jumping jacks and tuppenny bungers

thruppeny bungers for demolishing letter boxes around the neighbourhood

stereograms and Pye Black Box Hi-Fi with detachable speakers

milk, home delivered in bottles with foil tops - pecked through by magpies to get the cream

Kodak Instamatic cameras and blue Magic Flash Cubes

corks in popguns and clip-on roller skates with keys

FJ, FX, EH and HR Holdens and LJ Toranas

Hopalong Cassidy, Bob and Dolly Dyer, Gerry Gee, Zig and Zag, Joffa Boy and Princess Panda
you could put a tiger in your tank

crystal sets and short wave radios

eating the marshmallow first on the top of a Chocolate Royal

lime spiders and Paddle Pops

Enough of this. As Julie Andrews sang, "...these are a few of my favourite things."

Don't look now but we're being watched...



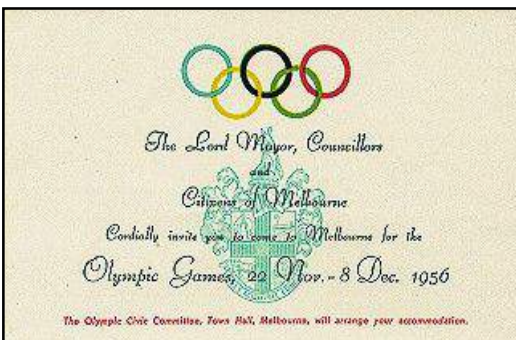
Back in 1956, Melbourne grabbed the greatest coup in its history, with both hands, - staging the **XVI Olympic Games**. It was also *the* pivotal point in our social and cultural history because we had to stand up to be scrutinised and be accountable on the world stage for the first time - our humble city had to change its image somehow to appeal to the tens of thousands of highly critical and discerning overseas visitors who would descend on Melbourne for a couple of weeks and then return home to tell others of their experiences - the good and the not so good.

These were not the P. & O. Line and Sitmar shiploads of sponsored British migrants who had no choice but to take us as we are, but cashed up international visitors, who expected to be treated on an entirely different level, with which we had little experience. Melbourne had a few underlying concerns. Few, if any Melbourne hotels matched the world benchmark and their level of sophistication was to be rather overstated in advertising to potential Olympic visitors. Grandiose claims were made to prospective guests



The King of radio, then of television - Graham Kennedy. (Publicity photo)

about the standard of accommodation available for them; claims which we were just not able to meet in the long run.



With the Olympics came the mesmerising spectre of television, (although by all reports we could have had it much earlier than 1956). The new TV stars - a good-looking **Bert Newton**, the incredibly witty **Graham Kennedy** and the evergreen battler **Ernie Sigley** (themselves all former radio announcers), could have easily

put paid to the days of radio domination were it not for the youth audience, the new and emerging music, the Hit Parades and of course, 'Stan the Man' - **Stan Rofe**. Sigley's *Teenage Mailbag* aired each weeknight on 3DB. The *Kommotion* TV show was live... yes!, but mimed when it was recorded at the new **Reg**

10.

Ansett TV station/studio, ATV O which had just been built in outer-eastern Nunawading. This 'teen show gave **Ian Meldrum**, a likeable young bloke and Cheer-Squad leader with the St. Kilda footy club, his first chance in front of a television camera. *The Go!! Show* was a sort of stable mate to *Kommotion* and was compared by **Ian Turpie**. **Ken Sparkes'** *Kommotion* aired nightly, during the week, running from 1965 until 1967 when miming (or lip-syncing as it's now known) was banned on Australian T.V. (Such a shame it was too early for **Milli Vanilli**).

It's a blackboard jungle out there...

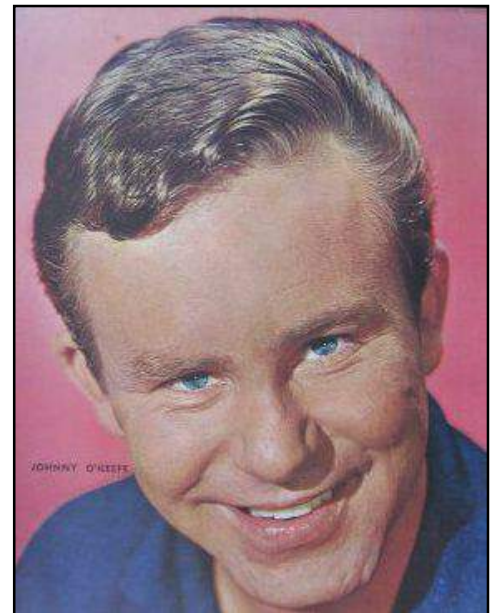
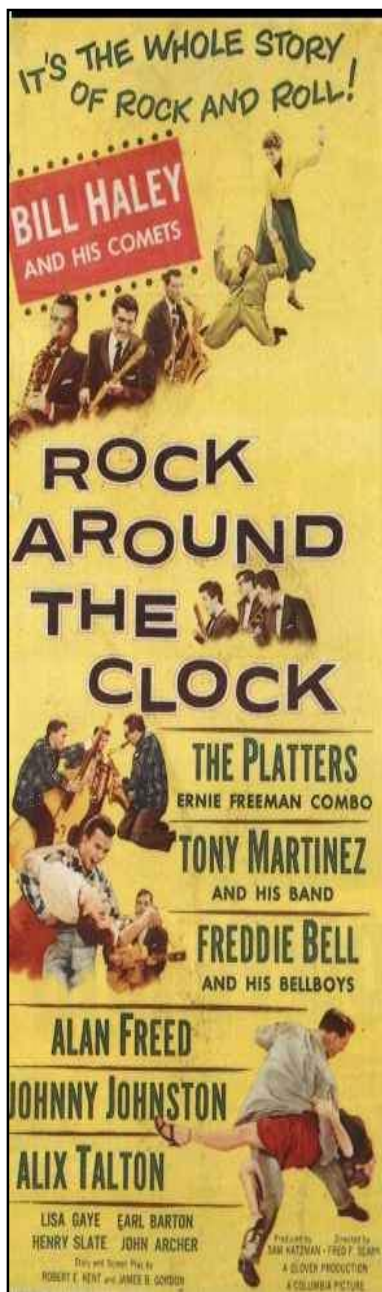
Equally, as Melbourne's and indeed, Australia's baby boomers began their adolescent years from 1960 onwards, arguably the most defining decade in the nation's twentieth century history was about to unfold

with the major theme being – *change ... and plenty of it*. Music was at the forefront of the new, youth cultural revolution which would see these teenagers begin to reject all that their parents and the establishment stood for - and why not, the oldies had led us into two world wars and a major depression, surely we could do better given the chance! World leaders were considered “war-mongering autocrats”, we had been taken to the brink of nuclear war and space was the ultimate frontier. We were engaged in yet another war, this time in far-off Vietnam. Protesting, both passive and active began to become a standard feature of the exciting new youth culture.

By 1960, the first wave of jean- and leather-clad rebellion had already exploded and impacted on the young minds and lives of the times. They were fired up by a new trend towards youth movies like *Rock Around The Clock*, *The Wild One*, *Love Me Tender*, *The Blackboard Jungle* and the rock 'n roll sounds of **Elvis, Bill Haley and The Comets, Chuck Berry, Gene Vincent, Little Richard, Eddie Cochran, Jerry Lee Lewis** and our own **Johnny O'Keefe**. These were the jukebox years but unfortunately, I was still too young to appreciate this – and in any case, **Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, The King And I, Carousel** and **Mario Lanza** still ruled the stereogram in our lounge room.

Over the years, the story behind Melbourne's early rock 'n roll scene has been largely ignored or has been relatively overshadowed by what was happening up in Sydney. This is to do a grave injustice to those who *were* part of a vital and potentially fertile early rock 'n roll landscape developing in this city and around the suburbs. There was most definitely a vibrant rock culture operating in Melbourne, probably about the same time as Sydney was experiencing the influx of the new beat. To most people however, the harbour city and not Melbourne seemed to be the natural glide-path into Australia for the American rock 'n roll music which, by 1957 was catching on fast as we were cast under its spell.

Johnny O'Keefe, who had started out in the music business as a Johnny Ray impersonator, shone like a beacon in the night when he perfected his own stage



Rock pioneer Johnny O'Keefe who made his mark in both Sydney and Melbourne, (Source: TV Week)

act and began recording himself. Although there was still that belief that all things good came from America and those who tried to be rock 'n rollers in Australia were but pale

11.

imitations of the real thing, J O'K went a long way towards establishing a strong foothold for top local artists to



Pioneers of rock – Bill Haley and his Comets at the time of recording, *Rock Around The Clock*. (From a publicity photo)

prove that they were as good as overseas acts. To give him his due, despite vocal limitations, he really kicked open the door for other local rockers to follow him through. He very quickly established a reputation as “our king of rock ‘n roll”. Soon **The Deltones, Johnny Devlin and The Devils, Lonnie Lee, Digger Revell and The Denvermen, Judy Stone, Ray Hoff and The Offbeats and Col Joye and The Joyboys** together with many other Sydneysiders were having chart success and plenty of it. The rock revolution was underway.

Melbourne’s establishment was forced to take notice as teenage rock ‘n roll dances began to spring up in local town halls, Mechanics Institutes and empty church and scout halls around the suburbs. Just about every suburb had its Saturday night rock ‘n roll dance. All music was, of course made up of cover versions of hits by **Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Elvis, Bill Haley and The Comets** and others, as no original material was being written anywhere in Australia at this time. When Festival, W & G and Leedon Records began recording local (Sydney) artists, these bands and singers were often picking up and recording little known songs by American rockers or Blues artists - for example *Shout*, (1959)

written by the **Isley Brothers** of *Twist And Shout* fame and never a huge U.S. hit, became an ideal vehicle for **Johnny O’Keefe’s** wild and outrageous vocal style.

By 1960, Melbourne had its first regional shopping centre – Chadstone – complete with the first outside broadcast booth, 3UZ’s “fish bowl” studio. It was here during the second week of November that same year that unprecedented scenes of suburban pandemonium occurred when O’Keefe visited the brand new shopping centre for a flying, promotional stopover. Following near riot scenes at Essendon airport on this day, his impromptu motorcade of leather-clad local bikers escorted him down Mt Alexander Road and through the city to Chadstone where fans mobbed the car, forcing the driver to retreat to a neighbouring side street and O’Keefe was escorted into the centre via a back door. The newly landscaped, pristine glass fronted 3UZ studio was in danger of being wrecked. However in the end, only the railing around it and the gardens suffered from the rampant fans, desperate to catch a glimpse of J.O’K who was just soaking up the adulation and was *loving it!*

I had wanted desperately to attend my first live concert with my school mates – we planned to miss school to see and hear J.O’K. at The Melbourne Town Hall, after I couldn’t get my parents to let me have a day off. This was despite the standard response from us when questioned – “its okay with all the other parents, so why can’t I go?” It didn’t work in the end for any of us and I guess in light of the times, I *was* still too young to be



you wouldn’t know from my photography. Taken at Essendon Airport, November 1960 on his arrival for a series of concerts and appearances.

involved in that sort of stuff. I did however, convince my uncle to drive me all the way from the eastern suburbs to Essendon Airport to see The Wild One who was my very first rock idol, arrive from Sydney on his 13 12.

November flight for that visit. I remember the day well – there was high excitement as the plane touched down and after he disappeared from view into the terminal, I sprinted flat out with my new Kodak camera around to the front of the airport just in time to see him drive past and out on to Mt. Alexander Road. I took a few quick snaps as his car went past. I was now clearly hooked on this rock 'n roll stuff.

The Preston Town Hall and beyond...

At the beginning of the rock movement, 50/50 (or 60/40) dances were springing up throughout the suburbs. These catered for many styles and one section of the dance floor would be set aside to try out the new music and the new dance steps while other dancers could foxtrot or tango the night away if they so desired. There were "growing pains" for the new rock music as rock pioneer **Billy Owens** who was there at the start reminisces:

BILLY OWENS: "Getting our music going in those days was no mean effort. Some kids had to sneak out telling their parents they were going ball-room dancing, which was not entirely a lie. Most early rock 'n' rock was played in a 50/50 type venue where a small corner of the dance floor was allotted for those who wished to dance to the "new music". (Owens, www.billyowensau.tripod.com)

But rock 'n roll in 1957 was beginning to take a firm hold and soon, the teenagers were demanding their own exclusive venues and their own music.



A young Laurie Allen with Malcolm Arthur and The Knights - before the whole Bobby and Laurie story began. (Courtesy of Bonnie Griffiths)



It hardly looks like a great dance venue. Today, the old Glen Iris RSL building, opposite the Glen Iris station is now the Model Railway Hall. But, from 1958 to 1962 it hosted the extremely popular Esquire dance.

Early promoters, often with little or no experience in the business were soon running regular rock 'n roll dances at halls – Town Halls such as **Coburg, Springvale, Malvern, St Kilda, Essendon** and other places like the **Glen Iris RSL**. Still situated in Wills Street this place now backs onto the Monash Freeway on-ramp which has been built at the rear of the hall. An unpretentiously small, single-storied, flat-roofed, building, it housed the local returned servicemen and women and was hired out at various times. It is still surrounded by the old Cyclone wire fence. Today, its modest looks belie its origins as an original and respected, suburban dance hangout.

However, the **Preston Town Hall**, which was on a grander scale, was "the" home of the new music and is said by many to have been the place where rock 'n roll was first *seriously* played in Melbourne – by **Johnny Chester and The Chessmen**. Long before he played drums with the legendary **Daddy Cool**, **Gary Young** cut his teeth at places like Preston, Glen Iris and Malvern with his band **The Silhouettes** and then **The Lincolns** doing Shadows covers and acting as backing band for a number of solo singers:

GARY YOUNG: "These town halls were the only places that catered for rock bands. There were places out at Croydon and The Glen Iris Rock – RSL halls as well. Malvern Town Hall, Preston and The Circle Ballroom would probably be the biggest of those venues. We were like.. instrumental bands... a take on The Shadows and being pre-Beatles, we weren't even vocal groups, just backing stars like Merv Benton and others. So if you had a job at say ... The Preston Town Hall, the band would get there on a Saturday afternoon and conduct a rehearsal with

the singer or singers, (it was not unknown to back four different artists in the one night.) So they'd all lob up in the afternoon and you'd run through the songs. Then the band would actually kick the night off themselves doing like ... a bracket of instrumentals by The Shadows or The Ventures. Then the singers would come on stage and do

13.

maybe at the most, four numbers each. This was years before the discotheques like Berties or Sebastians and before any bands played at the hotels. It always amazes me that the kids were so into the music and the fashions of the day... particularly the mods, that they would go along there and they didn't need to get pissed to enjoy the music." (Young, author's interview, 3 October, 2005)

The Preston dances like all others, had to finish well before midnight. They were compared by **Stan Rofe**, who



The Preston Town Hall where Johnny Chester and his Chessmen ran their own dances and first played to the youthful crowds in 1960.

was there and actively involved in both the radio scene and the world of live dances at the very start of the rock music incursion into Australia. There were also rock dances at **The Arcadia**, High Street, Thornbury, **Earl's Court** on the Upper Esplanade, St. Kilda and **Federal Hall**, Nicholson Street, Footscray, and these places were all regularly packed out on a Saturday night from as early as 1957. The Arcadia, in fact, may have been THE place where rock 'n roll was FIRST played in Melbourne, although it's quite a debatable point and depends on just who is being consulted.

As previously noted, alcohol was not available nor sold at any of these venues during this period – it was not only the tradition but the law – six o'clock closing. That's not to say that Melbourne rockers were also wowsers – to the

contrary. Alcohol could be bought earlier but those youngsters who attended the early rock dances, still didn't indulge in drinking alcohol to a great extent. (Some may have other memories!) Maybe a few bottles were cracked in the car parks or out in the streets around the dances but in general, nothing more serious than that.

There were the ingenious few who realised that by half emptying coke bottles and topping them up again with whisky, they could get around the no-alcohol ban. At this stage, rock 'n roll and chocolate malteds served at the local milk bar seemed to go together as naturally as vinyl, chrome chairs and laminex tables.

However, the dances soon gained a reputation as rather wild places to hang out at after dark. It was not uncommon for patrons to sort out differences outside the venues and at other times inside the dances - even in front of the stage as the band played:

BILLY OWENS: "Melbourne in those days was very Victorian in attitude. Sydney had Band Stand and Six O'clock Rock; we had "6 o'clock closing". Even the venues were alcohol free and the dances finished at 11.30pm. The dances in those days, on a good night, traditionally finished with a punch up out the front; on a bad night, there were a few of them inside. Several fights would break out inside, often spilling onto the stage. Scary stuff, especially when I had Bob Hargreaves (manager) yelling in my ear "keep singing!" Not easy to do when needing to change underwear." (Owens, op cit.)

Billy Owens recalls that while playing in probably one of our first rock 'n roll bands to hit the circuit, **Billy Owens and The Autocrats**, it was not



Johnny Chester is THE original Melbourne rock 'n roller. A publicity shot from about 1962. (Courtesy of Johnny Chester)

unusual for some of his band mates to dive from the stage, head-first into any fracas with fists flying when something started in front of them. He recalls that without them on stage, the band often sounded better!:

BILLY OWENS: "My first band (members) were limited in their talents. Our manager was a canny old Scot named Bob Hargreaves, a very clever man who, if he had pursued a career in the music industry, would have been

14.

Early Rock 'n Roll in Melbourne...

BILLY OWENS
and his
THUNDERBIRDS

HAROLD FRITH, Drummer
HENRI BOURGE, Sax
CHUCK GOLD, Guitar
MURRAY ROBERTSON, Piano
GORDON ONLEY, Bass

You've heard them at
Earls Court
Brunswick Town Hall
Festival Hall
On TV. & Recordings

**Brunswick Town Hall
Casual Dance
Every Thursday
THROUGHOUT 1961**



They were there at the beginning ...

Billy Owens and The Autocrats, then The Thunderbirds, (top right and centre right). They played the dance circuit including The Arcadia and Federal Hall. (Photos and poster courtesy of Billy Owens)

Johnny Chester, out front on vocals with The Jaywoods, before they became The Chessmen. Rockin' it up at the Pascoe Vale RSL Hall - early in 1960. (left) (Photo - Jean Dale, courtesy of Johnny Chester)



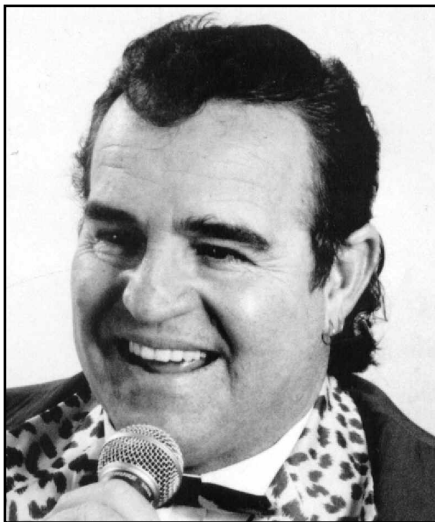
15.

a great success, but like the rest of us, he came along too early. The fame and riches came in the 60's. Mr Hargreaves only blemish in my eyes was having his sons, Bruce and Kenny in the band. Bruce played slap bass. He got the slap part right, but the strings just got in the way. Kenny played rhythm guitar, problem was, he only had three fingers on his chord hand. Perhaps that was a blessing in disguise. The one thing about the Hargreaves boys that stood out, was when a fight started, they'd down instruments and literally dive off the stage into the fray. I always believed that was the only time the Autocrats sounded half decent. Let me make it clear, I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Autocrats. It was a super learning curve under the wily guidance of Bob Hargreaves, and they were paying me 4 pounds a night." (Owens, op cit.)

Also prominent amongst the early Melbourne rockers were: **Colin Cook, The Planets, Bev Dick, Johnny Chester and The Chessmen, Bobby Cookson and The Premiers, Phil Golotta, The Allstars, Wayne Nelson, Judy Cannon, Malcolm Arthur and The Knights**, (whose guitarist was **Laurie Allen**), **Billy O'Rourke, Margie Mills and Betty McQuade** (who had a later hit with *Midnight Bus*). Any or all of these artists can lay claim to the prestigious title of "Pioneers of the Melbourne rock scene" and carry that with distinction and a great deal of pride.

Owens, as mentioned above, commenced with **The Autocrats** sometime in 1957 at the legendary Acadia Ballroom, Thornbury in the heartland of rock 'n roll. Then in 1958, he left this band after being invited by **Harold Frith** to join **The Thunderbirds**. These early rockers built a strong platform for the new music across the Melbourne suburban area:

BILLY OWENS: "When Harold Frith approached me to come see his Thunderbirds, who were playing to a handful of people in a tiny hall in Coburg (Progress Hall), I jumped at the chance. It was not because of lack of

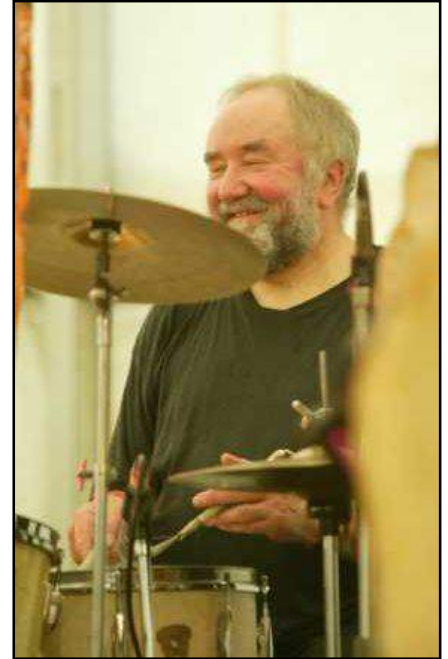


Billy O'Rourke, Melbourne's wild boy of rock. (Courtesy of Ian B. Allen - Archives)

success. I was playing to packed crowds at the Arcadia and the Federal Hall. I think the time had come for me to find the next step musically. As I said, the Autocrats were purely a visual band, great to watch. If Bruce and Kenny could have matched their antics on stage with a smidgen of talent, I'd probably still be with them at the age of 60. The moment I set eyes on the Thunderbirds playing to about six people at that tiny venue, I was hooked. I went from earning 16 pounds a week, to working for nothing. Kevin McClellan, who managed the Thunderbirds, asked me that night to join the band as lead singer. They already had a singer in Billy O'Rourke. I asked Kevin how Billy would feel about that. He said that he ran the band and if Billy didn't like it, he could jump ship." (Owens, op cit.)

Owens, after joining the Thunderbirds, which came through from a bebop and jazz background, landed a Festival recording contract and a guest spot on the **Fabian** tour – no doubt well and truly outshining the dubiously talented American, so-called "star" of the show. Billy and the boys got their chance in the recording studio and amongst the songs which the Thunderbirds put out were Owen's original composition, *Blue, Blue Woman* and the standard, *Lucky Ol' Sun*:

BILLY OWENS: "The Thunderbirds and I had immediate success. We achieved a recording contract with Festival (Rex), Sydney; the first Melbourne group to achieve that, and landed a spot on the Lee Gordon big show with Fabian, another first. The early Thunderbirds I joined consisted of Harold Frith, Peter Robinson, Murray Robertson, Colin Cook, and Laurie Bell. Shortly after, Laurie left the band, and Charlie Gould and Graeme Lyall joined us to



Harold Frith, founder of The Thunderbirds is still stroking the skins with The Pearly Shells Swing Orchestra (Courtesy of Steve Purcell)

form the greatest rock 'n' roll band in Australia. Believe me, I have heard them all. There was no better band than the Thunderbirds in this country." (Owens, op cit.)

16.

Mordi rockers and Customlines...

Nineteen fifty-seven was also the year that a local Bayside dance commenced at the Mordialloc Life Saving Club and this was typical of many dances which were sparking into life in any number of suburbs on Saturday nights. Named originally **Lighthouse**, then **Mother Goose** and finally **Shindig**, this venue lasted in its many forms for over twenty years. Its primary aim was to raise money for the Life Saving Club and at first, the dancers rocked the night away to records played by a DJ until a few local musos managed to form themselves into something like a real



The Mordialloc Life Saving Club rooms – from 1957, it was home to various incarnations of the Shindig dance—making it one of the earliest rock 'n roll venues operating in the suburbs. The bottom section was for storage and the top floor hosted the dance action.

band:

GRAHAM J. WHITEHEAD: "The beginning of the dance was modest, with recorded music being used, before moving to bands of live musicians, but the goal remained the same; raising money for the Mordialloc Life Saving Club to refurbish the club house after a disastrous fire and to purchase life saving equipment like reels and lines. Paul Meaney recalled that Stan Azzopardi was one of the foundation musicians who started playing the piano accordion. "They had a tea chest for a bass with a string on it, drums and an electric guitar with a ten watt amp. It was really remarkable because you have stereo equipment with more power than that nowadays." Bobby Cookson was the singer with the group called the Premiers, and he recalled the first night of live music when he sang Elvis Presley's song, 'Hard Headed Woman' and the crowd going berserk even though the performance

in his judgement wasn't that good" (Whitehead, City Of Kingston Historical Website, www.localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au).

As the dance progressed, its popularity spread:

GRAHAM J. WHITEHEAD: "The music that was played was basically rock and roll; good time music designed to keep young people happy. For Ian Lyons the music was just the best, 'it gave you a boost,' he claimed. From Tutty Fruity, (sic) all the Johnny O'Keefe numbers, Col Joy and Midnight Touch. Peter Grant described the music as 'great toe tapping stuff,... Even guys who didn't dance could get into the grove of it and have a bit of fun.' Greg Meggs described his dancing as a fairly free form involving shaking and spinning around, "but at times the place became so crowded as people moved shoulder to shoulder there was not much that could be done except shuffle. You could just stand there and jig a bit and twist a bit. There were those who really knew how to rock and people would move back and give them space and then admire the energy, combinations of moves and skill." But Michael Pierce acknowledged, 'When it was crowded it was very hard to throw your arms and legs around.'

(Whitehead, City of Kingston, op cit.)



The Paul Mackay Sound. They played at The Mordialloc Life Saving Club for many years. (Courtesy of Hazel Pierce)

'When it was crowded it was very hard to throw your arms and legs around.'

A couple of local bands which played at Mordialloc, achieved a degree of fame. **The Paul McKay Sound** was moderately successful elsewhere. **Colin Cook and The Premiers** also performed there many times. Playing 17.

at this dance from time to time was a local band, **Strings Unlimited** which had as its vocalist a skinny, blond, local kid with a big voice named, **Johnny Farnham**. Whatever happened to him?

Gangs of toughies were forming around this period and many came to local dances to do nothing but pick a fight and cause trouble – it seemed to be an accepted part of the night's fun and entertainment. At Mordialloc, several groups emerged and this illustrated how polarised the factions were becoming amongst the youngsters around this city. The participants often came from remote suburbs:

GRAHAM J. WHITEHEAD: "The dance on Sunday nights attracted teenagers, and some a little older, from all around Melbourne, not just Mordialloc. Many came from down the Peninsula, and from Collingwood, Brunswick and Prahran. ...there were at least four distinct groups attending the dance. 'There used to be the skin heads in one corner, they were the ones who had the short haircuts, the surfers would be in another corner, the jockeys and strappers in a third corner and the tough little ones with the leather belts and the studs and the rockers in the remaining section. But they all learned to live with one another.' Greg Meggs recalled the Mordi Rockers who could be found down the front of the hall. Greg and his surfing mates, in ignorance, looked upon this group with fear as 'they were dressed in black leather and used to drive Customlines and they would rock and roll. They were probably as peaceful as anyone else.' Although he was in one group he acknowledged there was a little interaction with other people on the edges. 'I guess when you are teenagers you are fairly shy and you stick with your peers. There were those who accepted you and you accepted them.' (Whitehead, City of Kingston, op cit.)

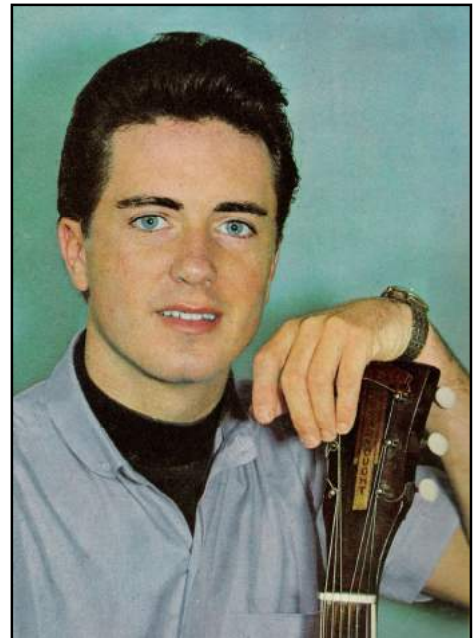
There is no doubt in the wide world that the young rockers were influenced by the growing cult of rebelliousness and gang mentality put forward by leather-jacketed Hollywood anti-heroes such as **Marlon Brando** in *The Wild One* and **James Dean** in *Rebel Without A Cause*. The local "hoods" began to find a street-wise toughness and a certain enjoyment in picking fights with rival gangs at local railway stations and dances. Later, those who leaned towards other forms of music apart from rock were legitimate targets for them as well; the less violent jazzers and mods.

At beachside Mordialloc, the Mordi Rockers reigned supreme while a little further north, there were The Jordie Boys from the Jordaville housing estate. The young Jordie toughs with their slicked back coiffures and leather jackets appeared in public with bike chains wound around their fists, carried iron bars and tended to create Saturday night havoc around local dances and functions in the Mount Waverley area when they felt like it. Then there were The Broady Boys in, well... where else but Broadmeadows! Again, the style was the same – greasy, black hair and leather jackets. It's scary to think that these blokes are probably greying or balding grandfathers now!

But the dances in Melbourne's northern suburbs could be *truly* scary! The major 'teen gangs around the suburbs seemed to gravitate there. **Bob Jones**, who later made his name through his security operations centred on dances, festivals, concerts and major events, had begun experimenting with dance promotions in the latter part of the early rock 'n roll era. He promoted a dance at Olympic Hall, the auditorium which had been built in the Heidelberg Olympic Village for the overseas contestants to use during the 1956 Olympic Games.

In 1961, "The Big Rock" was the name given to this dance which he organised with his partner, **Ron Blackmore** and it quickly attracted its share of attention from the local gangs, but one particular night has gone down in legend as the night of "The Big Brawl at the Big Rock":

BOB JONES: "The tell-tale sign of the gangs was their ranks swelling the Olympic Hall. Irrespective of what this venue had originally been designed for, the gangs were hell bent on creating their own blood sport. The Preston boys would congregate in front of the stage, perhaps the Northcote boys would hit the cloakroom, or maybe the Thornbury boys were assigned to the ticket box take of the night. ... Heidelberg would service the car park.



Melbourne's Colin Cook. (Publicity photo - The Australian Women's Weekly, 1 July 1964)

The faces milling around the centre of the hall would be from Reservoir. Among these Reservoir Boys would be the new recruits, including a younger member about to prove his worth. He'd be the one to wipe his sweaty hands,

18.

form a fist and throw his king hit at the target. A punch that he'd remember for the rest of his life.

This king hit was the signal for everything to happen at once.

Everything would be over within five minutes.



Hardly a ripple of trouble these days – the refurbished home of “The Big Rock” dances – the former Olympic Auditorium at the Heidelberg Olympic Village.

Outside, their getaway cars would be lined up ready for the five-minute exodus. Meanwhile, the Preston Boys came up to the stage in waves. Their job was to smash the equipment. ...

And the aftermath of this horrific five minutes of carnage: the cars of my patrons, mostly broken into; property stolen and damaged en masse; the Olympic Village Auditorium wrecked; our food stall tipped over and the takings stolen; and people everywhere, bloodied and injured, some seriously. The reception foyer was covered in broken glass from the floor-to-ceiling glass doors. There was blood along the floor, and splattered and smeared over the walls. People were unconscious everywhere.” (Jones, 2001, Pp 69 – 70)

Fortunately, during the era not all local, suburban dances produced chaotic scenes like this.

Trouble both inside and outside the dances was

not necessarily common place and many who regularly attended don't remember seeing many large-scale fights or even too many minor altercations. **Gary Young**, at this time, a drummer with **The Lincolns** was often still packing up his kit inside while any action was taking place outside. He remembers once however, at The Preston Town Hall taking the part of the Good Samaritan with almost dire consequences for him:

GARY YOUNG: “I was pulled up outside the Preston Town Hall one night. I was doing a gig there... got there a little early. I was with my girlfriend and we were sitting in the car. I looked out and there was this guy and probably his girlfriend on the footpath outside having a fight about something. He was pushing her around and my girlfriend at the time said, ‘... Well, what are you going to do about it? Don't just sit there.’ So I got out of the car and walked up to the guy, trying to look tough and I said, ‘Have you got a problem? He turned around and said, ‘Yeah, *you're* the problem!’ WHACKKK!!! He hit me so hard I couldn't get up off the deck! But I can't remember any really major, violent things happening at those gigs... I know they did happen but I can't recall being at one dance when something really big went down.” (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005)

But there were the lighter moments and **Bob Jones** remembers the time at “The Big Rock” when **Bobby Bright** and **Laurie Allen**, in their earlier days together, teamed with **Mike Brady** and his band:

BOB JONES: “They were working with The Harsemen and they were doing a coffin act. Laurie would lie in the coffin and Bobby would come out and do a few songs then get Laurie to rise out of the coffin with a bit of voodoo. Laurie often looked dead with that pale face anyway –

‘cos he lived on potato chips and Coke –then he would come out and sing with Mike Brady and The Harsemen.



Long before joining Daddy Cool, Gary Young was drumming with The Lincolns. Over recent years he has done afternoon radio on 3RRR.

Now, the coffin had been made for this gig on the Thursday before and locked inside Festival Hall. I was supposed to pick up the coffin on Friday morning for the gig that night at my dance ... couldn't find anyone with the keys to get in. So here's me with my long, flaming red hair and Zapata moustache and Bobby and Laurie with

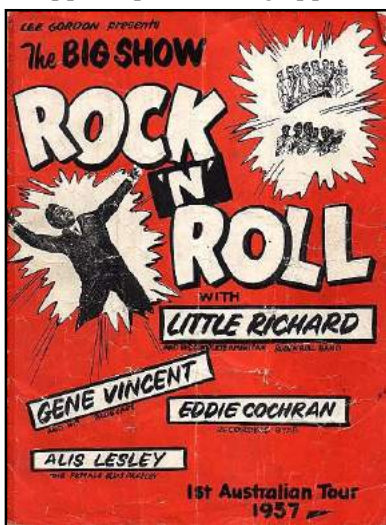
19.

the longest hair on any males in Australia, going along High Street, Thornbury, Northcote, Preston and Reservoir visiting every undertaker's funeral parlour. We knocked on the doors of every place saying, 'Hey, can we borrow a coffin for a couple of hours?' We're thinking... 'if we don't deliver this tonight, the crowd's going to kill us!'

Strangely enough, by the time we got to Reservoir, about the fifth place we visited, the guy saw the humour in the situation and lent us this spectacular satin-lined coffin – but we had to get it back the next day because it was needed about lunchtime!" (Jones, author's interview, 16 August, 2005).

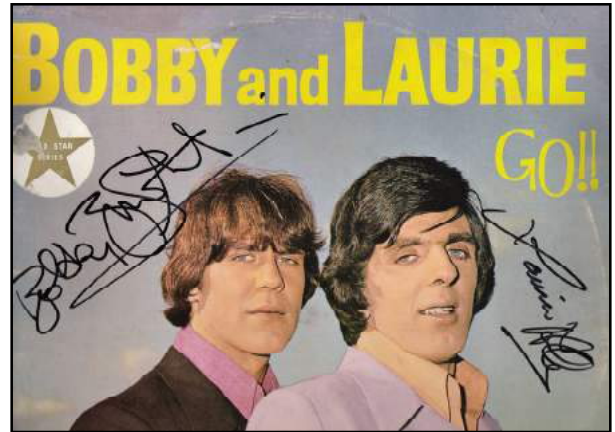
The Yanks cruise in...

With the coming of popular American music artists of the calibre of crooner, **Frank Sinatra**, singer/actress **Judy Garland** and teen sensation of the early 'fifties, the "*Cry Boy*", **Johnny Ray** (who visited here on tour in March, 1955), the trend for a time was for Australian fans to look towards overseas headliners for their idols. Melbourne managed a visit from the heavily promoted but aging, "*Mr. Mule Train*", **Frankie Laine** whose publicity machine intentionally whipped up something approaching teenage hysteria for him, when he toured in the same year as Ray.



LaVern Baker. Resident Australian act on the show was one, **Johnny O'Keefe** backed by his **Dee Jays**. J O'K, like thousands of Aussie teenagers had seen the film *The Blackboard Jungle* which had *Haley's Rock Around The Clock* as its theme. He knew that getting onto this bill was his big break into the world of rock music and he grabbed it with both hands.

J.O'K was on a steep learning curve and over hours of conversation while on tour with his idol Haley, he was given one of the star's songs to record with Festival Records – *You Hit The Wrong Note Billygoat*. However, when it was subsequently released, it failed to kick-start the Aussie's career in the hoped-for manner and perhaps it could be hypothesised that the public's intense fascination at that time with American entertainers and not Australian copyists was the reason it didn't sell well as a single. Better was yet to come for "The Wild One".



Bobby Bright and Laurie Allen with their Go!! LP from 1965 and autographed by both artists. Author's collection.

But **Johnny Ray** was a genuine sensation. With an unusually emotional act, a powerful voice and substantial hits to his credit, teenybopper fans went wild in their adoration for their idol when he was booked to appear around the country. Even the hearing-aid he wore did nothing to dint his sex-appeal – and few at that time knew he was homosexual. A crowd of ten thousand or so – mostly female fans - greeted the singer's arrival in Australia and the unrelenting screams followed him right around the land.

Despite the booming local scene, the trend towards all things American was to continue for some time into the rock 'n roll era as **The Big Shows** rolled into town with their package deals of instant idols. **Bill Haley**, even though he was nudging middle-age at the time of his greatest triumphs stormed into Australia on 8 January 1957, headlining a show which included **Big Joe Turner**, **Freddie Bell** and the **Bellboys** and



The hoards of screaming teenagers attested to the incredible following which rock 'n roll music was instantly generating in this country by the late 'fifties. O'Keefe, thanks to his liaison with promoter **Lee Gordon**, managed to become virtually the resident Australian artist on the many Big Shows which Gordon promoted.

20.



American-born Lee Gordon – pioneer in the Australian music biz. (Photographer unknown)

First up on 12 October, 1957 – three rock luminaries at the peak of their popularity arrived to a sell-out tour here – **Little Richard, Gene Vincent** and **Eddie Cochran** – what a hoot of a show that must have been! And what a life-changing event it was for **Little Richard** who had to come all the way to Sydney just to “find God”! It all got to him on tour where he experienced a life-changing revelation of some sort. There must have been one mammoth splash of tsunami proportions when he threw his glitzy, gold jewellery into Newcastle Harbour before returning to the US of A, disavowing his life as a rock 'n roller to become a minister of religion. Quirky.. huh?

Just a year before he met his fate in a 1959 plane crash, **Buddy Holly** with **The Crickets** toured with **Jerry Lee Lewis, Paul Anka** and **Jodie Sands**, (Jodie who?) in another of Gordon's Big Shows. They arrived in Sydney for a six-day summertime tour on 28 January, 1958. When they reached Melbourne, *The Melbourne Herald*, under the banner headline, “Stadium Shook To Big Show” described the West Melbourne Stadium spectacular on 4 February in glowing terms and boldly declared Holly to be the “undoubted star” of the evening. Billed as “**Lee Gordon's World Hit Parade**” it was a seven-day tour comprising 12 dates.

An impressionable, 11-year- old **Ross Wilson** was just one fan who sat in awe of his new heroes as they went through their paces on stage. The drive which it engendered in the youngster was to last a lifetime and propel him into the maelstrom of Australian rock music in the not-to-distant future. The moment, of course would

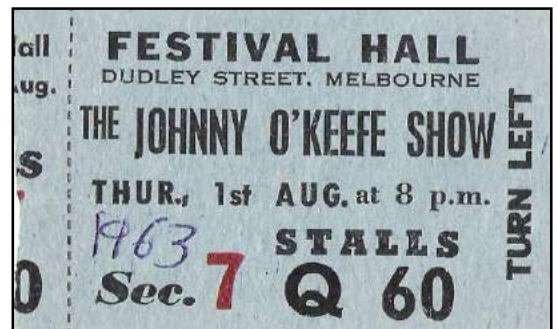
stay with Wilson forever and play a great part in the shaping of one of the great careers in Australian rock music history.

Holly is known to have made an appearance on Stan Rofe's 3KZ radio “Platter Parade” on the same day as this show hit the town. The following day, members of the tour recorded a limited concert



Johnny O'Keefe out in front of his Dee Jays. (Photographer unknown)

for radio station 3AW and this was broadcast later in February. During the tour, **Dave Owens** and



A 1963 Johnny O'Keefe ticket - Courtesy of Graeme Eadie.

Johnny Greenan of the **Dee Jays** wrote *The Wild One (Real Wild Child)* after one of their gigs ended prematurely in an all-in brawl. A few weeks later O'Keefe, who also was given writing credits, recorded the tune and it became the first home grown rock 'n roll song by an Australian to make the Top 40. The song gained “extra legs” later when the erratic American punker, **Iggy Pop** recorded his version and it has found its way onto a number of movie soundtracks including the **Richard Gere/Julia Roberts'** flick, *Pretty Woman*.

In these years, **The Everly Bros, Ricky Nelson, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison** and many other major American rock luminaries (and some lesser lights) came to our shores. Some, like **Billy “Crash” Craddock** (*Boom Boom Baby*) had a very limited (in fact negligible!) fan base at home. But ... they were wildly popular here thanks to strong radio airplay and they toured into the late 'fifties and early 'sixties in the Big Shows promoted by Gordon, the rather eccentric, ex-pat American who had picked up Craddock in a parcel of entertainers like picking up a bargain at a garage sale. He managed to get a tape of Craddock singing *Boom Boom Baby* and supplied this to

a bargain at a garage sale. He managed to

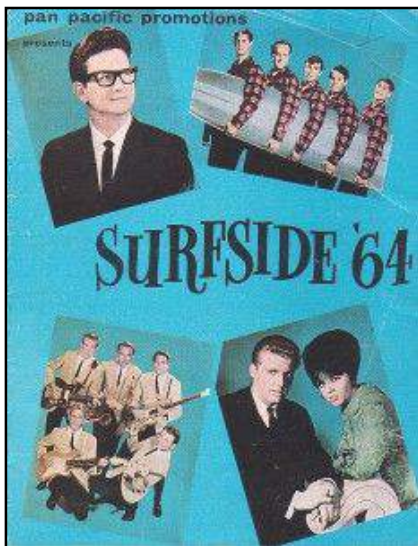
Brian Henderson to play on *Bandstand* on a Saturday night telecast. By the following Monday morning, all seats for the Sydney Stadium concert had been sold. After surviving a near riot at Sydney Airport, Craddock was literally stunned to find that he was actually *headlining* the whole show!

21.

Gordon himself had made around \$160,000 for the tour and Craddock had only cost him \$2000 per week!

For the fans, package deals were the way to go in those days – you often got three, four or more stars on the one big show; the minimum criteria apparently being that they needed to have had at least a solitary number one hit and that they were, “all the rage” at that time. In 1961, **Bobby Rydell** headed up the “All American Rock Spectacular” which toured Australia. It was another “Big Show” with **Brenda Lee**, **Duane Eddy**, the “Twist” king **Chubby Checker**, and tagging along for the ride, **Col Joye and the Joy Boys**.

Sydney rocker, **Lonnie Lee** who had national Australian hits in 1959 with *Ain't It So* and *Yes, Indeed I do* was also a favoured local inclusion as was O'Keefe and Joye on some of these bills, including the **Fabian** tour for which Lonnie was paid a total of \$150 for six shows – great money in 1959. In 1966, **Lonnie Lee** reflected on the changes that the Americans had brought to our show-biz scene:



LONNIE LEE: “I think, looking back at those early days that the biggest change in pop music is that it is now a business. There are managers, booking agents, and people to tell you how to sing, walk, talk, dress and live.

In the early days it was a buccaneering business, and you learnt the hard way. And if you didn't learn you were out, and there was no one to help you back in again.” (*Everybody's Magazine*, 11 May, 1966, P32.)



Over the decade or so of **Lee Gordon's** promotional career, Australia hosted not just a sampling of American and British rock 'n roll hierarchy but actually received visits from all of the top artists, (with the obvious exception of **Elvis**) – all at the height of their popularity and fame. Along the way there were also a few so-called “stars” that were a smidge beyond their “use-by”

date, but who still attracted a following. All of these tours included Melbourne on their itineraries and our renowned, “House Of Stoush”; The West Melbourne Stadium or Festival Hall as it was later known, hosted them all. At the time, it was the only venue in or out of the city capable of housing in relative comfort, the large crowds which were clamouring to see their idols – never mind the smell of liniment and stale sweat.

By the time **Harry M. Miller** had assumed Gordon's mantle for promoting pop music spectaculars, the concept of including a number of top line American acts on the same bill was well established. I was far too young to have attended any of the early shows but I do remember going with mates to **The Surfside '64** extravaganza.

This particular show starred **Roy Orbison**, **Paul and Paula**, **The Surfaris**, the token Aussie act – **The Joy Boys** - and as co-headliners, **The Beach Boys** on the last leg of their Japan/ Australia tour. As a pimply 16 year old, I sat with my mates in the second row to the far right of the Festival Hall stage – as close as we could possibly get to the front. I



The venue for all the Big Shows – Melbourne's Festival Hall, formerly The West Melbourne Stadium - in Dudley Street.

can't nominate with any certainty whether I attended on 21 or 22 January, but I clearly remember the power of Orbison's voice and his vocal range – I expected the roof to begin vibrating when he hit the high notes on *Crying*.

22.

But most of all, I remember being there for the Beach Boys. I had my copy of their recently released LP, *Surfin' USA* with the boys' names written by me in pen on the back cover of the album so that I could tell who each one was. (A bit of confusion though, because **Al Jardine** had joined the band in place of original guitarist, **David Marks**). I have distinct memories of being only a couple of metres from **Brian Wilson** as he played bass and I recall that a string broke on Carl's guitar – (amazing what you remember!). However, it didn't seem to make a great deal of difference because, in my humble opinion they were just *terrible* - considering what I had listened to on their records! This was so disappointing and I only realized many years down the track that in 1964, the whole outfit that made up **The Beach Boys** was unraveling fast as their tour wound down and Brian was just *days* away from the major mental and emotional trauma that was to affect his whole life from that point on. I guess now in hindsight I forgive them. However, in total the tour itself was considered a resounding success.

Harry M's next tour contrasted markedly with the relative triumph of Surfside '64 and proved that a washed-up, drug-addled, temperamental performer like **Judy Garland**, should never have been foisted on the Australian public in the first place. Every tour is a gamble in many ways but Melbourne was where it all sadly fell apart for the one-time movie and singing star and for the promoter as well.

Some – not all - of the great multi-artist, overseas rock shows which came our way throughout the late 'fifties and 'early 'sixties were:

The Big Show - April 1959 - Johnny Cash with Gene Vincent, The Playmates, The Tennessee Two, Robin Luke, Frankie Sardo, Bobby Day, Col Joye and the Joy Boys.

The Big Show - 1959 - Sal Mineo, The Everly Brothers, Tab Hunter, Col Joye and the Joy Boys, Johnny Rebb & the Rebels, The Delltones, Johnny Devlin, Johnny O'Keefe & the Dee Jays, Princess Rora.

All American Rock Spectacular - January 1960 - Duane Eddy, Johnny Restivo, Crash Craddock, The Diamonds, Eddie Cochran, Santo & Johnny.

The Big Show - May 1960 - The Everly Brothers, Crash Craddock, Bobby Rydell, Marv Johnson, The Champs, The Crickets and Lonnie Lee.

Parade Of Stars - 1960 - Tommy Sands, Rod Lauren, Chan Romero, Johnny and the Hurricanes, Johnny Preston, Jack Scott, Marv Johnson, Freddie Cannon, Mark Dinning, Dick Caruso and Jerry Lee Lewis.

The Twist - 1962 - Chubby Checker, Bobby Rydell, Del Shannon, Diane Hilton, The Peppermints and Johnny High.

Star Lift '64 - 1964 - The Searchers, Peter and Gordon, Eden Kane, Dell Shannon and Dinah Lee.

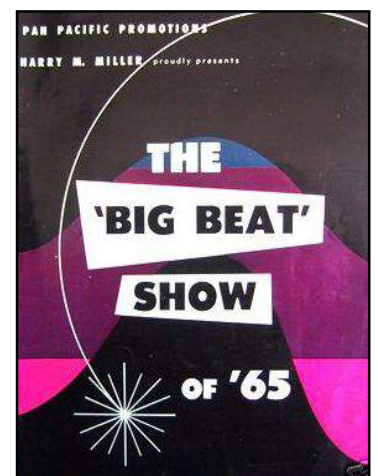
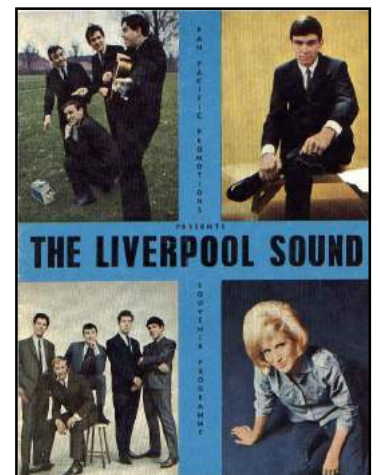
The Liverpool Sound - 1964 - Gerry and the Pacemakers, Gene Pitney, Brian Poole and the Tremeloes and Dusty Springfield.

The Big Show - January, 1965 - Manfred Mann, The Kinks, The Honeycombs, Tony Sheveton, Tony Worsley and the Blue Jays, Tommy Adderley and The Merseymen.

The Big Show - March 1965 - Cilla Black, Sounds Incorporated, Freddie and the Dreamers, Mark Wynter, The Changing Times and Merv Benton.

The Big Show - May-June 1965 - The Dave Clark Five, The Seekers, Tommy Quickly and Bobby and Laurie.

Caravan Of Stars - 1966 - Tom Jones, Herman's Hermits, Ray Columbus and the Invaders and The Squires, The Purple Hearts.



The covers of various tour programs of the 'sixties.

The Big Show – 1967 – Eric Burdon and the Animals, Paul and Barry Ryan, Dave, Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich, The Mixtures and The Loved Ones.

23.

MELBOURNE'S NEW MUSIC TRADITION.

"It (the Jazz and Folk revival) all began in Melbourne... In dim clubs, emerging from the always fierce interest there is in jazz and blues." (Charles Higham, The Bulletin, 14 November, 1964, quoted in "The Early Years in the Folk Revival" by Malcolm J. Turnbull, Trad & Now Magazine, issue 5.)

As an innovator, Melbourne town has always been unique and has provided an important platform for musical styles both imported and local, and it often created a distinct hybrid of the two. But these trends and waves of music would have been to no avail had it not been for the patrons in this city who always keenly embraced the live music and dance experience in large numbers and still do to this day. Already mentioned were the hugely popular pre-war and wartime dance venues such as **The Green Mill** (opened in 1926) or **Wirths Olympia** – both in South Melbourne on what is now **The Arts Centre** site. **The Palais-de-Danse** down along Port Phillip Bay a little further at St Kilda, was also a highly popular dance floor. Later, **The Glaciarium Ice Skating Rink** and **The Trocadero Dance Hall** pulled the crowds in. They became the fashionable meeting places for World War II servicemen on leave and local girls to step out until **Wirths** was destroyed by fire in 1953, and the other venues began gradually to fall into decay as the new medium of television convinced folks to stay at home more to watch ground-breaking American series like *I Love Lucy* or *The Jackie Gleason Show* on "the box".

Undeterred by the appearance of the flickering black-and-white images on the small home screen, both the keen jazz and the newer rock 'n roll exponents, found homes in separate venues. From 1957 onwards, rockers went to town halls, mechanics institutes, scout and church halls where loud music could be played and the new rock 'n roll dance style which was a descendent of the Jive, the Jitterbug and Swing, prospered.

As the Big Band period and the era of the Crooners began to fade, jazz devotees, particularly those who had a love of free-flowing Traditional New Orleans-style jazz, found refuge from potentially belligerent street-wise rockers and their new music, in established jazz clubs and lounges where they felt safer to mix quietly and casually with



The Oakleigh RSL in Drummond Street which at one time, served as home to The Onion Patch – jazz club/dance and all-round 'cool place' to be.

their own circle of friends. For a short time, around 1962, jazzers versus rockers was shaping up as a serious area of demarcation in youth music and society here, but it never proceeded beyond the occasional railway station scuffle or the rivalry created by the musical allegiances, hair styles and the clothes which each side wore.

The styles were definitely different - the clothes and hairstyles marked each side out. Jazzers were beginning to contrast sharply with the greasy-haired, leather jacketed rockers, by wearing desert boots, cord trousers, long, loose sloppy-joe jumpers and leaving their hair dry, free of Brylcreem and combed forward. Duffle coats, usually black or dark navy blue with their wooden peg fasteners, were also becoming highly fashionable Melbourne clobber for

jazzers and this image translated into the folk period as well. Eventually in Melbourne, the home of VFL football, the duffle coat became the young football fan's preferred outfit during the cold winter afternoons on the terraces at the M.C.G, Punt Road, Princes Park, Arden Street, Junction Oval, Kardinia Park, Lakeside Oval or Victoria Park. It was ready made to display the dozens of sew-on badges deemed essential to show your support for your team or your favourite footy players.

Cool jazz and onion weed...

Melbourne had a fairly strong trad jazz scene which was not necessarily duplicated with the same degree in other capital cities, including Sydney. Pioneers in the business like **Frank Traynor's Jazz Preachers**, **The Yarra Yarra Jazz Band**, **Graeme Bell's Jazz Band**, "**Smacka**" **Fitzgibbon** and **The Red Onion Jazz Band** played at a select few jazz clubs around town mainly in the suburbs. In a sign of the times though, members of the Red Onions would eventually go on to form **The Loved Ones** and move across into the R & B scene.

I have strong memories of a local haunt, **The Onion Patch** in Drummond Street, Oakleigh which was opposite the Oakleigh Town Hall and wedged between the football ground and the old cemetery. The building was the Oakleigh R.S.L.; by day a home for ageing, ex-Diggers and it was surrounded by rampant onion weed which had spread from the neglected cemetery adjacent. As we trampled it going into the hall, it released that characteristic onion-like pungency into the night air. **The Red Onion Jazz Band** which began a residency at The Onion Patch from March, 1963 blasted out cool and hot New Orleans improvised jazz, featuring upright bass, clarinet, trumpets and trombones duelling spontaneously in traditional jazz numbers. Finger snapping, head nodding with both eyes closed and slight, almost imperceptible foot movements were considered *very, very* cool dance steps indeed!

Ross Wilson of **The Pink Finks**, **The Party Machine** and **Daddy Cool** fame remembers as a teenager, being momentarily involved in this trad jazz scene:

ROSS WILSON: "There was this thriving trad jazz revival thing that went on based around the public school boys and girls who lived in the area. I was interested in that and used to go to suburban dances. A couple of guys at the school I went to – Haileybury College – were in the local band ... they were pretty well known ... The Red Onion Jazz Band. The trumpeter was one or two forms above me and consequently I used to go along to their dances and be part of that scene. I think they set the example in that you could perform ... that it wasn't an unlikely thing to do." (Wilson, author's interview, 29 September, 2004)



For the older age group, trad jazz appeared to suit the pseudo-intellectuals who seemed to embrace the somewhat Bohemian and beatnik student culture developing at Melbourne University, and the newly established Monash University, (not that this was a large percentage of both student populations by any stretch of the imagination), while rock 'n roll remained a distinctly more popular style of music, appealing to the youngsters and trendsetters of the more working class suburbs. Besides temporary venues like The Onion Patch which only became a jazz club on a Saturday night, there were other venues specifically set up for jazz like **Basin Street** in Brighton and the renowned **Powerhouse** on the shores of Albert Park Lake near Queens Road. Around 1963, **Frank Traynor's Jazz Club** which became the epi-centre of jazz coolness, began opening its doors every weekend in the city's east end at 100 Little Lonsdale Street.

But jazz fans were also increasingly being drawn to the emerging folk music movement which had effectively begun in U.S. college campuses and spread to New York's Greenwich Village. It was centred on the coffee shops and smaller venues there where it became "hip" to also embrace a righteous cause and exhibit an emerging social conscience. The guys were a clean-cut bunch and the gals favoured the long flowing hair, parted down the centre. A



It might not look like it, but the black-painted building on the corner once housed the renowned Frank Traynor's Jazz Club situated at the top end of the city.

new breed of folk singers armed only with an acoustic guitar and a strident message to pass on, began to record both traditional folksongs and their own compositions which were often based on American or Irish folk melodies.

25.

What's more, folkies began to *sell records* and from about 1961-2 onwards - artists like **Pete Seeger**, **Arlo Guthrie**, **The Brothers Four**, **The Limelighters**, **The Chad Mitchell Trio**, **Joan Baez**, **Peter Paul and Mary**, **The Kingston Trio**, **Simon and Garfunkel** and of course, the man who gave the burgeoning folk revival movement its impetus, **Bob Dylan**. All had a musical connection with Greenwich Village and the emerging college youth intelligencia which supplied them with the appreciative audiences to sit at their feet and the cool venues in which to hone their singing and playing skills.



Australian Tradition Magazine from June, 1966 with Glen Tomasetti and Brian Mooney on the cover.

Moratorium marches of the late 'sixties/early 'seventies. She regularly appeared on Channel 7 and sang her protest songs which often touched on women's issues and on inequalities. She made headlines in 1967 when she was taken to court for withholding one-sixth of her tax on the grounds that a sixth of the federal budget was used to finance Australia's role in the Vietnam War. In the universities and colleges, folk music, protest and study were now part of the academic life of young students with clubs like The Monash Traditional Music Society and The Burwood Teachers College Folk Club being set up on their respective campuses.

The folk music at the time was an eclectic mix of styles and sources. There was the Dylanesque folk/blues and beat poetry coming from New York, and the blues and gospel from southern rural, black America. There was also the traditional English and Irish folk material (*Greensleeves* and *Scarborough Fair*) which had had more than a passing influence on the Aussie bush ballads of the nineteenth century. *The Wild Colonial Boy* and *Bound for Botany Bay* were rediscovered by Bush bands like **The Bushwackers**. All of these varied styles had something in common - they were part of the social commentary of their respective times and places, just brought into the 'sixties context and they told the ordinary stories and social events rather than just being pop material about boy-meets-girl. Now they were drawn together under the one banner - folk music.

Greenwich Village in Armadale...

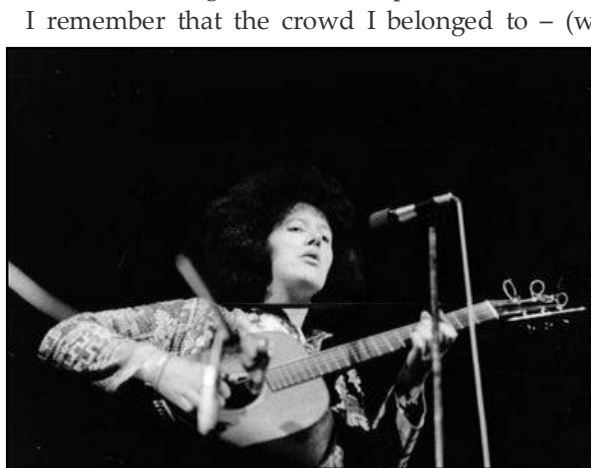
In Melbourne, these two forms of popular music co-habited for a period of time. While the folk clubs and jazz dances around town remained separate from each other and both well away from the more gritty rock 'n roll culture, many local artists moved comfortably between the two genres - folk and jazz, until some settled into the folk scene as a matter of preference. Some former jazz clubs made the crossing as the folk wave became a full-on craze helped by visits downunder from **Pete Seeger** and **Bob Dylan** in the early to mid-'sixties. Melbourne became the folk hub of Australian music culture. Prominent among the emerging local folkies were **Judy Jacques** who sang with the stylish **Yarra Yarra Jazz Band** and **Judith Durham** who performed regularly with both **Frank Traynor** and **The University Jazz Band** before being lured away to add her voice to **The Seekers**. **Glen Tomasetti**, **Trevor Lucas**, **David Lumsden**, **Brian Mooney**, **Martyn Wyndham-Read** and **Paul Marks** were to be seen around town - artists who took full advantage of the folk boom and the possibilities it offered. Tomasetti, in particular was involved in the anti-

Vietnam movement which culminated in Labor politician and former Deputy Prime Minister, **Dr. Jim Cairns'**



Martyn Wyndham-Read playing around town in the mid-'sixties - (Source: Australian Tradition - Courtesy of Malcolm J. Turnbull)

More and more, folk music began to be allied with a cause or a movement and as the decade of the sixties unfolded – it wanted to say something important about the state of the world. The conflict in Vietnam, and in America, Civil Rights and emancipation became the hooks on which to hang the folk music hat.



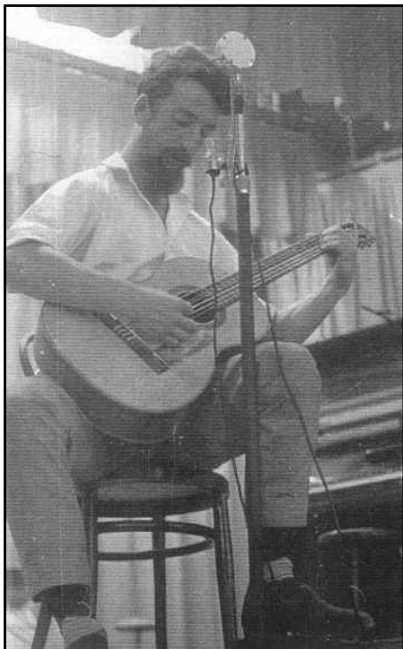
Margret RoadKnight made the transition from folk singing to mainstream pop. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

I remember that the crowd I belonged to – (we were fairly conservative eastern suburbs kids at the time) - organised and ran a local church youth group. After closing time, we would call into two places in particular, **The Green Man** at 1194 High Street, Armadale, on the north side, just west of the Glenferrie Road intersection and less frequently, a place which I recall as **Ravenscroft**, on the eastern side of Burke Road, Tooronga, just north of Toorak Road. (This coffee shop may have also been known as **The Copper Inne** at some point in time.) It was here that I remember seeing and hearing **Margret RoadKnight**, a tall, young husky-voiced folksinger /guitarist who had also performed in the jazz scene with **Frank Traynor’s Jazz Preachers**.

The Green Man opened around 1964 and had previously been **The Reata**, one of Melbourne’s earliest coffee lounges. **Gerry Humphrys**, who later went on to prominence with **The Red**

Onion Jazz Band and **The Loved Ones** worked here at The Reata as a waiter in the early years of the decade and found time to accompany Wyndham-Read on clarinet and recorder.

I remember both The Green Man and Ravenscroft as full-on folk coffee lounges – with the new, trendy way to sit, relax, talk and listen to music in the



Folk singer Paul Marks – (Source: Australian Tradition – Courtesy of Malcolm J. Turnbull)

more intimate and quiet atmosphere of the coffee house – there was no band and no dance floor. The artists, who sat and played didn’t necessarily command the attention of their audiences but sat quietly and often inconspicuously in a corner, singing and strumming their guitars in shorter sets while the patrons chatted and laughed, came and went. The folk singer’s presence was usually incidental and at times, they struggled to be heard as many sang without amplification and accompanied themselves on their gut-stringed, acoustic guitar.

Some of these artists from the trad and folk scenes were signed and recorded during the early ‘sixties by the only person and label willing to take a chance on their music - **Ron Tudor** at W & G Records. The acts including **The Ram Jam Big Band**, **The Red Onion Jazz Band**, **Margret RoadKnight**, **Frank Traynor’s Jazz Preachers** and **The Seekers**.



The essential Duffle Coat for folkies and jazzers – in black or blue – complete with wooden peg fasteners – ‘sixties style.

Candlewax and raisin bread...

The Green Man was typical of a number of folk/coffee shops at the time. Housed within a two-story late Victorian shop with dwelling above, it had been converted for its use in the accepted Greenwich Village Style of coffee

lounge decor. Painted green on the front as I recall with smallish windows, the building had a heavy panelled entrance door with a square coloured glass panel in the centre. Everything inside The Green Man was designed to create a Bohemian atmosphere in suburban High Street. The decorator items and furniture spread around were

27.

just inexpensive items and seemed to comprise just what could be found at little cost. There was fishing net suspended from the ceiling and often, bits and pieces of trendy wooden-bead studded macramé around. The tables were usually chunky, rustic constructions of heavy pine with benches to sit on, rather than chairs. Table cloths were red and white or blue and white country check and every table had to have a squat wine or liquor bottle with a candle stuck into its neck creating just the right atmosphere. Solidified candle wax dripping down the outside gave them just the right ambience, (before we even knew what that word meant!). The ceiling lights sported fringed, Tiffany hanging shades and these places were always dim, but never necessarily dingy. Sometimes empty wine bottles were hung on the walls or placed on ledges. The Green Man was also one of this city's longest surviving coffee lounges, remaining open long after the folk boom had wound down and it finally closed its doors for the last time in 1988.



High Street, Malvern, home of The Green Man from 1964. However, it had operated as a folk lounge/coffee shop much earlier. The streetscape has changed little over time.

Remember of course, that despite the empty grog bottles around, no alcohol could be served in these places and no one really asked for any. The menu usually comprised coffee, (no Cappuccino or Latte at that stage – just “black” or “white”) or hot chocolate and you could order

toasted ham and cheese sandwiches or my favourite, toasted raisin bread with melted butter – and stacks of it. Probably the most cosmopolitan dish available (nothing simpler to prepare) was Spaghetti Bolognese. I loved to sprinkle heaps of grated Parmesan cheese on top and think just how sophisticated I was, much to the annoyance of friends around who found it difficult to deal with the unfamiliar smell. As I recall, it was possible to order non-alcoholic apple cider or orange juice. Just in case anyone was wondering, drugs were an unknown commodity at this time.

The Green Man had an open upstairs lounge and at the peak times which were usually Saturday nights, it might have had a folksinger in the front corner downstairs and another upstairs. – the more experienced and better artist got the downstairs gig while the novice got the upstairs crowd. Mingling with the bearded and cord-trouser set were the girls with longer, freer-flowing hair and dresses or skirts – no jeans in the early days, but tight pants came in later. Ravenscroft had a similar atmosphere although it was single-story building squashed between the block walls of the adjoining premises. It was set a little back from the footpath on Burke Road and you needed to pass through wrought iron gates and a little pebbled courtyard before entering the coffee lounge.

Fourteen-year-old **Judy McCarthy** who lived in St. Kilda at the time with her parents certainly caught the “jazz bug” before progressing onwards and upwards to the discotheque/dance scene later. She describes her early experiences:

JUDY McCARTHY: “... at the age of 14, I would hop out my bedroom window and go to Jazz Centre 44, down opposite Luna Park. A dark and rather squalid place, accessed by a flight of very creaky stairs. It was inhabited by a largely beatnik crowd. I learnt to jazz dance, a very strange and funky sequence of steps, and hassled my parents until that pair of desert boots, blue stretch pants and duffle coat was mine. So the



Folk singer and activist, Glen Tomasetti – (Source: Australian Tradition – Courtesy of Malcolm J. Turnbull)

So the

consequences of leaving home without using the front door... off to boarding school for a year." (McCarthy, correspondence, 19 November, 2004)

By about 1966, jazz and folk clubs were beginning to raise the white flag of surrender to the burgeoning
28.



The government letter that most 20-year old males welcomed – the notice which meant that your number hadn't been drawn in the National Service ballot and you were relatively safe from the Army.

overseas. (Yes, the government actually DID use a barrel borrowed from Tattersalls for the draws.)

Not all young men accepted that if their name was drawn out they would go quietly. It was an extremely unfair system and deferments could be given to University students but not for apprentice carpenters or plumbers. Some boys became conscientious objectors and some, draft resisters, but most that were "called up" accepted their fate, made new mates and put their real lives on hold for a time. Chain drummer **Barry Harvey**, like most Australian 20 year-olds faced the day of his particular draw with trepidation. He has his own inimitable take on the situation:

BARRY HARVEY: "... I received a letter one day and said to Goose, (Barry Sullivan) "Hey man, this is from the National Service Department", at which Goose said, '...when you are over there don't give off any Goose calls or the Viet Cong will blow you to pieces.'

The letter had the number 28 - due to go to Vietnam- and my birthday is on the 28th. So I freaked out... got as much shit as I could find and got completely ripped and then about 6 hours later, Goose came looking for me and said, '... you dumb bastard, you didn't read the rest of the letter, they have deferred you from service in the Army as you have a defective arm, or you ain't good enough for them and they don't want you.'

I couldn't believe it. So I wasn't wanted to fight the Viet Cong, which was fine with me. So I celebrated again with Goose with another pile of smoke we picked up in the Cross." (Harvey, email to Rock 'n Roll Scars group, 31 October, 2004)

Ross Wilson was "called up" in the 1967 ballot for a potential two-year stint in khaki gear but a "lucky break" managed to see him safely out of the army's clutches:

discotheques and the new mod (R & B) music, yet as well as The Green Man, The Copper Inne and Traynors', jazz/folk was still being played at places like **Esquire, Bastille, Channel 5, Spanish Cellar, Tin Hut, Workshop, Keyboard, Ivanhoe Coffee Lounge, Move 2 Mix, Flower Pot and Candle, Heritage Jazz Club, Harlem**, and of course, **Powerhouse**.

Probably the most contentious issue of the period for young Australian men which definitely began to put a damper on weekend dance and coffee shop action was The National Service Ballot or Conscription for fit and healthy 20 year-olds, instituted by the Federal Liberal Government from 1964 onwards. It involved drawing out birth dates written on marbles to fill the dwindling numbers in the army, but not necessarily for service in Vietnam although **Normie Rowe** and one or two other prominent musicians did serve



"Nashos" on the move. No longer civilians – not quite army. A group of conscripts straight off the bus arrive at an army base for two years National Service training. (Everybody's Magazine, 8 March 1967, photo: Lee Pearce)

ROSS WILSON: "You know how they say break a leg and get into showbiz? Well, that's what happened to me. I got run over by a car and spent a summer with my leg up in traction. So, this broken leg got me into showbiz and got me out of the army, too. I got conscripted and because of this wonderful injury I had, I didn't get shipped off and shot at." (Long Way To The Top, www.abc.net.au/longway).

29.

This little light of mine...

The folk boom also brought with it an increased interest in gospel and gospel/folk music within certain areas of the Melbourne youth community. Folk singers in the coffee clubs often sang, hand-clapping Negro spirituals like *This Little Light Of Mine* or *He's Got The Whole World In His Hands* or derivatives of traditional southern black gospel



American evangelist Billy Graham preaches to the record crowd at The Melbourne Cricket Ground on 15 March, 1959. (Reproduced with permission: The Herald & Weekly Times Pty Ltd, Photographic Collection.)

music. This was another instance of the crossover of genres. It should be noted that **Judith Durham** sang gospel music earlier in her career. Sometimes these songs were modern re-packaging of traditional church music as sung by the hand-clapping, foot-stomping American Southern Baptist Church choirs. The mainline Evangelical churches here – Baptist, Anglican, Congregationalist, Presbyterian and Methodist developed a strong gospel music tradition emerging in the early to mid-'sixties.

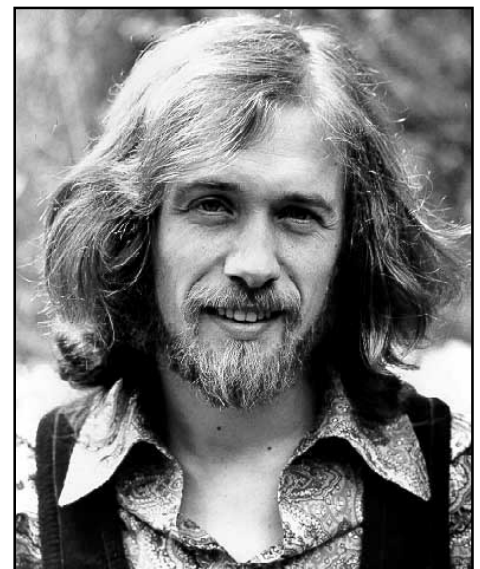
In 1959, mass-evangelist **Billy Graham** had brought his gospel message to Australia and thereby opened up Christian music to the church communities – but it was still mainly traditional hymns. His rally at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on 15 March that year saw him preach to 130,000 people – a ground record which still remains today. Not even the Collingwood army can mass that many troops to a 'Pies footy match! What it

meant for young people was that a number found a spiritual basis and a new interest in modern gospel music – but not necessarily anything resembling rock 'n roll. In fact Graham, (not to be confused with **Bill Graham**, owner of the Fillmore in San Francisco), and the whole church community were still strictly traditional and conservative in nature. From his rather substantial pulpit he made one of the great quotes of the time when he said about The Beatles:

BILLY GRAHAM: "I'm afraid I'm on a different wave length than The Beatles. I don't dig them. I hope when they get older, they'll get a hair cut" (Edelstein, 1985)

They didn't – they just grew beards instead and tried eastern mysticism and the Maharishi!

Folk music was a gentler genre than rock 'n roll and it could be a vehicle to tell a story in song. So the youth element in the more evangelical, local suburban churches found an outlet with a hybrid form of the two - a gospel message set to folk music, sometimes centred on re-packaged traditional Negro spirituals. When this music did encounter mainstream folk/pop such as in **The Byrds** *Turn' Turn' Turn* (taken from Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament), it gained some acceptance with young Christians even within the more moderate church congregations. This didn't extend to **Normie Rowe's** version of *It Ain't Necessarily So* (from the **George Gershwin** 1934 musical, *Porgy And Bess*) the lyrics of which stated that, "the things that you're liable to read in the Bible, ain't necessarily so" and prompted one local Christian songwriter to write a reply in song with, "the things that you're liable to read in the Bible are of necessity so." God fights back!!!!



Folk/gospel singer Franciscus Henri appeared at a number of Youth For Christ, Melbourne Town Hall rallies. Reproduced with permission: Monash University Archives - IN5026.

Popular within the Protestant church communities around Melbourne, were the Youth For Christ (Y.F.C) Rallies and similar large gatherings such as Third Saturday Youth (T.S.Y.) and Sunday Night Singout, which combined gospel music and the standard Christian message. A number of prominent folk / gospel artists appeared at these rallies including **Franciscus Henri**, **Judy Jacques** and **The Proclaimers**, (no, not the Scottish brothers!). **The**

30.

Proclaimers were a full-on, hand-clapping, gospel choir hailing from the Rosanna Baptist Church in the middle-



class north-eastern suburbs. They could boast some wonderful local solo singers and featured the booming baritone voice of **Jonathan Summers**. Their “black gospel” sound was as authentic southern U.S.A. as you could possibly expect from downunder and the choir incorporated a rock band with a Hammond organ to back the 40-odd voices.

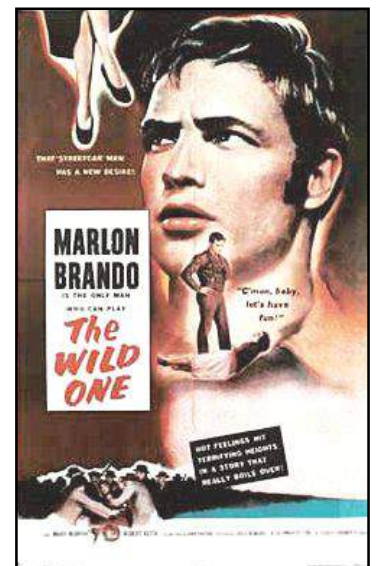
Held mostly once a month at The Melbourne Town Hall, Dallas Brooks Hall or The Camberwell Civic Centre, the YFC rallies filled a particular niche in the community - that is: gospel music for a younger audience at a time when many churches attracted large numbers of adolescents who became involved in many youth outreach activities. They wanted to be thoroughly modern and groovy within their chosen Christian setting but didn't quite want to be associated with that nasty, sex 'n drugs 'n rock 'n roll culture.

Trends from overseas – fashion and fighting.

Way back in 1960, some things HAD to change. As well as differences in attitudes, other outward signs of teen rebellion were beginning to show as the Baby Boomers who were approaching their collective adolescence, began moving on to secondary school. The most obvious alterations were to clothes and hair – and they were to change a number of times in the 'sixties and the 'seventies as dictated by fashion trends overseas. There were however, a few later generic developments (the Mullet hairstyle!) which were not directly influenced by what we saw from abroad. In all, there were clearly observable symbols that showed we were different from our parents, determined enough to confirm that difference and confident enough to get away with it.

Not that teen rebellion hadn't happened here before. In the late nineteenth- early twentieth century world of Melbourne's growing working-class suburbs such as Collingwood, Fitzroy, Carlton and Richmond, gangs often battled for control of territory and all exhibited the trademark dress codes and rebellious attitudes towards authority, often exclusively and mistakenly linked only with the post-1954 rock 'n roll era. Known as 'Larrikins', (probably from the term 'larkin' around') they were young and keen to demonstrate that rebellious spirit, even in 1894. One such Melbourne gang would show its defiance by fronting up to pubs around Fitzroy, demanding free drinks then trashing the pubs and anyone nearby who even looked sideways at them when their demands were refused. A writer of the time made this keen observation:

“They are generally known by their peculiar style of dress—the broad-brimmed, low-crowned felt hat, the coat dotted with buttons in every conceivable spot, the tight-fitting bell-bottomed trousers, and the heels of the boots, which are disproportionately small.” A similar scene in Sydney – just the uniform was different: “slouch hats on the back of their heads, greasy curls, no collar or waistcoat, a bright handkerchief around their necks, an overhanging shirt, and tight trousers.”



This was well before any bodgies, widgies, rockers, sharpies, mods, stylists or punks showed up at various points in the story of post - World War II rock 'n roll. By 1955, leather and denim had made a fashion impact on the youth of the day, thanks to the new music and a spate of generational films of the times starring **Marlon Brando** and teen sensation, **James Dean** – and was the ultimate sign of teen rebellion, although not all Australian teenagers chose to dress this way. (The motor bike was a reasonably acceptable accessory, too!).

31.

THE BRITISH BEAT SCENE AND ITS INFLUENCE – 1963.

By 1963 in Australia, the “first wave” of rock 'n roll had started to abate and decline in popularity, in line with decreasing interest in the “fad” from around the world. Rockers, **Chuck Berry**, **Little Richard**, **Jerry Lee Lewis** and others were struggling to sell records at the volume they had been used to since 1957. **Eddie Cochran** had died in a



American surf duo – Jan and Dean. They worked the surf and car songs of Brian Wilson into hits. (Album cover)

car accident in England, **Buddy Holly** met his untimely fate in a plane crash, (1959), **Little Richard** had given up Tutti Frutti for prayer and **Elvis** had done the patriotic thing and answered his call-up notice to join the U.S. army.

When pop music began to sound a little bland and featureless in the early 'sixties, music fans commenced scanning the horizon for the “new wave” or “the next best thing” – surely rock 'n roll wasn't all over yet! Our eyes, of course were turned towards America – the traditional source of all good teen, pop music. But we were all gazing in the

wrong direction! The real earth-shattering explosion of music was to come from an entirely different and probably unexpected direction – England!



The one redeeming feature of music in this period between the end of the “first wave” of rock 'n roll and the arrival of **The Beatles**, was probably the Surf music craze, emanating from California. With a bright, new brand of twangy guitar music for the warm, balmy summers, as it turned out, it was ideally suited to Australian conditions. As Americans discovered different things to do on a beach apart from just



So cutesy, cutesy! – Little Pattie Amphlett. She had surf hits while still at school. (Publicity photo)

sitting, walking or throwing a Frisbee, so did Aussies. The new American sound, headed up by **Brian Wilson's Beach Boys**, **The Surfaris** and blond surf duo, **Jan and Dean**, caught on particularly well in Sydney around 1963 where the locals invented their own brand of dance to go with it – The Stomp. Purely a Sydney dance craze – it could be done barefooted and in the sand rather than on a dance floor. In fact, soft-ish sand was necessary as the dance required participants to continually bash their foot into the ground – hard. Cute, blond and every teenage boy's imaginary girlfriend, **Little Pattie Amphlett** with a few hits to her name, became a star at age 16, while still at school. (Where does, *He's My Blond Headed Stompie Wompie Real Gone Surfer Boy*, rate in “the most stupid song title ever” category?) In contrast, the seriously first-rate Sydney band, **The Atlantics** had a monster national hit with *Bombora* featuring its distinctive twangy, surf guitar beat and echo - and they recorded a great album to match.

Despite being somewhat Sydney-centric and based around Bondi and Manly beaches, the Surf music craze hit Melbourne and

teenagers got caught up in it, although we were not as enamoured with **Little Pattie's** music as the Sydneysiders were. We were more interested in the **Lee Gordon** promoted "Surfside '64 Big Show" when it hit Melbourne. To my knowledge few Melbourne bands of any note anywhere in the suburbs played surf-style music and I'd like to think that we were a tad more sophisticated than our tacky Sydney cousins. Sydney's monopoly on surf music is borne out by checking the list of Surf/Stomp hits from 1963

32.

– *Stomp The Tumbarumba, Johnny Devlin, Hangin' Five, The Delltones, and Stompin' at Maroubra* by **Little Pattie** – all Sydney hits which created little more than a few ripples (pun intended!) on Melbourne beaches. I don't remember stompin' at Brighton, Torquay, St. Kilda or anywhere else for that matter! Maybe others did! Yes, there were a few Bayside surf dances but these were usually incorporated into rock dance settings and venues. Meanwhile over in Europe, surf music seemed in general, to pass the Brits by, which is not surprising – I can't name one great English surf beach, can you?

However, in Britain something else was bubbling away just below the surface while our backs were turned as we



Kenn Brodziak, who brought out the Beatles four years later, toured the skiffle king, Lonnie Donegan in 1960.

scoured the horizon in the direction of California. There had been a healthy musical output in England for a long time. Before Beat music arrived, the Skiffle craze had swept Britain whereas the United States hadn't had skiffle since it was a rather obscure blues form of music from the southern states, way back in Depression times. The term itself was invented to describe a "rent party" where people turned up to help out a desperate neighbour who was about to be evicted for non-payment of rent – a not uncommon occurrence in those difficult times. The great exponents of the 'thirties skiffle were **Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Blake** and **The Hokum Boys** and this form of music employed a variety of readily available, makeshift instruments – guitar, washboard stroked with thimbles, tea-chest bass, kazoo and it really made the place jump. How it re-emerged in Britain two decades later is uncertain, but perhaps the end of World War II meant that ordinary folks just wanted to let their hair down and Big Band music didn't quite lend itself to that degree of celebration.

Ever made a tea-chest bass?...

Lonnie Donegan seemed to be a one-man Skiffle craze and his particular form of Skiffle leant a little more towards Country music than its original southern American blues counterpart, while retaining the bright, up tempo beat and sense of fun. *Rock Island Line* was a huge

skiffle hit and *My Old Man's A Dustman*, while not necessarily being a "classic" skiffle tune, also typified the spate of "novelty" tunes around at the time. (Try, **Ray Stevens' Ahab, The Arab** - "the sheik of the burning sand!"). While Donegan seemed to score the hits, countless other young musicians were influenced by this infectious sound and beat, and played it around the clubs and dance halls of Britain. **John Lennon** and **Paul McCartney** as well as **Mick Jagger** started out in Skiffle bands, although Jagger later admitted that he didn't like the music all that much.

With the arrival of large numbers of assisted British migrants in Australia in 1960, many brought the skiffle sound with them, but it didn't really catch on as a trend, apart from *My Old Man's A Dustman* which was a runaway hit here in our national charts. I remember hearing a schoolmate's dad, (the family was from Birmingham) play some skiffle records one day and thoroughly fired up, I set about making a tea-chest bass in our garage at home using an old broom handle and some string – not too difficult to put together. I loved the deep, vibrating, resonating sound it made against the tin-foil



inside the chest and the way it would change pitch as I gave the string more tension or released it a bit. Pity I didn't have anyone else to play with so, as the novelty soon wore off the instrument reverted back to a junk storage box and the broom head and handle were eventually reunited to serve their real purpose in life.

33.

By 1957, American rock 'n roll had already made inroads into Britain as the craze spread across the Atlantic. Soon



Cliff Richard's backing group – The Shadows in 1959. Their guitar work and stage presence influenced everybody around at the time. (Publicity photo)

England had its very own leather-jacketed heroes with black, slicked back, Californian Poppy hair – the Teddy Boys. The beat was still the same, the look practically identical and certainly there was a lot of “aping” of American stars' antics and styles. The proven American rock 'n rollers also took the opportunity to open up new territory and enhance their reputations with the British audiences by touring – **Bill Haley and The Comets, Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, Chuck Berry** and **Jerry Lee Lewis** et al, took the journey across The Atlantic. But, not **Elvis** who apparently had an acute fear of flying. **Buddy Holly**, who should have taken more notice of Elvis' phobia, in fact was more popular in England in 1959 than he was back home in America.

British promoters were searching for home-grown talent which looked and sounded like Haley and his Comets. **Cliff Richard** (born Harry Webb) seemed to fit the bill when English promoter **Norrie Paramor** signed him in '57, but Paramor was also impressed with **The Shadows**, Cliff's backing group, (who had to change their name from **The Drifters** to avoid confusion with the American vocal group of the same name). Their sound was impressive; it was tight and their neat choreographed movements on stage were quite deliberate, mechanical and in time with the beat. Cliff and The Shadows were launched on the scene, both together and separately. The two co-existed on the charts and had their own runs of Top 40 British and international hits. The sound of **The Shadows** – all instrumental with guitars and nimble foot work perfectly in sync - also made a big impact on the Australian charts.

It's all one, long, summer holiday...

Meanwhile, Cliff's first British number one hit was *Move It* - an original up-tempo rocker, that didn't chart particularly well in Australia. But he was about to make up for that. As the energy and fervour of the early rock music began to calm down a notch or two, to stay in touch with the audience he had nurtured, Cliff found himself recording in front of an orchestra at times. He put down the softer ballads which were to make him famous, songs such as *Living Doll* (1959) and *Please Don't Tease* (1960).

The Shadows it must be said weren't exactly unique in delivering their trademark instrumental hits – America's **Duane Eddy, The Ventures** and **The Surfaris** were doing pretty well on the charts all around the world using the same formula – no lyrics, twangy guitars and really catchy, foot-tapping tunes. But **The Shadows** were also seriously good at what they did. The classic line up of **Hank B. Marvin, Bruce Welch, Jet Harris** and **Tony Meehan** were responsible for producing the hit, *Apache* (released 1960) which many aspiring young guitarists of the time cut their teeth on. Sales of Fender Stratocaster and Telecaster guitars (and their ranges of cheaper Japanese copies) also soared. *Apache* spent 21 weeks in the British charts and also charted strongly in Australia as did *Kon-Tiki*, (1961), *Wonderful Land* and *Dance On* (both 1962). The connection with Australia was made stronger when Hank B. immigrated to sunny Perth in 1986 and operated a recording studio there. Cliff, of course, found

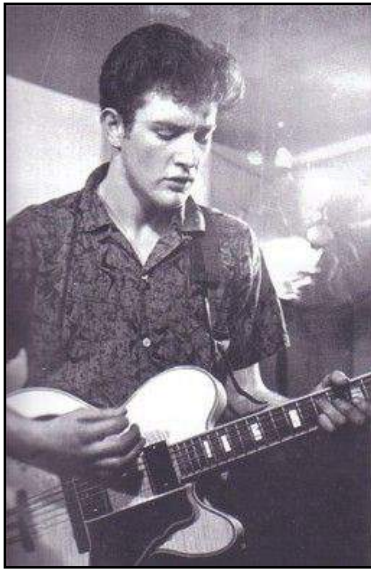


Cliff Richard being interviewed by Lily Brett - 1966. He gained success in Australia – both with and without The Shadows. (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

himself pressed into the **Elvis Presley** mould as a pop star-turned-movie-hero and made some passable and some not-so-memorable teen movies in the Presley tradition. They did yield a few substantial hits for Cliff such as, *The Young Ones* (1962) and *Summer Holiday* (1963) - both title tunes from his movies of the same name which did reasonably well in Australian cinemas at the time.

34.

“...and now... direct from Hamburg...”



British rocker Tony Sheridan who pioneered the rock 'n roll invasion of Germany in 1962. Performing in Soho in 1958. (Courtesy of Anna and Tony Sheridan)

While all this was happening, across the English Channel, to the east and a bit further inland, German teenagers, despite the language difference, were also discovering rock music and couldn't get enough of the tantalising and alluring beat coming from America and Britain. A few British lads (and promoters) realised the excitement and opportunities for musicians and singers in cities like Hamburg which soon established a healthy, if not rambunctious club scene. British bands and singers were attracted there – it seemed like a great excuse for a seventeen or eighteen year-old groover to experience the delights that Hamburg could offer and get away from the gloomy world of Liverpool, London, or Manchester – oh.. and of course out of mum's and dad's sight for a short time!

Hamburg in 1962 still showed some of the effects of the catastrophic allied bombing raids carried out towards the end of World War II because being a port city, its strategic benefit to the faltering Nazis war machine was of vital importance. Virtually all of the city's older buildings had been damaged or levelled by the raids and the city was still rebuilding, physically, culturally and emotionally when a young, talented British rocker, **Tony Sheridan** arrived there in 1960-61 to spearhead the rock invasion of Germany.

Chosen by promoters after appearing with **Marty Wilde** and **Conway Twitty** on stage in London, Sheridan had been the first artist to have played an electric guitar on television following the lifting of the BBC ban on the instrument which was the heart and soul of rock 'n roll. He quickly established himself during a six month residency at Hamburg's Top Ten Club and then moved on to the brand new cabaret-style venue, The Star Club. In a world well apart from Britain and America, Sheridan became a celebrated performer in the seedy beer-laden

environment of the Hamburg night spots.

Into this world of steamy sex, neon lights and wild rock music, some adventurous boys from Liverpool, (another noted seaport), found themselves playing for four hours a night at a rather sleazy nightclub called the Indra Club. They became known as the Beat Brothers, temporarily discarding their original name of **The Silver Beatles** as the word "Beetle" didn't translate all that well into German slang - (silver penis?). The boys, **Paul McCartney**, **John Lennon**, **George Harrison**, **Stuart Sutcliffe** and **Pete Best**, worked up a wild stage act designed to make the German drinkers and dancers stay on into the early hours for more beer.

A rowdy juke joint, The Indra Club was soon closed down by the authorities following many complaints from the locals. After switching to The Kaiserkeller, the band began to drift around after their gigs had finished checking Hamburg out and it was at The Star Club that they met Sheridan and were soon up on stage with him. This was a clearly a violation of their contract with The Kaiserkeller's owner and after he found out, a backstage fight broke out between



The Beat Brothers then The Silver Beatles (with stand-in drummer because Pete Best arrived late) at a rehearsal at The Wyvern Club, for a backing band for Billy Fury - 10 May, 1960. They didn't get the job! (Photographer: Cheniston Roland)

The Beatles and the alleged informer. As a result, George was sent home to Liverpool in disgrace because he was clearly underage. The remaining Beatles were blamed for a fire which broke out at The Kaiserkeller and this didn't help their cause. McCartney and Best spent a little time in jail before also being sent packing back to Liverpool. They had however,

35.

met up with another ex - Liverpoolian band, **Rory Storm and the Hurricanes** whose drummer, **Richie Starkey**, was soon to play an exceptionally important part in the unfolding story.

The whole episode could have ended there. After a period of gloominess back in Liverpool, the band, now minus Best and Sutcliffe and with the addition of Starkey (as **Ringo Starr**), played a Christmas Day gig at Litherland Town Hall in the same frenetic manner that they had played in Hamburg. *If there was one, clearly defining moment in 'sixties rock history – this was it!* They were billed as, "The Beatles – Direct from Hamburg" and the place erupted into total and complete madness with screaming teenagers mobbing the band on stage. Never before witnessed scenes heralded in a brand new era of rock 'n roll and 1963 saw in a pop phenomenon – Beatlemania – something that had never been experienced before or was likely to be bettered in the near or distant future. The British Invasion sound had arrived as bands queued up to tread the path that The Beatles forged.

The Fab Four downunder...

If there was any real need to cement the place that **The Beatles** had in changing the world forever – not just the world of music but the WORLD - this occurred when the Fab Four (or Fab Five if you count stand-in, contract



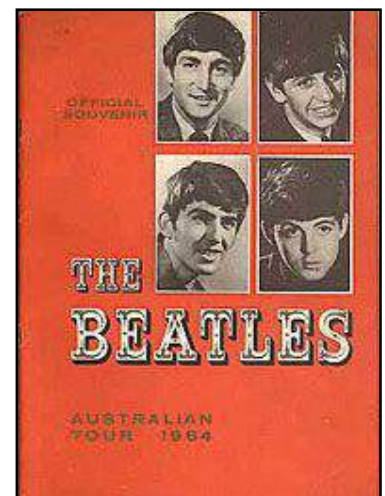
The Beatles arrive in Melbourne and sample some of the local instrumentation. (The Australian Women's Weekly, 1 July 1964, photographer: Les Gorrie. Published with permission from ACP Magazines Ltd)

drummer **Jimmy Nicol**) visited our shores in June, 1964 for their first and only tour here. It seemed that everything we knew or accepted about our world was in a state of turmoil ... turned completely upside down ... never to be the same again. Can a rock 'n roll band really do that? Nothing to match Beatlemania downunder had ever been witnessed before in this secluded country.

Aussie Promoter **Kenn Brodziak** could be considered to be one of the luckiest guys of all time, unlike Sun Records' **Sam Phillips** who earlier had sold Elvis' contract to RCA for a pittance – (one of the most regrettable music industry decisions ever.) In 1963, when on a talent-scouting expedition in England, Brodziak wanted to sign a band to tour Australia and took a huge punt by selecting the virtually unknown band, **The Beatles** because he thought they had a great sounding name. Between the signing and the eventual tour, the

world was plunged into the grip of Beatlemania and Brodziak who was not to know this when he returned home from England with the signed contract, had the greatest coup of the century at a bargain basement price. **The Beatles'** management was forced to keep their end of the deal. And, like a house in need of major restoration the entire music scene from Melbourne to Montreal, Sydney to Stockholm, Adelaide to Abilene, received a complete makeover at the hands of four boys from Liverpool.

When they finally arrived on their Ansett-ANA flight at 3.15 pm at Melbourne's Essendon Airport on a bleak and windswept afternoon, they drove around the tarmac in the rain on a flat-bed truck, partly obscured by black umbrellas. These were scenes which nobody, young or old could forget. All of a sudden the oldies were taking notice of a pop group and almost nodding in approval – what was happening? The Melbourne Town Hall reception - the seething 250,000 strong crowd in Exhibition Street - the obliging waves and smiles from The Southern Cross Hotel, Exhibition Street balcony – royalty had come to town! In Sydney, their humour and sincerity shone through. At the press conference they were subjected



The tour program for The Beatles in Australia - 1964. (Author's collection)

to the now expected, totally inane questions from reporters whose collective knowledge of pop music probably often struggled to break even. Here's, one for starters: "What do you expect to find in Australia?" Paul casually retorted back, "Australians". This refreshing candour caught many by surprise – they were pop stars and by tradition, they were expected to be unintelligent and unintelligible, rude and raucous!

36.

Melbourne and Festival Hall.

In Melbourne, they did six concerts in three days with only one show being filmed for Channel 9 – the one I was fortunate to be at. This was the 8 pm show where cameras were positioned in the balcony at the rear of the stadium. The cut-down version was shown on 1 July as *The Beatles Sing For Shell*. I can clearly remember Festival Hall, West Melbourne on this night, Wednesday 17 June, 1964. With friends, I was sitting with a very emotion-charged, totally excited and highly expectant audience patiently enduring the lead up acts including **Sounds Incorporated** and **Johnny Chester and The Chessmen** (sorry Johnny, but we *were* waiting for **The Beatles!**). This was the practice at the time in the style of The Big Shows – a number of acts and the headliners doing a shortish set. As The Fab Four hit the stage, I didn't know where my eyes should be – there was so much to take in. Weeks, maybe months of anticipation were over. The screaming was at an absolute crescendo.

The previous night's concert too, had been pure mayhem. Apparently, in the chaos, some sort of fracas or scuffle



The Beatles Melbourne press conference with Ringo back in the fold and Jimmy Nicol nowhere to be seen. He was, in fact, waiting at Essendon Airport for a plane to head home to England. (The Australian Women's Weekly, 1 July, 1964, published with permission from ACP Magazines Ltd)

took place at the side entrance door to the right of the stage. This, I found out much later probably concerned none other than **Ian "Molly" Meldrum** being forcibly ejected by bouncers after becoming so hysterical that without realising it, he had grabbed the hair of a girl in front – the result being that Meldrum and his mate, **Ronnie Burns** missed a unique moment - **The Beatles** on stage. [True story!](#)

The same "Molly", who was outside the Southern Cross Hotel on the day of their arrival, made a total goose of himself again by hurling his body onto the bonnet of the 'Beatles' car' as it pressed its way ever so slowly through the Exhibition Street crush. Maybe, he thought if they knocked him down, they would be kind enough to let him in the car. All was to no avail

because meanwhile, the Beatles had arrived in relative secrecy via the rear entrance to the hotel – the cars in Exhibition Street were no more than "decoys"... [Another true story!](#) Yet, Meldrum's reaction to **The Beatles** was not atypical of most teenagers worldwide – boys and girls alike.

It is well documented that **The Beatles**, with Ringo now back on the drummer's stool after a bout of tonsillitis replacing stand-in **Jimmy Nichol**, only appeared on stage for about half an hour (actually a ten-song set) – but that was long enough. The screams were absolutely deafening at various points and hardly waned as the boys launched into their hits up to that point in their career. I can testify that contrary to some reports, the band could be heard above the incredible din and actually sounded as I expected them to sound. A previous experience with **The Beach Boys** live at one of The Big Show tours at the same venue left me highly disappointed because they sounded nothing like their records. (I was a music critic at sixteen?) The reasons for this have become clear since – **The Beach Boys** were a vocal harmony group and weren't great musicians. In fact, on their records, they didn't play any instruments – this was done by well-known session musos. On the road however, the stressful grind of touring, problems with an



The Beatles at Festival Hall – ticket stub for the early show, Tuesday 16 June, 1964. (Courtesy of Nigel Shipley)

overbearing father/manager, arguments, fist fights, and the emotional strain they were experiencing had guaranteed a less than impressive show by the time they reached Melbourne.

Not so **The Beatles**. They were at the top of their game. Because I judged live rock bands by how close they sounded to their records, **The Beatles** were probably on my scale, an eight/nine out of ten on the night. *I actually*

37.

remember assisting in passing the limp bodies of girls who had fainted in the rows behind me, over my head and down to the



The Beatles on stage at Festival Hall, Melbourne. (The Australian Women's Weekly, 1 July, 1964, published with permission from ACP Magazines Ltd)

St. John's Ambulance people in front of me. John's on stage "spastic impersonation", though politically unacceptable now, hardly raised a ripple then; likewise, his Nazi salute earlier from The Southern Cross Hotel balcony. Strangely, after the concert was all over, there was not the least feeling of anticlimax in my mind. I know I stayed on a high for days on end. It was certainly the greatest single event I had ever experienced. I had been a keen rock concert goer even though I was only still in my mid-teens, but I knew that this was something very special that we were not likely to see repeated again by these boys or by anyone else for that matter. Full credit to my long-suffering dad who drove us all into West Melbourne and stayed in the parked car in nearby Dudley Street until the end of the concert, so he could deliver us all safely home.

Their satanic majesties...

If parents in 1964 were just getting to accept and even *like* what teenage music was at last delivering – neat, clean, approachable, happy and articulate pop stars – **The Rolling Stones** changed all that back in an instant. The sneering and sullen face of teenage rebellion that characterised the early rockers had returned and with it, a new sound – that of rhythm and blues. These five London boys dressed down, looked unkempt by the standards that **The Beatles** had set and rumours surfaced about these presumed dirty and unwashed new rock stars – something that their astute manager **Andrew Loog Oldham**, for publicity purposes wasn't about to correct. Their hair was creeping below their collars and their music took on a harder and tougher edge – mainly raw blues based on **Elmore James, Bo Diddley, Muddy Waters** and **Chuck Berry**. Much has been made of the rivalry between **The Beatles** and **The 'Stones** but in fact, they were friends, even participating in each others' recording sessions without the credits, as recording company contracts strictly forbade these favours. Between the two of them, these bands held the world by the balls! I became infatuated with The 'Stones and the whole rock star image and again, couldn't wait to see them in concert at The Palais on 29 January, 1965 on their very first tour. This was what the real world was all about.

For the future of Australian music and those in this country who had the talent and the guts to take rock music on, **Jim Keays** of **The Masters Apprentices** seems to sum up in his book, *His Masters Voice*, the feelings and response to what the country was experiencing;

JIM KEAYS: "The (Beatles) concert was one of the great days of my life and I made up my mind there and then that I had to be in a band." (Keays, 1999)

Those very same thoughts were obviously rattling around the heads of countless youngsters in Australian cities at the time. The benefits and possibilities that Beatlemania opened up for local bands and artists are immeasurable. Fortunately for us all, a number of local boys and girls - some like Jim, the children of recent migrants - went on to realise that dream.

Australia - serenity, sand and sunshine... oh, really?

Migration to Australia was undoubtedly an important factor in the growth of this country in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties. Needing a substantial job force to fill the burgeoning number of vacancies in an ever expanding post-war job market in all states, migrants were seduced into making the long voyage with their families to Australia. A

great many of these migrants were English who found the assisted passage to Australia too good to miss out on as it only cost them ten quid for the one way passage prompting them to be labelled, "ten-pound tourists".

From 1947 onwards, the scheme was heavily promoted in England where the Aussie sunshine and beaches shown in the advertisements seemed to contrast starkly with the dank, chilly, gloominess of British industrial cities which

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had still not recovered fully from the war and from the German bombing raids on home soil. The impression given at Australia House, the neo-classical building which served as the recruiting headquarters for Australia in London, was that Australia was just like England - but with *sun!* H..mmmm!!

Important for any understanding of the impact of the beat generation on Australian music is to recognise that



The P & O liner, Strathmore tied up at Station Pier, Port Melbourne in 1960 after disembarking its cargo of immigrants.

alongside those boys and girls who were born locally and who went on to be rock 'n roll hit-makers and consummate live performers, there was a large number who were children of migrant families, who picked up guitars, played drums or sang into a microphone and they were often the product of Australia's system of migrant hostels. Sometimes, in these temporary and Spartan half-way houses for the newly arrived, washhouses and laundries acted as echo-chambers. Some boys had cheap guitars and the communal recreation halls which each camp had, had stages on which to perform during their temporary stays in these camps.

From 1949 onwards, the gleaming, white P & O and Sitmar liners arriving at Station Pier Port Melbourne or Circular Quay, Sydney carried aboard them families of British migrants, and in due time liners from other nations carried those disgruntled and disassociated peoples from non - English speaking countries in eastern, southern and western Europe as the "Iron Curtain" descended on Europe. Australia's first non-British migrants were Latvians,

Dutch, Lithuanians and Estonians who arrived in 1947, but Greeks and Italians soon followed. All-comers were now welcome to try their hands at starting a new life in "The Lucky Country". The - "serenity, sand and sunshine" - mentality, echoed in the posters displayed at immigration centres in England and throughout Europe, painted that idyllic picture of space to spread out, unlimited freedom and golden, sun-drenched beaches for potential migrants.

These posters didn't exactly give the whole picture. While most migrants did eventually succeed and prosper in their adopted land, in the short term the reality of starting a new life here didn't quite fit the impression of Australia that they had been given. About one-quarter of British migrants chose to return to their homeland, (boomerang Poms!) but most stuck it out in their new country either taking the initiative in starting their own businesses or grasping labouring, factory and assembling jobs that many native-born Australians shunned. This resettlement was about filling the working-class jobs in this country - few newcomers at this level of migration were professionals. Large projects like The Snowy Mountains Scheme had a workforce comprised of nearly all non-English speaking migrants. For most, it was more difficult than they thought to establish themselves half way around the world.

Having left a situation in their homeland where they may have had to live in



Recruiting poster for prospective British migrants in the 'sixties.

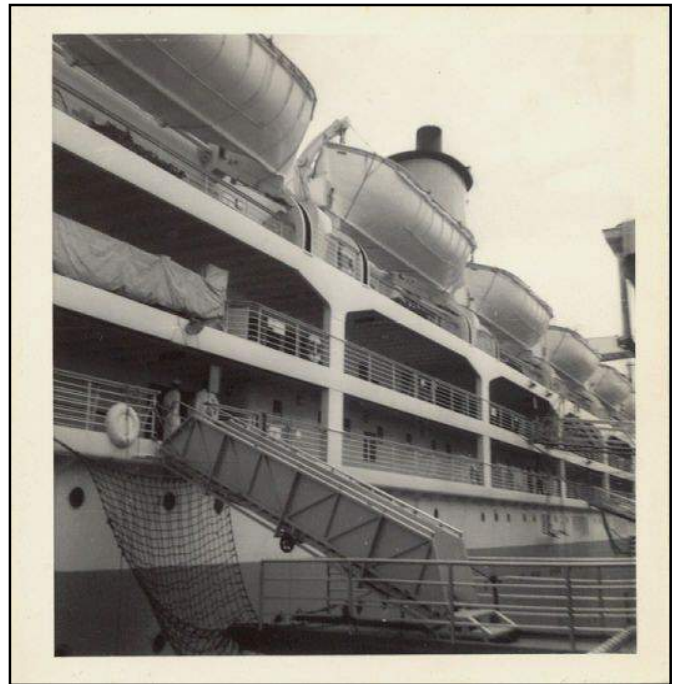
cramped or sub-standard conditions, hopes were high for new arrivals and their young families that a “new start” in a new country was the answer to many prayers, hopes and dreams. The sight of the tall buildings of Melbourne as the ship steamed through Port Phillip Heads and up the bay, or recognising The Harbour Bridge as Sydney drew closer, led to a release of euphoria and relief as the migrants

39.

scanned the horizon and gazed at this new and strange land. In their time on board ship they had probably spent five or six weeks at sea. There was, however a major hurdle to overcome as many migrants who didn't have sponsorship from this end or pre-arranged accommodation, were immediately ushered off into migrant hostels or as they were officially known, “Reception and Training Centres” located at **Villawood** and **East Hills** in Sydney; **Holmesglen**, **Fishermen's Bend**, **Nunawading** and **Broadmeadows** in Melbourne; **Greylands**, Perth; **Finsbury**, near Port Adelaide and **Pennington** at Salisbury, S.A.. There were certainly many other camps established in all states and in country towns like **Bonegilla**, Victoria. In this rural town, the government processed and temporarily housed the bulk of the Greek migrants who eventually settled in parts of Melbourne such as Latrobe Street, City and suburban Oakleigh.

Strangely foreboding and rather bleak, these hostels had been used as army camps during WWII and some were situated in remote places on the outskirts of the cities – hard to imagine now as the sprawling suburbs of our major cities caught up with and overtook these camps sometime during the 1970's housing boom. In particular, Holmesglen, in Warrigal Road, was located then on the eastern limits of the Melbourne metropolitan area – not much more there than a few isolated housing estates, farms and fruit orchards through to the Dandenongs in the late 'forties.

This complex had served the needs of the workers at the nearby tank construction facility, (now Holmesglen TAFE) until that closed down at war's end. The Migrant Hostel was situated between this saw-toothed, corrugated iron factory and a new sprawling government Housing Commission Estate which had opened in Jordanville, Chadstone and Ashburton



The Orsova, at Station Pier, 1960 – the migrants have embarked for their first look at Melbourne. The ship stands empty and waiting for tourists to board, ready for the return leg to England.

providing low-cost housing for mainly returned soldiers and their families.

My parents when they applied for housing, were given the alternative – Broadmeadows or Jordanville. As my father had been at Broadmeadows Army camp during the war, they thought Jordanville had to be better even though they had no idea where it was. We moved into a two bedroom concrete house on a large block of land there in early 1951. It was like a mansion in Toorak for my parents even though there were no footpaths, no roads and an outside dunny where the pan was emptied once a week by the nightman. Yet all families were young, married couples with kids.

Make it easier... help build Australia

BRING OUT A BRITON

To make Australia greater, richer, stronger, we must develop this country by expanding industry and primary production. By widening employment opportunities we raise the standards of living for all.

Part of the answer to a greater Australia is a greater population. We must have more people... more migrants who are:

- Qualified for modern, industry and technical advancement.
- Desirous for vocational demanding careers.
- Desirous for labor on rugged projects.

The Commonwealth Government has a major program designed to bring out a Briton which requires the migrant to pay only £10 leaving the rest free. The

scheme provides two main categories under which the Australian public can actively help to bring out more British migrants:

PERSONAL NOMINATION: Australian citizens and residents in Britain for wanted persons. The sponsor pays nothing, but the most favorable bonded living arrangement.

GROUP NOMINATION: Australian employers, including State Institutions. Many of these migrants are single men and women. The sponsor pays the cost of living arrangements. The Commonwealth also operates its own scheme to bring out more British migrants.

Make further detailed enquiries today!

IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK...

1. To obtain more information, write to the nearest British Consulate, or the Commonwealth Migration Office, 100 Victoria Street, Melbourne, Australia.

2. To obtain more information, write to the nearest British Consulate, or the Commonwealth Migration Office, 100 Victoria Street, Melbourne, Australia.

3. To obtain more information, write to the nearest British Consulate, or the Commonwealth Migration Office, 100 Victoria Street, Melbourne, Australia.

PEOPLE ARE CAPITAL—BRING OUT A BRITON—HELP TO DEVELOP AUSTRALIA

United Kingdom & Republic of Ireland
Commonwealth Migration Office, Department of Immigration,
8 Broadwick Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000 AUSTRALIA

EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE!

SENITT'S FOR THAT CREAMY FLAVOR

Yuck! Healthful! Delicious!

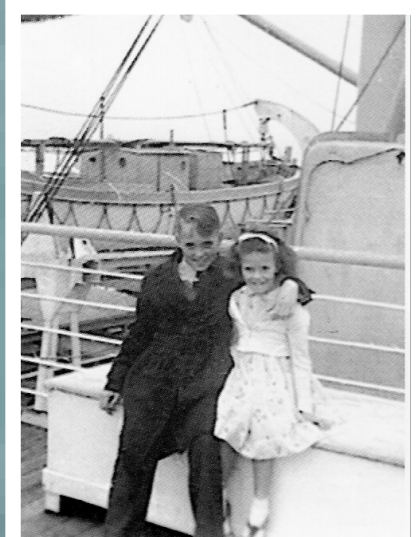
Make Sure You Get Sennitt's

SENNITT'S
Ice Cream

The old Holmesglen tank factory became the centre for building the 1950's prefabricated concrete houses in slab form to be transported to the mass government housing projects throughout Melbourne. No doubt, some migrants gained work there, or in the nearby Sennitt's Ice Cream

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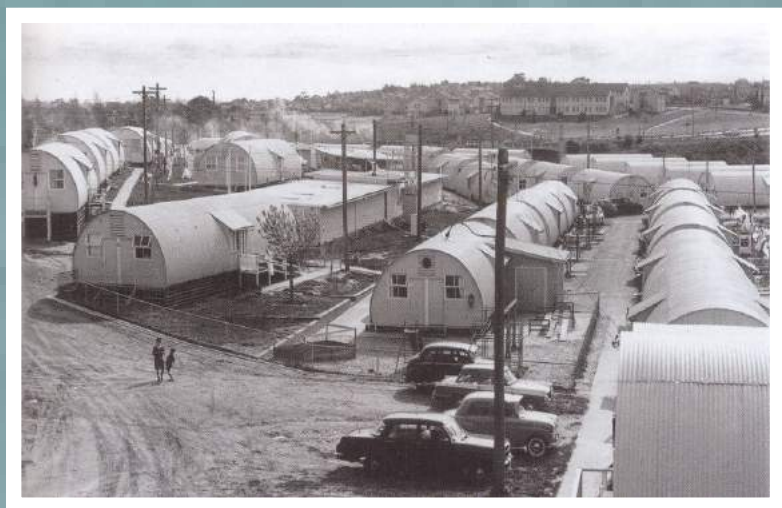
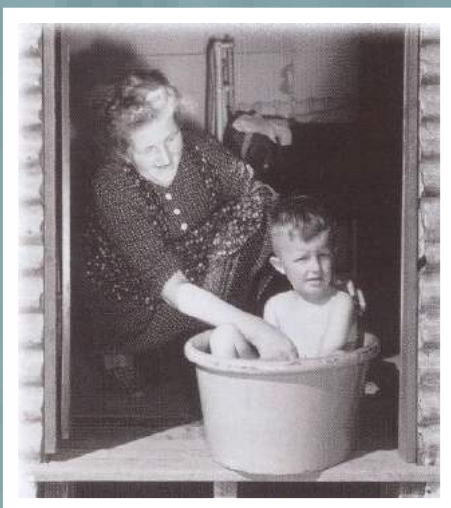
The Migrant Experience In Melbourne....



Many young migrants had to stay in migrant camps. Once used as army barracks, these migrant huts were occupied by the new arrivals from Britain and Europe throughout the 1950's. Everyone used the communal dining and recreational halls. Many camps similar to Holmesglen became fertile breeding grounds for kids to try out rock 'n roll.

Above left: The Willem Ruys at Station Pier, Port Melbourne in 1957. 'BEEB' BIRTLES (Zoot, Little River Band) is second from the left, on the railing and behind him is his father. Next to him is his mother and sister on the railings. (Courtesy of 'Beeb' Birtles.)

Above right: MPD's MIKE BRADY with his sister Elaine on the deck of the Strathnaver just before leaving London on 2 June, 1959. (Courtesy of Mike Brady)
Below, left and right - Holmesglen Migrant Hostel: published with permission from The Herald and Weekly Times Ltd.



factory and just to the north, packing biscuits on the conveyor belts of the booming Brockhoff's Biscuit factory in Burwood.

With its rows of round-roofed Nissen huts and communal dining facilities, the migrant hostel must have looked to the new arrivals very much like a concentration camp, without the barbed-wire and guard towers. It was here that these new-comers, particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds with no family or sponsors in Australia, were housed. The tin huts, frigid in winter and stiflingly hot in summer were divided down the centre by nothing more than a light partition – each hut housing four families until they could find their own accommodation in the expanding suburbs.

During the decade of the sixties, migration accounted for an increase in the Australian population of upward of 650,000 people. Those lucky enough to avoid long periods in the migrant hostels and who went into temporary accommodation did so usually until they could become part of the great Australian dream of owning their own house – something that was probably going to be an impossibility in their respective homelands. There it was – the typical suburban triple-fronted brick veneer or weatherboard cottage; two or three bedrooms with a front garden, back yard with the Hills hoist, a tool shed and a neat brick and wrought iron front fence. The factory job and maybe a second job could pay the mortgage over time – it was really an achievable dream.

Little boy sad...

Those who went to Holmesglen or to Nunawading Hostel a little further out in the suburbs/country were the lucky ones. A youngster named **Mike Brady** had arrived at Melbourne's Station Pier aboard the old P & O liner, *Strathnaver* from England in July, 1959. He was eleven years old and like his parents and their fellow British migrants, he didn't know what was awaiting him.



Mike Brady (centre) with two mates from the Fishermen's Bend hostel, practices outside the wash house. (Courtesy of Mike Brady)

11 years old." (Brady, op cit, 17 May, 2006)



MPD Ltd., with Mike Brady on the right. (Everybody's Magazine, 11 May, 1966).

Brady, who with **Danny Finley** and **Peter Watson** formed the band, **MPD Ltd** in 1965 was to eventually score a huge number one hit with **Johnny Burnette's** *Little Boy Sad*:

MIKE BRADY: We arrived here on July 5, 1959 at approximately 2.37 in the afternoon and I believe it was the coldest winter day on record. We thought we were coming to a place full of sunshine and kangaroos and it was full of stray dogs... cold and damp. And I absolutely hated it. My first impressions were ... we stayed on the ship the first night and we walked to the city ... up Bay Street... all round the city ... had a hamburger for the first time in my life and then back to the ship. The next day, they put us on these Metropolitan Tramways Buses with "square" wheels because Bay Street Port Melbourne still had those wooden blocks left in it. And we bounced all the way into the city and I just hated it. I cried myself to sleep the first night. I was

Brady recalls his first impressions of the Fisherman's Bend Migrant Hostel, located smack in the middle of Port Melbourne's, Lorimer Street heavy industrial centre and dock wasteland. This region in 1959 was as unpleasant as any heavy industrial city in Europe and the most unpleasant part of Melbourne in which to locate a migrant camp, 42.

considering the Utopian visions of Australia presented to the prospective migrants by the propaganda from Australia House in London:

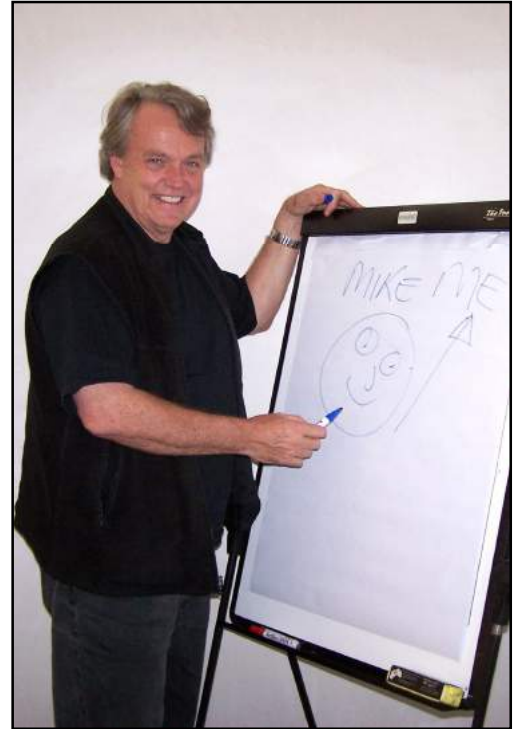
MIKE BRADY: "...they gave us our stickers for Fishermen's Bend and we thought it sounded really wonderful... some people got Bonigilla, some people got Brooklyn, Holmesglen. But we got Fishermen's Bend and so it was back on the "bouncing" bus to Fishermen's bend. It was sandwiched between Lysaght's Steel on one side, International Harvester on the other and some asbestos and plaster factory on the other end. There were abattoirs all around so the smells were from the constantly burning Port Melbourne tip, the pigs having the hair burnt off them ... they'd slaughter them then hang them ... so the smell of burning flesh...well... it was an absolute dog's breakfast of stench. Not a very nice place. The hostel was disgusting. Just about every kid got Hepatitis, I didn't. There were open drains ... terribly unhygienic. We were supposed to be there for two years, we stayed for four, because my dad was sick and my mum had two more babies. It was a pretty shitty place and we were isolated but having said that, it was only a decent walk to the beach at Port Melbourne and that used to slake my homesickness because I used to see the ships coming in. My intention for quite some time was to get back to England as soon as I possibly could because I hated the place." (Brady, op cit, 17 May, 2006)

On average, a stay in a Migrant Hostel would be no longer than two years at which point or preferably before, the family would seek its own accommodation. As with all hostels, a canteen and recreation hut was provided – often bare and empty except for a broken down table-tennis table or two. The experience was common to all migrant hostels regardless of the location. Fishermen's Bend was just that much more unbearable because of the environment. The Nissen huts at Fishermen's Bend were similar to those at Holmesglen with each one divided for four different families. Each "flat" here had three rooms – a living room in the centre with a bedroom at each end – almost luxury but little consolation when the residents stepped out into the acrid and putrid air, generated by factory pollution which often continued right around the clock. In the camp, there were open drains – the toilets and showers were outside and hepatitis was almost as common as catching a cold. Local boys jeered through the wire fence and tried to provoke trouble.

Brady subscribes to the assumption that the migrant hostels were, in part responsible for the seemingly large number of migrant kids who made up the roll-call of Australia's prominent musicians of the period:

MIKE BRADY: "I've got a theory on that. Migrant hostels were pretty boring places. It was communal living and there wasn't a lot else to do other than gather, in winter when it was cold and wet, in the wash house. The wash houses were concrete and they would echo, and the kids would all stand around singing. There wasn't much else to do – there was a communal television room... you didn't want to stay in the hut because it was too small with your parents and in a lot of cases with younger brothers and sisters.

But what I think triggered this too was that you had this nice communal venue, but you had, all of a sudden coming from England especially, all this new music. All of a sudden we were getting commercial radio when we only had the BBC in England – all the best of America ... a bit of Australian music, a bit of British. So they became quite inspired. England had become such a cool place. Even prior to The Beatles it had become a great music place. The English kids arriving here now, were much cooler kids than we were because it seemed that they were from the centre of the musical universe." (Brady, op cit, 17 May, 2006)



Mike Brady currently heads up a successful advertising business and lives not far from the place he first called home in Melbourne, the old Fishermen's Bend Migrant Hostel, Port Melbourne.

So with guitar in hand, he soon met up with a group of fellow migrant boys, this time from the Nunawading Hostel who had been playing rock 'n roll around town as **The Phantoms**. All were British lads as well – **Dave Lincoln, Alan Fenton, Gene Taylor** and **Pete Watson** and they played as a Shadows-style instrumental group in
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the same circles as the other Melbourne pre-Beatles instrumental bands such as **The Chessmen** and **The Thunderbirds**. Brady, at 17 years of age was already playing in a lesser group called **The Hearsemen** when he responded to a newspaper advertisement by **The Phantoms** for a fill-in guitarist. The couple of months that Brady and Watson played together in the band were significant to both and led to the formation of **MPD Ltd**, while **The Phantoms** effectively came to an end at the same time – around 1965 – victims of musical progress.

It's a long way there...

'Beeb' Birtles (Gerard Bertelkamp) now an Aussie legend through his bass guitar vibes and vocals with the



The left-handed bassman, 'Beeb' Birtles in his early days in Adelaide with The Zoot. (Courtesy of 'Beeb' Birtles)

groundbreaking bands, **Zoot, Mississippi** and **The Little River Band**, recalls through his family website biography, how in 1957 as a nine-year old he arrived with his family from Holland on the passenger ship, *Willem Ruys*. Back home, he remembers the promotional films which were shown to prospective migrants extolling the virtues of the new lands – the Bertelkamp family chose Australia from the list which included Rhodesia, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand.

Arriving firstly in Melbourne, the family was immediately shunted off to South Australia where they were taken to the "holding centre" in the Adelaide Hills at Woodside until space could be found for them elsewhere. As a timid nine-year old, 'Beeb' remembers the raucous, bush echoes of the kookaburras, the not so friendly pecks on the head from the swooping magpies in nesting season and the racket at night which terrified the women, caused by possums on the tin roof of the laundry hut. Then on to Finsbury for the family – and more tin huts. 'Beeb' has similar memories to **Mike Brady** and recalls:

'BEEB' BIRTLES: "The huts were made out of corrugated iron just like the army barracks used to be. No heating or air conditioning and so they would get extremely hot in the summer. All the hostels had central food halls where the migrants would line up for their food. They served three meals a day cafeteria style. The men as well as the children could get lunches packed in brown paper bags to take with them to work and school. There was no heating or air conditioning. The shared laundry and toilet facilities were very poor as there was no soap with which to wash your hands. ('Beeb' Birtles, email correspondence, 19 March, 2006)

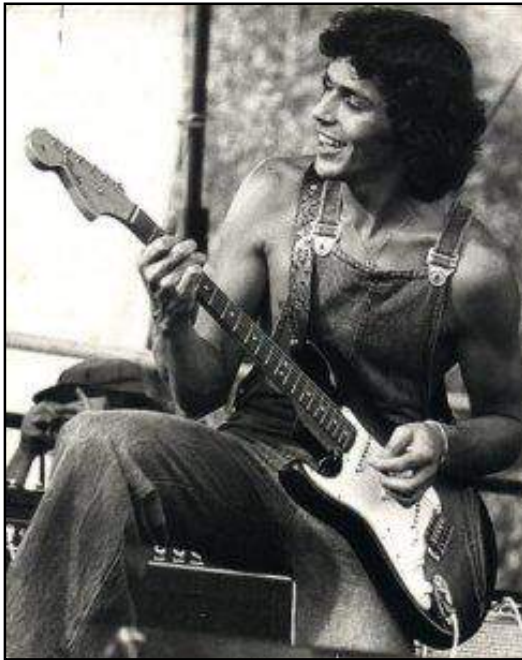
This lack of sanitation in Finsbury was directly responsible for young 'Beeb' contracting an infectious liver disease and landing him in Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital:

'BEEB' BIRTLES: "Because of this, I developed Hepatitis C and had to be confined in Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital for three long weeks. There I was, a ten year old Dutch boy, unable to speak the language and away from my family. It devastated my mother to the extent that when I was finally released, she put her foot down and made my father take out a loan to buy a block of land in Netley. My father bought a corrugated iron garden shed that became our living room, kitchen and their bedroom and he rented a caravan for a year that served as my sister's and my bedroom. If you can picture this corrugated iron shed with a caravan parked next to it out in the middle of what was then nothing but sand dunes, that's how we lived. Our closest neighbours were the Colletts, an Australian family who owned a farm and were kind enough to give us our fresh water every day that we carried back to our shed and caravan in buckets. To us, it was the norm." ('Beeb' Birtles, op cit, 19 March, 2006)

The collective experiences of the Bertelkamp family would be shared by a generation of migrants and their children. 'Beeb's school experience was peppered with the memories of the same tricks all local kids played on

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the "new Aussies" – teaching them swear words at school and watching them get the "cuts" from a teacher when they innocently tried out their new vocabulary. Then there was that reading/writing literacy barrier for the non-English migrants – bad enough for the kids but often nearly impossible for the adults to crack. Local people weren't very tolerant or particularly patient with them when they couldn't speak "our lingo". Migrant boys and girls were expected to learn the language from scratch and sort through the myriad of colloquialisms and regional slang as well as cope with the "formal English" component taught at school. Many were "kept down" or even thumped



'Beeb' was an important member of Zoot, Frieze (with Darryl Cotton), Mississippi and The Little River Band. (Courtesy of 'Beeb' Birtles, photographer unknown)

with a ruler for the slightest misdemeanour when they didn't perform well in class. 'Beeb' recalls that one day at Netley, he failed to spell "Sydney" correctly and was smacked with a ruler repeatedly across the backs of his legs by his first teacher until they became red raw. However, 'Beeb' is convinced that this incident had a positive affect and spurred him on to become accomplished at English:

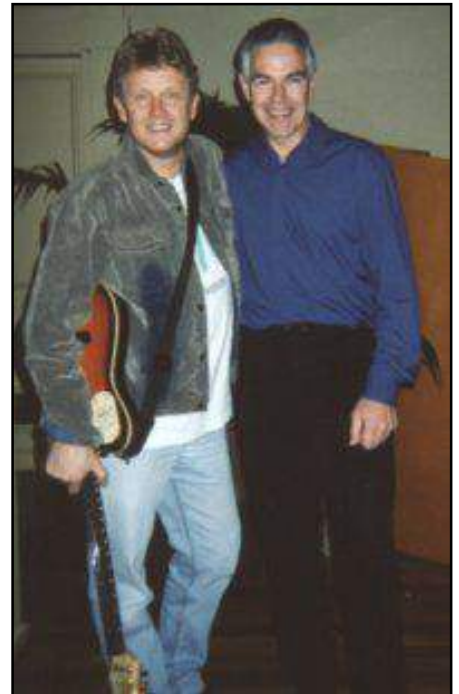
'BEEB' BIRTLES: "The English migrants had no problem speaking the language of course, but children like myself from the European mainland were thrown in with Australian children and had to fend for ourselves when it came to making ourselves understood. There were more than a few occasions when the Australian and English kids would teach us bad words to go and say to teachers. And obviously that landed us in big trouble! ('Beeb' Birtles, op cit, 19 March, 2006)

The great Australian dream...

The Villawood camp in Sydney was the equivalent of the Fishermen's Bend, Holmesglen, Nunawading and Finsbury Hostels – little difference in the conditions – just the location. Villawood acted as a catalyst for a group of boys, two Dutchmen, a Scot and a couple of English

lads ranging in ages from fourteen to twenty-four to meet, write and play music. Gathering together despite language differences to form a camp band, they later became the **The Easybeats**.

Bringing the new beat music to Australia, some migrant boys were old enough to have had musical experience from what was becoming an explosion of new groups in Europe and Britain by 1964. Johannes Vandenberg (**Harry Vanda**) had already played Shadows-type music in an outfit called **The Starfighters** before accompanying his family to Australia, (living temporarily at Villawood.) **Stevie Wright**, a 15 year-old migrant from Leeds, England was fronting a local band called **The Outlaws**. After four years spent in Melbourne following the family's arrival there, his dad joined the Australian Army. Stevie and his family relocated to Sydney when his father transferred there, setting up home just opposite the Villawood centre. If proof is needed of the transmission of the new music from Europe to Australia, it's not necessary to look further than the Young family, also temporary residents at Villawood. Arriving with his family from Scotland, **George Young** already had an older brother who had played in bands back in London and had remained there when the family sailed for Australia. In time, George's younger brothers **Angus** and



'Beeb' with his old band mate, Darryl Cotton in 2002. (Courtesy of 'Beeb' Birtles)

Malcolm experienced the growing pains of **The Easybeats** first hand when they practiced initially in the communal laundry at Villawood hostel, then at the suburban home which the

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Young family bought in the early 'sixties. They in turn, became founders of arguably Australia's best and most sustained rock export to the world, **AC/DC**. Easybeats' **Gordon "Snowy" Fleet** had already been the drummer for **The Mojos** in his hometown of Liverpool. Dutchman **Dingeman Vandersluys (Dick Diamonde)** had been in Australia since he was four years old and when he joined **The Easybeats**, the band began to take shape.

One advantage which migrants had was that many had brought their new beat records with them at a time when the music was fresh and few radio stations in Australian cities were playing this type of music. They could be months ahead of any record releases in Australia. So to further emphasise the point, in a period of peak migration, we know a disproportionately large number of those "adopted Aussies" - singers and musicians with Australia's 'sixties and 'seventies bands - came to this country as migrant children or as young adults. Even if some were too young to be influenced by the scene at home, they were certainly caught up in the flow-on effect in their adopted country. **Jim Keays**, who arrived from Scotland in 1950, believes that the effect that British migrants in particular had on the face of music is significant:

JIM KEAYS: "I think that it was probably that they had that connection with England. They had been exposed to what was going on there. England, of course, was the centre of rock 'n roll with The Beatles in that early 'sixties period. Anything that was any good came out of England and the kids were influenced by that. And in a lot of instances as was our case, (**The Masters Apprentices**) we would play to audiences who were all British migrants and they would give us tips on how to sound and dress, because they had been over there watching The Kinks, The Beatles and The Who only weeks before. It was all very current. So when you make up a list of the great bands in Australia at the time probably about 80% were migrants. They definitely had a big influence. (Keays, author's interview, 8 March, 2006)

Coming from a non-English background, **'Beeb' Birtles (Zoot, Little River Band)** believes that this was not necessarily so in his case, because he was encouraged musically by his parents. He acknowledges that because Britain was where it was all happening, English migrants were probably the ones who were more influenced:

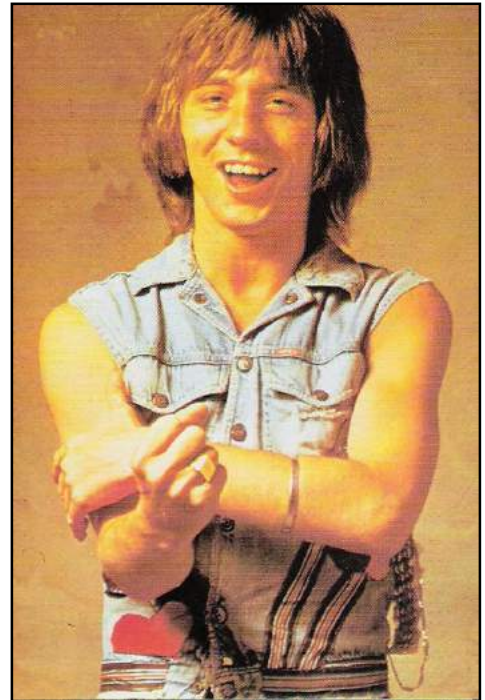
'BEEB' BIRTLES: "Not so for me as my parents had bought me a piano accordion when I was 8 and I had taken lessons for a couple of years prior to us migrating to Australia. And it wasn't until I was in high school that mostly the English kids brought with them the music and the clothes from the then emerging British bands invasion. I was too young to have brought any musical influences with me from Holland. It all happened from England. But I agree that it was mostly the migrant kids who formed the bands. ('Beeb' Birtles, op cit, 19 March, 2006)

There is a large "guest" list of those who came here as children and have called Australia home. This list includes: **ENGLAND:** John Farnham, Billy Thorpe, Stevie Wright, Barry, Maurice and Robin Gibb, Olivia Newton-John, Gerry Humphrys, Ted Mulry, Broderick Smith, Glenn Shorrock and Terry Britten, (Twilights), Red Symons, Jon English, Tony Barber (Aztecs) Mike Brady and Peter Watson (M.P.D. Limited), Tony Worsley (The Blue Jays), John Bell (The Throb), Peter Bruce (The Groop), Lynne Randell, Chris Stockley, (Flying Circus & Dingoes), Steve Prestwich (Cold Chisel) Mick Hadley and Bob Dames (both of The Purple Hearts), Ian Ferguson, (The Moods & Carson).

THE NETHERLANDS: Harry Vanda, Dick Diamonde, 'Beeb' Birtles, bluesman 'Dutch' Tilders and Marty Van Wynn (The Throb).

DUTCH INDONESIA: Johnny Young and Marty Rhone.

IRELAND: Bon Scott, 'Doc' Neeson and 'Paddy' McCartney (The Twilights).



The "Black-Eyed Bruiser" himself - Stevie Wright from his 1975, EMI album of the same name.

SCOTLAND: Jim Keays, Colin Hay, John Paul Young, Barry McAskill (Levi Smith's Clefs), Jimmy Barnes, John "Swanee" Swan, Fred Pickard (The Purple Hearts) and Betty McQuade.

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MALTA: Joe Camilleri.

CANADA: Wendy Matthews.

BANGLADESH: Colin Cook.

It's no real coincidence that Australia's rock 'n roll tradition is studded with the children of post-World War II migrants. Perhaps the harsh conditions that some experienced in their old homeland or in the Migrant Hostels here, the struggle to establish a better life for themselves and the necessity to band together as "New Australians", could be given as reasons why their determination to succeed in rock music was so strong. It is certainly true that some found it difficult to gain acceptance in their new schools, their neighbourhoods and their communities.

It wasn't so bad for kids who spoke English to make friends because even though to the locals, they had a funny accent, the thinking was that they at least spoke English. But those who arrived from southern or eastern European countries were positively ostracised and found it difficult to assimilate into the native population. Therefore, banding together with others in the same predicament seemed natural.

Adelaide and the transplanted beat...

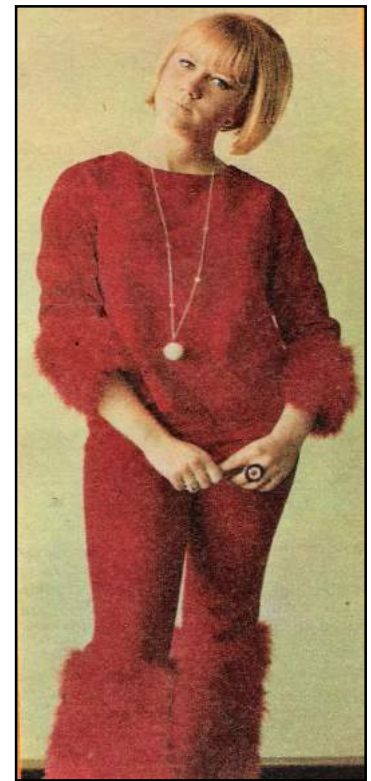
Many adult migrants shared an additional desire to outperform the locals, usually in business as if they had something extra to prove from a stronger and better work ethic and this may have been instilled in their offspring. Greeks were known for their fish and chip shops and Italians often bought and operated the local Milk Bars and greengroceries as an alternative to settling for labouring jobs on the roads or packing from a conveyor belt in a factory. Over the border in South Australia, Elizabeth was Adelaide's "satellite city" and was a purpose-built town constructed to house the large workforce needed to run the nearby General Motors Holden plant. It drew many migrants, particularly English, with young families to the area and to its workforce. It was also fertile ground for aspiring rockers whose choices seemed limited at that stage to following their parents into the factories and the motor plant. Elizabeth and Salisbury too, were built on the desolate outskirts of a major city



The Masters Apprentices – still in Adelaide and already Mark III. From left, Tony Summers, Steve Hopwood, Jim Keays, Mick Bower and Gavin Webb. (Photographer unknown - courtesy of Jim Keays)

and their populations quickly increased with mainly British migrants taking advantage of the cheaper housing, available near where they worked. The homes were adequate, if not a little austere in their facilities – but it was a house and land even if it was located at the southern limits of the arid South Australian interior where searing, northerly winds sent temperatures soaring for months on end in summer.

Adelaide can lay claim to four of the biggest and most progressive bands of the mid-'sixties, **The Masters Apprentices, The Twilights, The Levi Smith's Clefs** and **Zoot**, all of whom re-located to Melbourne after gaining a substantial following in the city of churches. **The Beatles** visit can also take much credit for the healthy rock tradition which grew up in Adelaide in the wake of the 1964 tour. It was probably due to the large English population in and around Adelaide that the sound that these local bands were putting out was pure, imported beat music although at this stage, not sophisticated enough to be as good as **The Beatles** and other groups had come up with.



Lynne Randell, like the Beatles - was born in Liverpool. She arrived at the age of five and settled in Murrumbena. (Everybody's magazine, 20 June, 1966)

The new mod haircuts, Beatle boots and Carnaby Street - style

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imitation suits did give them that authentic British look and edge and the music was really booming with packed church halls and local dances giving these bands the chance to perform on a regular basis. In no time at all they were perfecting their own, new beat sound. **Jim Keays** recalls an early rock 'n roll venue called **The Princeton**



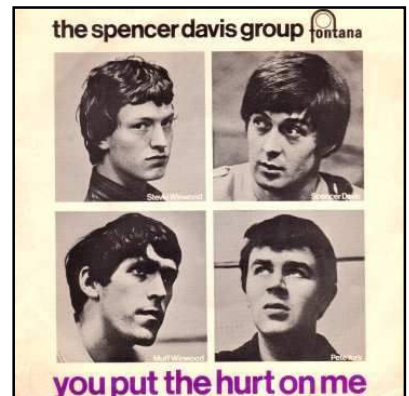
The first Rolling Stones record I ever bought – the EP – Five By Five released in 1964.

where he became a Saturday night regular listening to **The Clefs** with **Johnny Mac**, and **The Viscounts**. The queue to get in regularly stretched down Greenhill Road. At the same time, Jim had the good fortune to meet and audition for **The Mustangs** - **Mick Bower**, **Brian Vaughton**, **Rick Morrison** and **Gavin Webb** who needed a vocalist. They had been playing Shadows material for quite a while and were in need of a beat makeover – Jim gave them this and they went on to become **The Masters Apprentices**. (Keays, 1999).

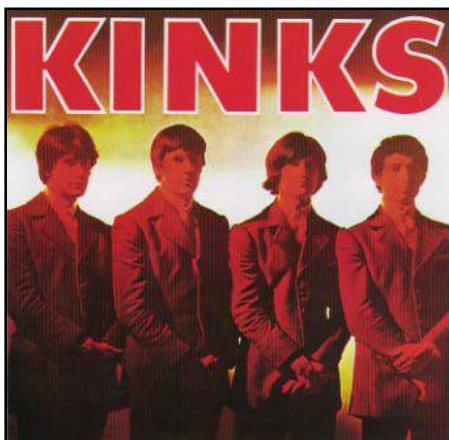
In all, from 1963 it took little time for **The Beatles**, **The Rolling Stones**, **The Who**, **The Hollies**, **Cilla Black**, **The Kinks**, **The Dave Clark Five**, **Gerry and the Pacemakers**, **Brian Poole** and **the Tremeloes**, **Procol Harem**, **The Small Faces**, **The Spencer Davis Group** and a myriad of other British

Beat bands to sweep into the Australian Top 40 Charts and entrench themselves there, as they had done throughout the rest of the world. It is probably true to say that the Aussie bands which sprung up around the country as the new rock music took over, modelled themselves very closely on their British counterparts. But it's not entirely accurate to say that as they improved, they remained merely Beatles- or 'Stones-clones. It is more likely to suggest that the Brits really created the foundations and the atmosphere in Australia for early Aussie bands like **The Twilights**, **Zoot** or **The Masters Apprentices** to generate their initial momentum, push through the adversity and survive in their own right.

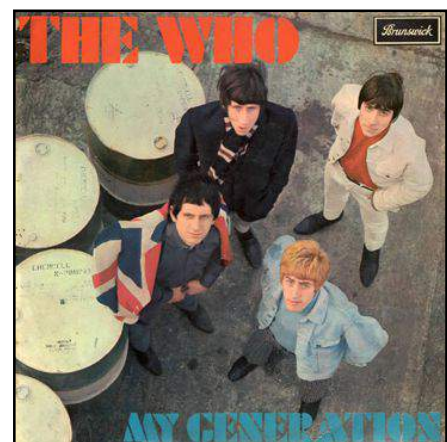
Very soon, a distinctive form of 'sixties Australian progressive rock was to develop and Melbourne, boasting the top venues in the country, became the place to show just what a band could deliver unfettered in a live context. Many of the country's top singers and groups relocated here from other states as the scene began to take shape. This city also had a large, music-hungry and appreciative public to enjoy the experience.



The Spencer Davis Group featuring the bluesy vocals of 16 year-old Steve Winwood. They had an enormous hit with *Gimme Some Loving*. This EP is from 1965.



The Kinks - I bought it on a whim one day back in 1965 at Brashes in Chadstone – what a great introduction to a great R & B band.



Another best of the Brits – The Who with their first LP release. It included their huge hit – with Roger Daltry's stuttering, *My Generation*.

PSYCHEDELIA AND THE HIPPIE MOVEMENT - 1967.

Into the maelstrom created by of the worldwide British Beatlemania phenomenon in the first half of the decade of the 'sixties, came a new influence on the scene with some distinctly darker and deeper overtones. The times they were certainly a-changin' – yet again. In America, established artists had been bewildered by the British onslaught and were fighting back as the red-hot world music scene that the Brits had created, began to cool down and stabilise a little. Just as **The Twilights** in Australia were labelled "Australia's Beatles", **The Byrds**, led by **Roger** (or as he then was - Jim?) **McGuinn** were immediately labelled "America's Beatles".

In truth, they didn't at any stage set out to copy **The Beatles** or deliberately sound like them, despite McGuinn being obsessed with the twelve-string Rickenbacker guitar that Lennon played so successfully in the opening chords to *Ticket To Ride* and *A Hard Day's Night*. McGuinn bought his own "Rick" on his return to California after a tour. There is no doubt that **The Byrds** were just like every other band in the world – they couldn't help but be influenced by the Fab Four in some way. After all, **The Beatles** had changed music forever. From a different background to **The Beatles**, McGuinn had been a devoted folkie having played in Greenwich Village, New York before meeting up with **Michael Clark**, **Chris Hillman**, **David Crosby** and **Gene Clark** on California's sunny, west coast shores.



They came from folk origins to pop – The Byrds from the cover of their 1965 Columbia Album *Mr. Tambourine Man* with its fish-eye photo by Barry Feinstein. They fought often amongst themselves, but produced brilliant music.



The Mamas And The Papas – John Phillips, "Mama" Cass Elliot, Denny Doherty and Michelle Phillips – cleaned up on the pop charts. From the cover of their first album – *If You Can Believe Your Eyes And Ears*. (Photo – Guy Webster.)

The Americans had been somewhat stunned by the British assault on their Top 40 charts and to their credit, they turned this into an advantage and learnt from the experience. Folk artists were the first to take on the challenge by downing their acoustic guitars and plugging new electric guitars into amps to create what we now might call "folk rock". Within a short time California, specifically San Francisco, was the place to be with groups like **The Mamas And The Papas**, led by "Mama" Cass Elliott with that silky soft voice, **The Fifth Dimension**, **Scott McKenzie** and **The Lovin' Spoonful**, (the band name heralding an early connection with drugs).

Dylan himself, after recovering from a motorcycle accident, stunned his fans by coming out on stage at **The Newport Folk Festival** in July, 1965 with an all-electric band. When he launched into *Maggie's Farm* and *Like A Rolling Stone* on the Newport stage the pro-folk crowd was momentarily stunned. There was a clearly discernable level of opposition towards his "selling out" to the new music. But electrified music was here to stay. **Brian Wilson's Beach Boys'** surf sound had become completely redundant once **The Beatles** hit the USA, but even the innovative, enigmatic and

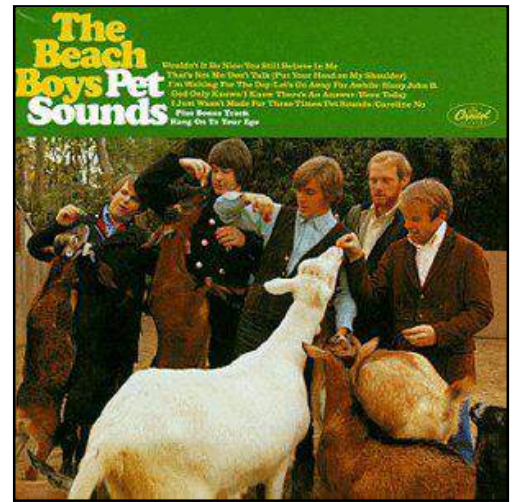
troubled Wilson saw the way forward through new musical direction and experimentation, (with both music and drugs). The result – possibly the most influential album of all time, 1966's *Pet Sounds*.

In Australia, it seemed that every kid wanted to pick up a guitar or a set of drumsticks and form a band. Thus the term “garage music” was coined because in suburbia, that was the best place to practice, when dad had the

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family car out. It was a time of great experimentation in music and as a result, rock ‘n roll took on a heavier and darker edge, despite the incursive efforts of **The Monkees** and **The Partridge Family**, attempting to lighten it all up. In the ‘States, **Jerry Garcia’s Grateful Dead**, **Frank Zappa’s Mothers Of Invention**, **The Doors** with the ultimate rockster, **Jim Morrison** and other darker San Franciscan bands, increased the depth and expansiveness of rock music and began to enhance the possibilities for creating new sounds.

Meanwhile, in New York and Detroit other forms of American music had entered the mix, though the influence exerted by **Andy Warhol’s** beat musicians. The influence that they had on the overall rock scene has taken some time to appreciate. The vicious proto-punk sounds of **MC5**, **The Velvet Underground**, **Lou Reed**, **Patti Smith** and **The New York Dolls** fed into the mix despite being diametrically opposed to the emerging peace and love which had descended on San Francisco by mid-decade. From Detroit – the motor city - a distinct new “black” sound emerged promoted by **Phil Spector** – with his “wall of sound”. The girl-groups in particular like **The Supremes** with **Dianna Ross** and **The Ronettes** had hit records all around the world.



It's been called, "...the most influential album of all time." **Pet Sounds**. (Capitol Records)

Expanding the consciousness...

Live music too, began to expand its horizons as more and more people wanted to catch the exciting spectacle of bands in full flight on stage. Viewed against the changes in society which were happening, the new approach to sexuality, morality and the overall life experience of love and freedom for the kids, meant a new level of independence not experienced by young people before. This was expressed in their attitudes towards the more conventional morality of the clean-cut college-based folk generation as well as that of their parents. Drugs were



The drawing by **Julian Lennon** that started off the whole **Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds** saga. (Source unknown)

beginning to kick in, particularly the mind-expanding LSD and amphetamines although, outside of San Francisco and New York, they were not widely available until later in the ‘sixties.

This is particularly true of Australia as we looked on in amazement at kids painting their faces, dancing and tripping out, trance-like, on the new substances which had not really made their way to this country. “Psychedelic” became the way to categorise all things hippie - swirling images, patterns of light and a chemical-induced consciousness were naturally associated with mind expanding drugs such as LSD.

Was this all new? Well.. no, actually. Hallucinogenic drugs had been around since the 1950’s (maybe even earlier) and it had long been acknowledged that the experience of listening to music could be enhanced by hallucinogenics – music could have *colour* and *form* and there was also the feeling of warping or distorting the sounds, thoughts and visions. Many users reported that the affects of mind-altering drugs remained long after the immediate affects of the actual drug had worn off.

By 1966, many of the leading musicians of the time were openly using LSD and “magic mushrooms”, (though not admitting to it) giving rise to the musical tag of ‘acid rock’. True, many songwriters either deliberately or unintentionally wound drug themes into their songs. As well, the keen-eyed scrutineers of the time were reading drug themes and messages into the songs. Such an example could be **The Byrds**, **Eight Miles High** – (were Crosby and his fellow Birds really alluding to drug experiences?). Then there was the controversy over **The Beatles**, **Lucy In**

The Sky With Diamonds – LSD – coincidence or not, it caused a minor furore at the time of the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* release which happened to coincide with San Francisco's famed "Summer of Love" (1967).

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Certainly it had that mystic, transcendental, wafting quality about it.

Is it all just chicken shit?

It might be drawing a very long bow to equate the zenith of musical experimentation and song writing in England, America and Australia during the 'sixties and the 'seventies, with the rise of hallucinogenic drug use amongst musicians. But it is interesting to compare the era when the best, most creative and experimental rock 'n roll songs of all time were written, with the time of peak psychedelic drug use. Somehow, they both seem to match up. Is this coincidence?

The characteristics of acid rock music were the floating, cyclical melodies, the use of eastern and other exotic instruments to create a drone-like structure and the studio-enhanced instrumentation. The music tended to create patterns and swirls. It is difficult to gauge the effect that the acid rock and psychedelic music coming from California had on Australian bands and songwriters, but many bands which were around in 1967, did take the trend on board. (For example, **Russell Morris'** *The Real Thing*, written by **Johnny Young** and **The Masters Apprentices'** *Living In A Child's Dream* and *Because I Love You*, featuring **Doug Ford's** superb, wafting guitar work). However, were they influenced by the musical trend coming through or by the actual experience of taking mind-expanding drugs? – unfortunately, this can't be easily traced and nailed down as many musicians still do not readily admit to dabbling in LSD. Oh.. some do admit it but can't remember! The influence was certainly there.

Mike Rudd, by 1973, had formed **Ariel** and their first LP release, the acclaimed *A Strange Fantastic Dream* featured all the key elements of psychedelia – visions, dreams, distortions, eastern influences and ... a huge, dripping hypodermic needle on the **Stephen Nelson** designed front album cover!:

MIKE RUDD: "... the first album, *A Strange Fantastic Dream*, provoked controversy from the moment it was released – the cover alone was deserving of that singular selling device that hadn't been thought of in the '70s – a warning sticker. I mean, there was a dirty, great hypodermic needle dominating the front cover for Christ's sake. We may just as well 'fessed up that we were drug addicts and checked ourselves in for rehab' right there and then." (Rudd, liner notes to *The Jellabad Mutant*, 2002)

It was immediately banned as much for the artwork as it was for three tracks deemed as being offensive. I ask you - could anyone in 1973 be offended by a song titled *Chicken Shit*? Welldamned right they could! Not only was there an expletive in the title, the whole song was ostensibly drug-related. Here's an example of the lyrics:

*"When your pusher comes around
Knocks upon the door
Waste no time
Knock him on the ground*

*'Fore he says a word
Scream out loud –*

*I need a fix now
A fix of Chicken Shit
None of your tricks now
I need that Chicken Shit*

*Chicken Shit is such a groove
It's really outta sight
Try it lumpy – try it smooth
But try some Chicken
Shit tonight
Sprinkle it with sugar*



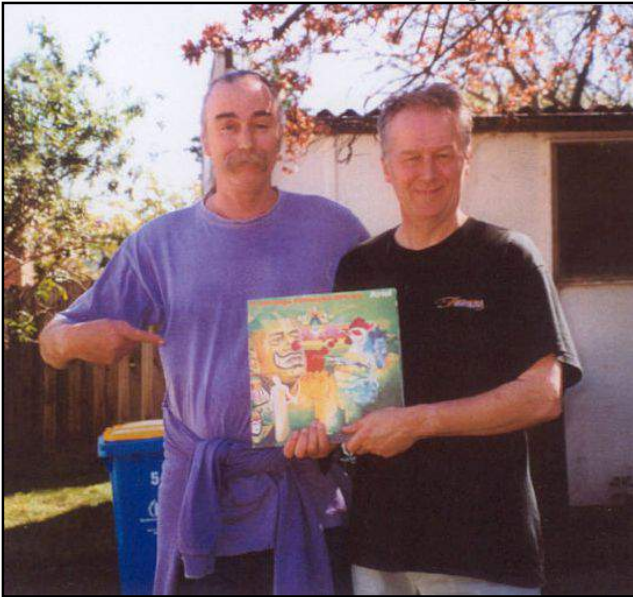
Ariel, from their 1976 album – *Goodnight Fiona* – **Tony Slavich, Nigel Macara, Mike Rudd, Glyn Mason and Bill Putt** – (Photo by **Ken Wright, EMI Records**)

For the taste thrill of the year."

(Reproduced courtesy of Mike Rudd.)

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It does seem however, that the psychedelic influence was not as strong in Australia despite albums like *A Strange Fantastic Dream* and Mike Rudd's "lost" project, *The Jellabad Mutant*, (now released at last on CD). Melbourne bands



Bill Putt and Mike Rudd hold a copy of *A Strange Fantastic Dream* – just making us aware of the hypodermic needle on the cover.

seemed more interested in the direction a harder-edged and bluesier, form of progressive rock was taking. It may also be hypothesized that because few independent labels existed in this country at that time, only the major companies released Australian music and few, if any major companies would have been willing to record or release material so obviously drug-related and therefore by association, offensive to public decency. Rudd believes that EMI/Harvest was searching for something outlandish at the time and a band of wild Aussies seemed to fit the bill. EMI though, clearly took a big chance releasing *A Strange Fantastic Dream*, (that's if anybody at the company had bothered to check the album's content out!) but subsequently refused Rudd's sci-fi concept set, *Jellabad Mutant*, although possibly for different reasons. For *the Mutant*, EMI probably decided that there were too many "concept albums" around already. There may have been other bands performing psychedelic music in Australia, but it seems little of it was actually recorded. Therefore, the correlation between taking mind-expanding drugs and the inventive song writing process is likely not to be an

easy one to prove. It's a "given" that certain band members took LSD. **Jim Keays** admits this but is uncertain about how it influenced songwriting in this country:

JIM KEAYS: "Many musos tried LSD a few times. In my experience of talking to other people about it, it's a drug you only have to take a couple of times and you say to yourself, well... I've been there, I can see where it all goes but I don't need to go there every day. It's a phase you go through... it's very intense though..

I don't know that too many records have been written under the influence of LSD but I do think that the imagery that is conjured up from LSD was used in songs. That image of say... "I am a walrus" or "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" ... whether they were written while on LSD, I don't know. In fact, it would be pretty hard to write a song on LSD because you'd just get carried away. Afterwards, you'd just wonder how the ink got on the page! But certainly, using the imagery to flesh out songs; I know I did that. And I know other writers did the same thing. It was almost like the "William Burrows school of songwriting" where you get a whole bunch of words and throw them up in the air and where they land, you use them like that. So I think it's more in the imagery than the actual drug itself. A good example of that is our *Living In A Child's Dream* which was written in all innocence and Mick Bower, who wrote it never took LSD in his life, or any other substance at all ... he was as straight as anything. But it's got that sort of floating melody and "the mountains made of ice cream" is real imagery. Everybody refers to it as a psychedelic song and everybody says that it was one of the very first Australian psychedelic songs and yet, it is not that at all, strangely enough. I suppose even Mick Bower was influenced by the imagery of that time.

I don't think that LSD was mind-focusing; marijuana could be mind-focusing, LSD was more to open the mind to possibilities beyond the envelope, if you like, and it also could be in a spiritual sort of sense as well. You can see God or think you are God and the Universe seems to be more fascinating...spiritual. (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)

Ross Wilson credits LSD as being a partial catalyst towards creating a focus for him to set a clearer course for his musical career, though not necessarily forming a basis for some of his lyrics written during his time with **The Party Machine**:

ROSS WILSON: "There was stuff all over the airwaves at the time with psychedelic lyrics and the papers were full of acid stories and so I guess I tended towards being an "acid wannabe", writing my lyrics along those lines. It wasn't until I went off to England to join Procession that I actually took any acid and so, as it happened it was really

good stuff. I got right into it and I think that helped to form my interest in absurdity and I don't think Daddy Cool would have happened if I hadn't taken acid to help me sort out where I stood in relation to having grown up

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in Melbourne ... and there I was in England... looking back and thinking, 'I guess it's not that bad'. So by the time I came back, I had a healthier attitude about where I fitted in and what I wanted to do. I was continuing to take acid from time to time and having fun with mucking around with that naive do-wop music." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004).

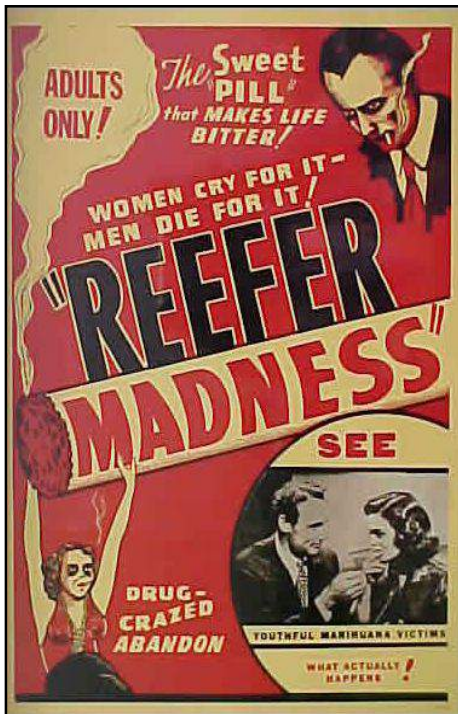
A similar mind-blowing then mind-expanding experience was what **Jim Keays** felt with his first "trip" which was in Melbourne, about the time the psychedelically-inspired *Living In a Child's Dream* was storming up the Australian charts. Given about 500 mg of Clear Light, he waited over an hour for it to take effect and when it did... boooooing!! After seeing Coco Pop monkeys swinging from the light shade, being attacked by a lone baked bean, watching musical notes float into the air from a record player then flood a room and realising that he was made of lemonade, he finally crashed, exhausted. But in a way, that particular trip changed Keays' whole approach to life and music. Whether it was the LSD or a renewed determination, Keays began looking for compatible musicians to form a new **Masters Apprentices**. The result: the most recognisable and best line-up of the band with Keays, Wheatley, Burgess and Ford.



Ross Wilson found himself as part of the drug scene at places like The T. F. Much Ballroom. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)

Beware of "reefer madness"...

But apart from LSD and "magic mushrooms", this hippie stuff was really catching on and was to culminate in the "Summer of Love" in San Fran. –



A poster for the 1938 anti-marijuana propaganda film – Reefer Madness. (Source unknown)

July, 1967. The loose-fitting, tie-dyed clothes, longer hair and headbands looked really cool. Adding "man", "peace", "cool" and "wow" to almost every sentence spoken seemed essential. Even marijuana began to reach our clubs in Australia and was given a try out by a select few in the community who were willing to risk arrest for possession and use. However, as the 'seventies wore on, marijuana use became much more of a recreational drug staple amongst the young in the community.

But Marijuana was really nothing new. It wasn't invented in San Francisco. It had been around in history as a common middle-eastern drug popular in both its recreational and medicinal applications. In mid-nineteenth-century America, marijuana was being used to a greater extent than has been recognised:

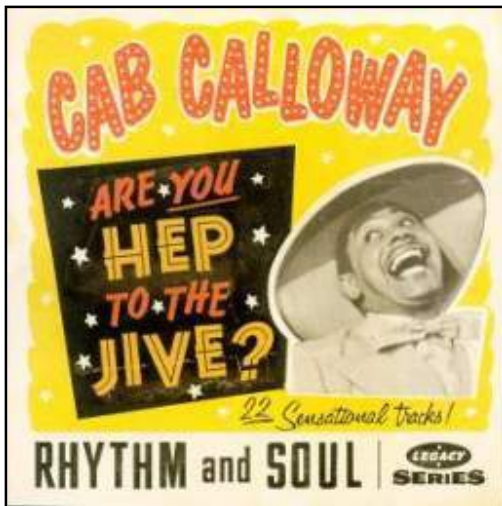
"Young America is beginning to use the "bang" so popular among the Hindoos, though in a rather different manner,...It is not a "drink", but a mixture of bruised hemp tops and the powder of the betel, rolled up like a quid of tobacco. It turns the lips and gums of a deep red, and if indulged in largely, produces violent intoxication. Lager beer and schnaps will give way for "bang" and red lips, instead of red noses (will) become the style." (M. C. Cooke, *The Seven Sisters of Sleep* (London, 1860), cited in T. Kupferberg, ed., *Birth Book 1*, no. 3 (1960)).

However, very few middle-class Americans used marijuana during the first half of the nineteenth-century. By about 1910, it had begun to filter across the Mexican border into the United States and a few "minority" groups like Mexicans and African-Americans began to smoke it. It was about this time that the weed began to take on more sinister overtones when Mexicans in particular, began to be accused of violent crimes while

under the influence of marijuana. Thus began a highly successful - if shifting - campaign to outlaw the drug and warn the nation of the potential problems which could be caused if used. The first of these crusades, in the 1920s was the campaign to inform all Americans that the drug caused ... (wait for it) ... INSANITY!

In New Orleans, the cosmopolitan, southern centre and the home of jazz music, the bordellos and brothels of the city began to prosper along with the music and so did marijuana smoking or "Moota" as it was known there. Therefore, by association it received an early link with crime:

"It has been the experience of Police and Prosecuting Officials in the South, that immediately before the commission of many crimes the use of marihuana cigarettes has been indulged in by criminals, so as to relieve themselves from the natural restraint which might deter them from the commission of criminal acts, and to give them the fake courage necessary to commit the contemplated crimes." (E. Stanley, "Marihuana as a Developer of Criminals", *American Journal of Police Science* 2 (1931).



In 1932, Cab Calloway wrote and performed his song, *The Reefer Man* which made no attempt to cover up its theme and in the same year, he also wrote and sang, *The Man From Harlem* - about his drug dealer. Clearly in the jazz era, marijuana was openly touted without the restrictions of later years. By the immediate post-World War I era, the music community, particularly the jazz musicians in New York were using the weed. It was, according to some sources, quite readily available around the dance band community. The 1938 film, *Reefer Madness* however changed that perspective, and it purported to show the evils of the effects on humans - melodramatically using extreme

scare tactics and Boris Karloff-like images to push the insanity line.

Harry J. Anslinger has been accused of single-handedly master-minding the opposition to marijuana in the United States by his relentless campaigning and legislating against its use, therefore driving it further underground. Sensationalistic journalism helped in making marijuana smoking more socially unacceptable but this actually served to enhance its status as an illegal substance:

"The sprawled body of a young girl lay crushed on the sidewalk the other day after a plunge from the fifth story of a Chicago apartment house. Everyone called it suicide but actually it was murder. The killer was a narcotic known to America as marihuana, and history as hashish. It is a narcotic used in the form of cigarettes, comparatively new to the United States and as dangerous as a coiled rattlesnake." (H. J. Anslinger and C. R. Cooper, 'Marihuana: Assassin of Youth,' *American Magazine* 124, 1937).

After World War II, a number of prominent Hollywood stars were either charged with its use or suspected of using marijuana; all caught up in a purge similar to that which was carried out against communists within American society. The mass anti-communist hysteria generated by McCarthyism was reflected in similar attempts to have the public see marijuana treated as an equal evil. What was the worst type of American criminal? - obviously a pot-smoking communist! Anslinger and McCarthy were actually running parallel campaigns using scare-mongering tactics with their respective crusades. On the drugs front, possibly the greatest "coup" for Anslinger was to have actor Robert Mitcham caught and busted for marijuana use in 1948. Following the Mitcham court case which resulted in a suspended jail term for the high profile Hollywood star, the war against the drug really escalated to newer and greater heights.



Robert Mitcham - snared in the Anslinger trap in 1948 - just one of the many Hollywood stars to use marijuana. (Studio publicity photo.)

When it was proven that marijuana did not cause insanity, the authorities turned to another tactic to drive it further from acceptance – that was that marijuana use leads directly to cocaine and heroin use – and hard-core addiction.

It was not until the mid - 'sixties that Australians really knew that marijuana existed at all, because of our relative
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isolation and our naivety. If it had been a problem in the United States, we really didn't know much about it until the hippies arrived on the American scene around 1967. Again, in its initial infiltration into the music community in Australia, possibly making early contacts with American servicemen on leave in Sydney and Melbourne was the only means of getting the weed. Visiting American servicemen on shore leave, particularly in Brisbane and Sydney liked their live music when they hit the cities and therefore turned up at the clubs, seeking out the local musicians to party with and show their gratitude to, by offering a relaxing smoke. The community of Australian musicians, roadies and their associates was the first to be introduced to marijuana.

From The Fillmore with love...

Back in the 'States, after being sacked from **The Byrds** for his drug use, **David Crosby** met up with **Stephen Stills** and **Neil Young** from the country-rock band **Buffalo Springfield**. They then took on board **Graham Nash**, who left the touring **Hollies** and all four formed **Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young**. With harmonies to die for, they headed up the vanguard of the new hippie/folk/country/rock movement with ex-folkie **Joni Mitchell**, blues woman extraordinaire, **Janis Joplin**, her band, **Big Brother and the Holding Company**, **The Band**, **Frank Zappa's Mothers Of Invention**, **The Mamas And The Papas** and **Grace Slick's Jefferson Airplane**. They began a new charge forward and the music thus created earned the tag of "acid rock". From there, it was steadily onwards to Woodstock in '69. But, back in 1967, that was still light-years into the future.

San Francisco and later New York took the music to the people thanks to an entrepreneur, artist manager and concert promoter named **Bill Graham**. Beginning in late 1966, Graham bought the run-down Fillmore Theatre and turned it into THE hippest, happening place to be in the United States – maybe even the *world*. There, Graham booked the finest acts available anywhere - British and American - to perform concerts on any given night of the week to packed houses, (but he didn't get **The Beatles**). This was a revolutionary advance in the way music was presented. Far beyond the less-flexible program of any Saturday night Cavern Club, dance hall or discotheque, The Fillmore was to influence the way in which music was presented in a live context from that point onwards.



Always the purveyor of the weird and off-beat – Frank Zappa and his Mothers Of Invention. (Photographer: Steven Magedoff, courtesy of Constantxposure.)



Janis Joplin regularly performed at The Fillmore Theatre with her band, Big Brother and the Holding Company. The album is Columbia's 1971 release, Pearl. (Author's collection)

After organising a promotion for **The San Francisco Mime Troup** at The Calliope Ballroom in Howard Street, Graham realised the potential for providing a venue for music in the city which, like a steadily building river, was about to burst

its psychedelic banks. At The Fillmore, local bands such as **The Quicksilver Messenger Service** and **Sopwith Camel** were soon joined by top line British acts of the calibre of **The Who**, **Joe Cocker**, **Humble Pie** and **Pink Floyd**. Events on the evenings were varied and as well as the music, the bill could include hippie fashion shows and tarot card readings amongst its many and wide-ranging activities.

Meanwhile on the east coast, The New York scene had its own form of experimental progressive music, centred 55.

around The Factory, **Andy Warhol's** art studio and home. This movement bore absolutely no resemblance at all to the peace and love "tune in, turn on and drop out" society now taking over San Francisco. Beat poets, photographers, dancers and film makers seemed for over a year to be attracted like moths to the Warhol flame. Many intellectuals, avant-garde artists and would-be movie stars lived, created, played and loved at The Factory.

Warhol saw himself as the catalyst in the first coming together of rock music, art, film and literature - something which had not been even considered before. True experimentation at its best at **The Film Makers Cinematheque** could give the participant a multi media performance never before seen. There were avant-garde short films like the underground, *Vinyl* being projected behind **The Velvet Underground** as they played *Venus In Furs* or **Lou Reed's**

Heroin. In front of the stage, dancers **Gerard Malanga** and **Edie Sedgwick** gyrated trancelike around the perimeter of the band. Transvestites such as **Holly Woodlawn** and **Candy Darling** completed the "cast". The whole cacophony was overlaid with trance-inducing coloured slides and lights directed at the audience and onto backdrops or walls. The music of Reed and **John Cale** seemed to be at odds with the peace and love of the hippie vibrations emanating from San Francisco, but it all was just as exploratory and revolutionary.

The two streams of American music finally met (and clashed) when Warhol took his 12-piece ensemble west and played The Fillmore as **The Exploding Plastic Inevitable** on May 26, 1966. San Franciscans had no way of dealing with this potentially belligerent and confrontational music which was weird even to them and diametrically opposed to their peace-and-love hippie music and culture. The negative and hostile reception the E.P.I. received, stirred up the indignation of Reed and company who, on their only appearance at The Fillmore, left their guitars against the speakers in full feedback mode then headed off stage



The Andy Warhol, pop art portrait of Marilyn Monroe.

and back to New York, vowing never to set foot in San Fran. again!

Important for us here in Australia was that Graham hit on the idea of mixing the musical genres - maybe having jazz trumpeter **Miles Davis** on the same bill as **Neil Young** - **Richie Havens** with **Pink Floyd** - **The Butterfield Blues Band** and **The New Salvation Army Band!** **Andy Warhol** mixed the arts as well. Both of these influences - New York and San Francisco - filtered through to Australia and were refined locally in the mushrooming clubs in town.

This is *the* vital influence on the Melbourne discotheque scene in the decade from 1965 onwards. Venues such as The Thumpin' Tum, Berties and Sebastians it could be said, owe more to Graham's and Warhol's concepts and designs than to the British discotheque scene, probably with the exception of the use of Go-Go Girls. At the later T. F. Much Ballroom, they used the notion of variety, for example having local acrobatic act **The Leaping McSpeddens** on the bill with folkie **Margret RoadKnight**



Creator of twentieth-century avante-garde, "Pop Art", Andy Warhol influenced the music coming out of New York in the 1960's. He met Australia's Jeff Duff in Paris, just prior to his untimely murder in 1987. (Photographer: Jean Pierre, courtesy of Jeff Duff)

and perhaps, **Chain** (and **Matt Taylor**) belting out the best in progressive blues later in the same Saturday night and on the same stage as **Jeff Crozier's** insane, magic act.

The T. F. Much Ballroom became Melbourne's top "head" venue in the early 'seventies thanks to this style of variety evening which probably would have been easily recognisable to the old-time Vaudeville patrons from the 'twenties. (Not sure they would have liked the venue's name or the music!) Mixed in with the rock bands and singers throughout the night's performances were jugglers, bikeriders, comedians, clowns and acrobats—all set

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against a wild psychedelic light and sound show, provided by **Hugh McSpedden's Edison Light Show**. Yes.. it was all just *too fucking much* for the senses to take in! The New York avant-garde spectacle of the Warhol Plastic Inevitable with its slide show, dancers and hypnotic lighting may be said to have made some sort of an impact in Melbourne, but whether it was by mere influence or intention is difficult to establish.

Aesthetically, **Bill Graham** revived the gay (yes.. the *original* use of the word here!) and free-spirited feeling of turn-of-the-century, French Art Nouveau style – floral drapes, flock wallpaper, fringed Tiffany light shades and Toulouse-Lautrec poster-style art, to decorate The Fillmore. This appears to have carried over into the décor employed at, for example Berties or The 'Tum. It would seem that those who created our discotheques must surely have visited The Fillmore at one time or another – only a few actually did. However, it is difficult to quantify the influence that the Graham and Warhol experiences had on those who planned, set up and ran the Melbourne discos – names like **Anthony Knight**, **David Flint** or **Graham Geddes**.

The vibes from San Francisco, the psychedelic culture and the new music trends were to have a profound effect on the youth culture of the day. The way ahead for youth was in possessing a new consciousness and being part of a new society where all the restraints and inhibitions of the past could

be thrown off. Not every teenager recognised this, but the connection was still quite strong. Journalist, **David Pepperell** or "Dr. Pepper" as he was known made the rather spectacular summation of "new" teen values and ideologies in Planet (Daily Planet) Magazine in 1972. I'm not sure in hindsight that such sentiments would find this type of expression today – maybe there would be a more mature and considered summation of the whole hippie

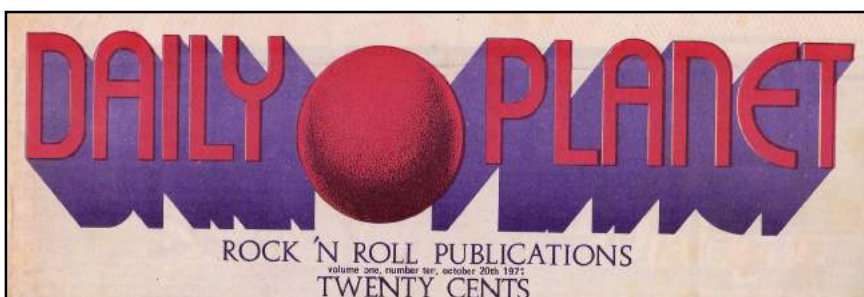


The Thumpin' Tum owners Jan and David Flint in the opulent sitting area upstairs. Berties Discotheque was probably more Edwardian and sumptuous than The 'Tum. (Courtesy of Jim Colbert - Photo Archives)

ideology in hindsight – it was just too idealistic and somewhat ephemeral and ultimately unattainable to last. But that didn't stop youth in 1967 from wanting to change the world with peace love and a new consciousness:

DAVID N. PERRERELL: "The New Society was born in late 1965 - early 1966 with a blaring of trumpets and a

blast of hili stereo sound from two loudspeakers with the Beatles, Stones, Airplane et al in the centre. All would be changed, all would be new -- dreams could be fulfilled, peace and love were to reign. As I remember they were heady times -- times when a friend could be recognised by the length of his hair, the cut and colour of his clothes, the things he liked, his vibes (we kidded ourselves we could feel such things and who knows maybe we could). We



were united against common foes, we shared each other and each others projected view of a new humanity -- a man's humanity to man to cast away the built up gloom of the Dark Ages history had been to that time. New music, new theatre, new poetry, new fashion, new drugs, new cars, new lifestyles, new camaraderies -- a whole phantasmagoria of fancy, of illusion, of reality, of farce, of hard fact. We lived in this carousel world and believed in it so hard because it was what we wanted truth to be -- we sacrificed truth in the name of our dreams." (Article by David N. Pepperell, Planet, 10 May, 1972).

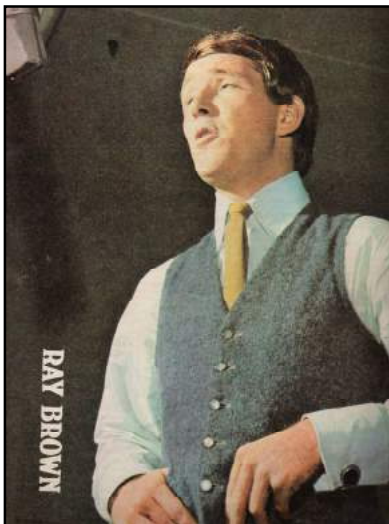
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THE WHOLE FANTASTIC, PROGRESSIVE ROCK SCENE ... from pop idols to denim blues bands.

"Melbourne in 1969 was unbelievable. I'd never seen anything like it. I got there and realised I was a pop star with a lot to learn. I thought - fuck me! Why am I going to England when it's all happening here? I went to Melbourne for two weeks and stayed eight years". (Billy Thorpe, www.Milesago.com).

"It was abuzz! So many gigs, so many groups. The best time and place for live music ever, I think." (Andy James, (Anderson), email interview, 3 October, 2004)

"Melbourne and Sydney? Different scene altogether. ... that's the difference between Melbourne and Sydney. Sydney's music scene was largely corny and Melbourne was much more cool. There were some great and cool Sydney acts, but Melbourne had a lot more. There were a lot more 'cheesy' things in Sydney. Melbourne was much more original. (Mike Brady, author's interview, 17 May, 2006)



Sydney's dapper Ray Brown out front of his Whispers – (Everybody's Magazine, 11 May, 1966)

much of its existence, this Sydney-based T.V. staple, which claimed to aim itself at the teen market, actually catered for the more middle-of-the road fans, rather than the minority teen pop fans, rockers or R & B devotees. **The Allen Brothers** typified this neat, precise and acceptable-to-the-oldies, on-camera image and the bespectacled Henderson looked debonair and quite conservative as presenter/host. (But only on camera!)

As much as the folk, jazz and gospel devotees hoped and probably even prayed for, rock 'n roll was not going to pack itself up in the mid 'sixties and just neatly fade away – in fact, it was about to morph itself into something quite distinct. Rock 'n roll had first come to Australia in much the same way as it had permeated other parts of world culture. Initially in the mid-'fifties, radio airplay for this child of blues and country music was scant, but as the new sound of **Bill Haley and his Comets** found its way onto soundtracks of Hollywood movies such as *The Blackboard Jungle* and **Elvis'** revolutionary *Jailhouse Rock* hit the airwaves, Sydney at first, began to respond to rock 'n roll.

With the help of T.V. 'teen programs like **Brian Henderson's Bandstand** and then *Six O'clock Rock*, Sydney-siders **Col Joye and the Joyboys, Digger Revell and the Denvermen, Lucky Starr, and Ray Brown and the Whispers** brought the new sound and dance craze to the people. It came wafting in gently at first but it quickly became a raging torrent which was difficult to ignore and it was difficult to stem the tide in the end.

On TV, *Bandstand*, as a youth music forum was not entirely devoted to rock 'n roll music and in fact, for



Six O'clock Rock, with O'Keefe as compare and talent scout, was more prepared to give the rather spirited young talent a go, but even J.O'K. balked at allowing newer bands like the freakish **Missing Links** on to his show – their hair alone was enough to have a ban slapped on them from compare O'Keefe. This was rather ironic really, because J.O'K himself had ridden the wave of teen rebellion and anti-conservatism just a few years earlier. Sydney in 1965 also had a thriving disco scene, but it didn't necessarily last.

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For a time, Melbourne's rock community played second fiddle to Sydney's rock breakout and it essentially remained that way throughout the 1963 surf music craze. However, by the middle of the 'sixties decade, many Melbourne bands were honing their skills with a bluesy brand of garage pop music, leading into the so-called progressive rock phase.

These bands which gravitated to the city from interstate or country Victoria, included **The Missing Links, The Vibrants, The Throb, The Mixtures, The Loved Ones, The Gloop, The Running Jumping Standing Still, The Creatures, The Elois, The Spinning Wheels** and **The Moods**. Melbourne bands and Melbourne-based groups which came to this city took advantage of the more progressive beat industry here and began to turn to rhythm and blues played **LOUD** and with a defining rock tinge, in a manner that was as revolutionary here at the time as it was in the London clubs.

Melbourne also had the finest recording studio in the land when **Bill Armstrong** and his innovative engineers opened their premises in South Melbourne in 1965 and this paralleled the progressive rock era of 1965 to about 1973. **Neale Johns**, lead singer of Sydney's boppy **Blackfeather**

is in a position to make a fair retrospective comparison between Melbourne and Sydney. He had first arrived here with the band in 1970 and has spent about equal time in both cities:

NEALE JOHNS: "Melbourne at that time reminded me of Sydney in the mid 'sixties. Sydney in the mid-sixties had discos. In town, there would have been about 20 to 30... then Sydney went into another realm and Melbourne became the hub. The one thing I do remember about the places in Melbourne was that some were tri-level... or at

The Gloop (Mark II) from Melbourne, with songwriter Brian Cadd, (far right). From the cover of their first LP and signed by Cadd.



The Loved Ones with Gerry Humphrys on harmonica (partly hidden) at Garrison Discotheque, Prahran in 1966. (Go-Set, 17 August, 1966, photographer unknown)

least an upstairs and a downstairs.



The Vibrants were originally from Adelaide but re-structured the band in Melbourne in 1966 and issued a number of singles which reached the Top 40. (Go-Set, 17 August, 1966, courtesy of Colin Beard)

That was another thing that was very interesting. It was a very coffee-lounge feel with upstairs for sitting and talking and downstairs for music. But again there was another element of Melbourne that was different to Sydney and that was your civic centres, town halls and pubs... which I thought were wonderful because there was no age limit. And kids could go and see five top bands and they would all be incredibly different ... Wendy Saddington, Chain, Doug Parkinson." (Johns, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

The Melbourne scene was clearly coloured by the bands which gravitated to this city

and found their homes in the discotheques and dances. Some of these bands made spectacular impacts on the

public as they went about strutting their stuff on stage and on record. Here are some – yes, just a small number - of these bands and individuals which formed the nucleus of the progressive rock scene as it unfolded:

THE EARLY YEARS – beat, rhythm and blues

As revolutionary and distinct as any band which broke out, **The Loved Ones** which had formed in 1965, only tasted relatively fleeting success – both live and on record - but nevertheless they have long since achieved

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legendary status for the manner in which they brought rhythm and blues out into the open from its underground existence. They made a considerable impression on the live scene thanks to the guttural, growling vocals and unique stage persona of **Gerry Humphrys**. They were created from two bands – **The Red Onion Jazz Band** and **The Wild Cherries**. Interestingly enough both had similar roots in trad jazz before making a significant shift in



A rare 1962 picture of the Red Onion Jazz Band. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Rainer Breit)

to witness the breathtaking guitar work of Loyde on many occasions. He particularly remembers a ten-week stint during 1971 which Loyde did on Sunday nights where he played on stage for up to three hours. Unfortunately, there were few who witnessed these unforgettable performances because being Sunday nights, the crowds were fairly sparse. Seemingly never-ending guitar solos were popular in the cavernous atmosphere of these venues:

HARLEY PARKER: "... (This) was a time of lengthy solos in every band and the organ solo suited this electronic rock age with well known bands like Spectrum to lesser known bands like Dafiduk performing their wizardry. Dafiduk did a wonderful version of 'You Keep Me Hanging On' which certainly transported you to another planet, but that

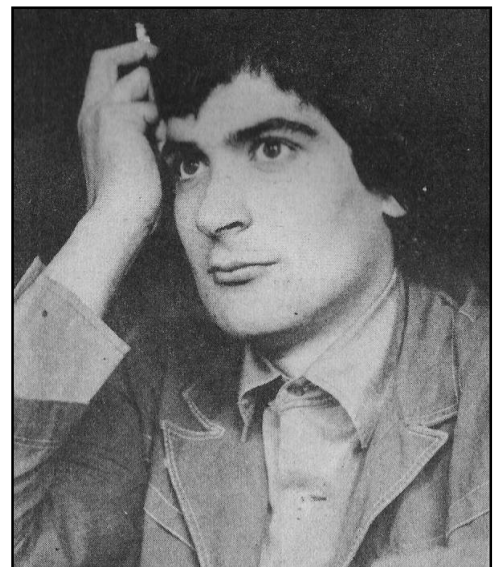
was the time, the music was meant to send you off without any drug or alcoholic help. It wasn't just organ solos it was guitar solos, drum solos, you name it; it was soloed. It was a time when (you saw) both the individual members of the band and the band performing." (Parker, www.milesago.com, Feature Article)



The Loved Ones, "Blueberry Hill" EP from 1966.

style. When **The Red Onion Jazz Band** broke up, Humphrys, keyboardist **Ian Clyne** and bass player **Kim Lynch** joined with the ex- Wild Cherries' **Rob Lovett** and **Gavin Anderson** to explore a new direction in music.

The Wild Cherries themselves had formed in Melbourne in 1964 and broke up soon after, only to re-form in 1967, this time with guitar whiz, **Lobby Loyde** (Barry Lyde) who had come down from Brisbane with **The Purple Hearts**. Like a number of new bands, they were looking for new directions as well. A regular patron at The Thumpin' Tum a little further down the track, **Harley Parker** recalls being privileged



A very pensive Loved One, Gerry Humphrys - (Go-Set, 17 August, 1966, photographer unknown)

Back in the mid-'sixties, **The Loved Ones** forged a path for other progressive pop and R & B bands to allow them to make the observation that success could come from a combination of writing original music and

making frequent live appearances at the newly established disco venues which sprung up around town. The audiences were there and they were accepting the true local product alongside overseas sounds. Sadly, **The Loved Ones** only recorded one solitary album, the classic, *Magic Box* (1967) and had two ground - breaking singles, *The Loved One* and *Everlovin' Man*. **Gerry Humphrys'** vocals were so

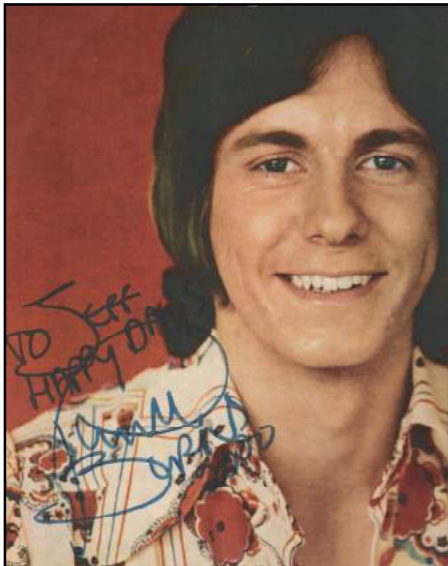
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distinct and an absolute standout on record and particularly on stage where he often sounded like a cockatoo shrieking in pain, much to the delight of the fired-up audiences.

THE MISSING LINKS and RUNNING JUMPING STANDING STILL - Driving us insane...

The Running Jumping Standing Still were probably as wild as you could possibly get in the mid-'sixties and played all the major clubs after forming in Melbourne in 1966 from the remnants of **The Missing Links**. The 'Links had established themselves in Sydney before moving south to take advantage of the scene:

ANDY JAMES: "Doug and I had left Sydney in some old bomb with next to no funds but we'd loved the shocked reception we'd had on The Missing Links Melbourne tour earlier. (Doug says somewhere that he remembers the curtains parting at a Missing Links Opus gig and the crowd shrinking back at the sight of us!)" (Anderson, op cit, 3 October, 2004)



Ronnie Burns with his band The Flies got the Rolling Stones 1965 Tour gigs, when The Missing Links were rejected as the support act because they were just "too wild". (Author's collection).

The 'Links themselves had been pushing garage rock or maybe it was "proto-punk" to the absolute limits and even they were considered too wild to be **The Rolling Stones** support act on their first Australian Tour in 1965 – that honour on the Melbourne leg eventually went to **The Flies**, with future solo pop star, **Ronnie Burns** as lead vocalist/guitarist. The 'Links were wild to the point of being totally out of control and their often frenzied stage act saw former Kiwi, **Andy James** (later reverting to his real name, **Andy Anderson**) literally climbing the walls and swinging from the rafters as he screeched and screamed into the microphone. Even Melbourne with its more liberated and tolerant attitudes found it hard to take the notorious and highly outrageous **Missing Links** onboard, and their appearances at The Biting Eye and other discotheques, left even the most hardened party freaks, gasping for breath!

The Missing Links recorded a hotch-potch of blues songs and their own originals, mostly just constructed on the spot rather than actually being written – the basic two chords and minimal lyrics screamed out at lung-

bursting capacity by James and Ford.

Some songs

done live, actually just collapsed rather than conclude in the standard manner. A single – *You're Driving Me Insane* was first released on the unsuspecting public in August 1965, but was just too "out there" for radio stations to touch. Obviously there was no middle ground in The 'Links public acceptance – you either thought they were the greatest gift to modern R & B or you believed they should be caged with the other feral animals in the zoo! Their looks – which meant unkempt hair with shaggy fringes - was as primitive as their music – blood-curdling screams,

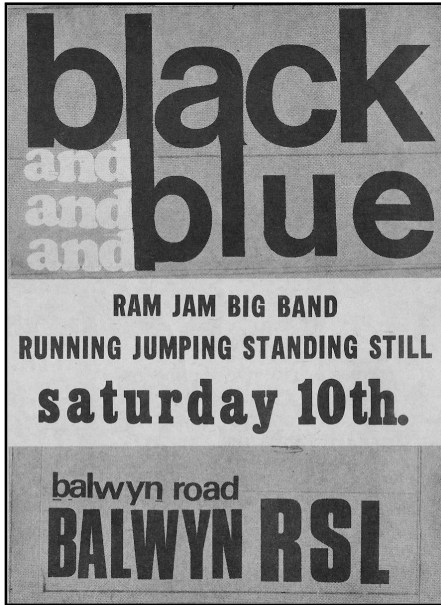


The Missing Links first line up on stage in 1965 – Danny Cox, Dave Boyne, Bob Brady, Peter Anson and Ronnie Peel. (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

incomprehensible lyrics, tons of feedback – buzzes, rattles, crashes, bangs and wallops aplenty, making **Stevie Wright**'s primal scream on the introduction to **The Easybeats**, *She's So Fine*, positively tame by comparison.

When the 'Links concluded, **Doug Ford** and **Andy James** continued their somewhat tempestuous personal
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relationship in the new **Running Jumping Standing Still** and the original line up which included bass guitarist **Rick Dalton**, (from **Ross Wilson's Pink Finks**) and **Ian Robinson** on drums lasted probably just a few months:



Go-Set, 7 February, 1968.

ANDY ANDERSON: "I can't remember a lot about how we got the RJSS together. Ian and Rick were a unit already, I think. But we were gigging pretty quickly. Thumpin' Tum and The Bowl were the main ones I recall. We were pretty popular at the 'Tum there and could get into some of our 'out there' material. We had realised that to make some money, with all the competition, we'd need to be a bit more commercial than the 'Links were. We were sick of starving for art in Sydney. I know we weren't wanted at Alberts and some of the more respectable clubs. I thought we were doing a great impression of being house-trained! (But maybe we just weren't as good as I thought we were.)

John Jones, the rhythm guitarist in The Missing Links and I found Doug - rocker haircut, brown boots 'n all - practising at Nicholson's music store in Sydney and knew we had our man...(He may say he found us!) He was brilliant even then. Fast. Later he made every note count more. Doug and I always had that...we'd often rub each other up the wrong way personally but we shared a very similar, bent sense of humour and respect as musos... Well, I respected him as a muso... He added...colour, enthusiasm...grit. He's a solid man. (Anderson, op cit, 3 October, 2004)

thunderous tsunami of noise on stage, they smashed consistently shattered over chairs and drums got kicked in. Microphones and other stage gear almost became lethal weapons in James' hands. Feedback became a part of the live act and all this was costing the band thousands of dollars in replacement costs for their instruments. **Andy James** (Anderson) explains how the band reacted on one another on stage:

ANDY ANDERSON: "To me, I've always loved the idea of a mixture of the very earthy and the very spacey. That was what I aimed for in performance. We'd get a feel going; one or two chords. I'd get a rhythm going on congas mixed with Ian on drums. Get the bass in there. Then Doug would take off with the feed back. He was an amazingly fiery man, and player, and technically brilliant as well. So he'd take off into space...and then anything could happen. Chants... bass... feedback ... whatever ... very jungley, primal. But I don't even remember which songs this would happen in.

The 'Links were the main feedback band though. John Jones on one guitar, Doug on the other, Chris on harmonica or keyboards, Hutch and Ian were a pretty insane rhythm section, I'd be hitting anything I could find... it would get pretty outlandish. Never did come back from that....." (Anderson, op cit, 3 October, 2004)

Go-Set printed **Andy James'** thoughts on the RJSS's wild act back in 1966 when they were criticised for using feedback as a gimmick just to get themselves recognised:

Changes came quickly as it was obvious that the band was destined to burn out rather than meekly fade away. Not content with just creating a up just about anything they could find. Guitars were



The Missing Links later in 1965. Clockwise top left: Ian Thomas, John Jones, Doug Ford, Chris Gray, Andy James, Baden Hutchins. (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

ANDY JAMES: "This isn't a gimmick, although a lot of people say that we just turn on a performance, so that we can be labelled the wildest group, but that's just not true. We are sincere in our addiction to feedback and believe it gives you a release. The sound can completely capture your mind and we have seen people who were nearly 62.

hypnotised by our music. You don't just go onstage and go mad. Everything is sincere, you can play and draw in the crowd with you and then comes the climax of feedback and smashing instruments." (Go-Set, 31 April, 1966)

At The Thumpin' Tum in December 1966, James had to be taken to hospital in dramatic circumstances after suffering a sudden and serious brain haemorrhage while on stage during the band's version of **Tina Turner's** *River Deep, Mountain High*. James had been living on a cocktail of drugs and alcohol at the time, (including "Romolar", a rather radical cough mixture!) though this was probably not at fault this night. He had been suffering from extreme headaches for a number of weeks but this being a typical 'Links performance, his antics would have pushed him to the absolute limit of his capacity on stage. However, no one knew at the time that he was in imminent danger. On stage, it all caught up with James as he went full on – no stopping him. He slumped to the floor clutching his head in total agony and was to spend a month recovering from his ordeal in hospital. He can possibly put his survival down to his youth – certainly this would have been fatal to someone older.



The Missing Links in an early publicity photo from 1965. (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

After his stay in hospital, James had an enforced rethink about his future and went on to form the mildly successful **Andy James Asylum**, while RJSS began a search for a new lead singer, finding **Peter Newing** (nicknamed "Ring" by the band because of the enormous number of rings he wore on both hands!) and

added bassist, **Ian "Fingers" Ferguson** who had played bass with **The Moods** throughout the mid-'sixties discotheque explosion. Ferguson felt that this last incarnation of this wild, out-of-control band maintained much of the original momentum on and off stage following the departure of James:



The Running Jumping Standing Still – doing just that for the camera! - A promotion for their appearance on The Go!! Show, 24 October 1966 - (The Listener In-TV, 22 October. 1966.)

IAN FERGUSON: "I don't think the act changed that much – still plenty of feedback. But the band changed a lot in line with some changes in the venues – not a lot maybe, just flashier lighting. They were playing a lot of Cream and John Mayall stuff and that's the reason I joined the band, because I'd heard a John Mayall album and I'd come from a Hollies-type band with vocal harmonies. I know that Peter Newing didn't have the aura of Andy James who was just, like ... *psycho*. But that was part of the act. Newing was more of a Bohemian character. More arm actions. This was at the start of psychedelia, flowers in your hair stuff." (Ferguson, author's interview, 24 July, 2005).

The band continued to play at city and suburban venues throughout 1967 and 1968, and they completed one short tour of Tasmania where the high jinks both on and off stage continued:

IAN FERGUSON: "I must tell you a story though. We went down to Tassie and one night, we had a food fight at our Motel table and got kicked out of the place. Then we went ten-pin bowling and we didn't have any drugs but

we got hold of little bottles of stuff called Romula S3, and sculled the lot – *off our faces!* We got kicked out of the bowling alley because Peter was right up the back of the bowl, started running in screaming...

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'CAANNNONNNBALLL!'. The whole placed turned around to see him going down the lane after the ball! Then we got kicked out of there as well. It was a wild band RJSS, it was a very wild band!" (Ferguson, op cit, 24 July, 2005).

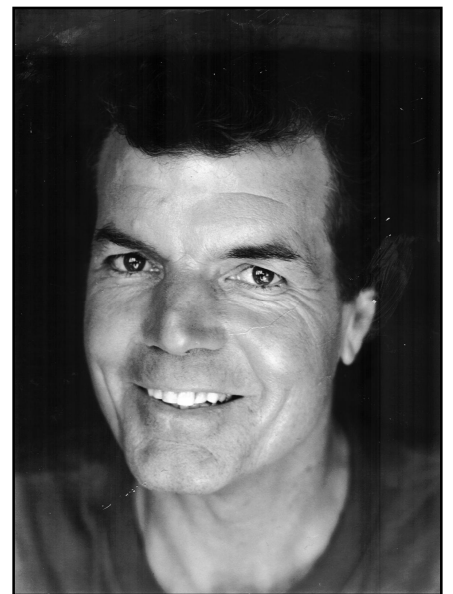


Ian "Fergie" Ferguson played bass with RJSS towards the end of the band's career. He went on to Carson and continues to play regularly.

Fergie, too was drawn under the spell cast by the mesmerising, nifty guitar work of **Doug Ford** and although **The Running Jumping Standing Still** were not far from the end of their time, he still managed to enjoy the short period he spent on stage with the master:

IAN FERGUSON: "I was fascinated by his style. I knew he had great potential. I remember the day he said he was leaving because he'd had an offer from The Masters Apprentices – I was devastated because we worked so well together. And that was basically the end of the band. We did get another guitarist in – an English guy – Brian Holloway (The Dream) but he couldn't match Doug. It was a big step for Doug. He'd come from The Missing Links to RJSS where it didn't matter what they wore, they just believed in the music. Then he's going to a pop, Top 40 band. Then that was basically the end of RJSS." (Ferguson, op cit, 24 July, 2005).

Doug Ford was to show his versatility by successfully making the switch in musical styles to the chart-orientated **Masters Apprentices** and James survived his near-death experience at The 'Tum to become actor **Andy Anderson** (reverting to his real name). Anderson landed among other acting roles, the part of "Jim Sullivan" for which he won a 1982 "Logie" in



Andy Anderson – the actor. A long way from the wild times with The Missing Links and Running Jumping Standing Still. (Courtesy of Andy Anderson)

the seminal Australian T.V. series, *The Sullivans*. His acting CV is impressive with appearances in *Neighbours* as "Mick Scully" in 2000 and this has been followed by major roles in the best Aussie dramas on TV - *Phoenix, Fire, Robbery Under Arms, Water Rats, Blue Heelers, McLeod's Daughters, Stingers, Home And Away* and *All Saints*. More importantly, he has been cast in *Hair* – the musical and *The Great Bookie Robbery*. In 2002, he played "Kev", a greying, acid casualty rocker who wore leopard-skin print undies, in the **Pia Miranda** and **Kick Gurry** movie, *Garage Days* (a part he says he didn't need to do much research for!). In the 2003 film *Anacondas*



The Andy James Asylum at The 'Tum, 1968.

- *The Hunt For The Blood Orchid*, his character, "John Livingston" ended up as a snack for a giant python! Perhaps in hindsight it wasn't a bad career move after all - to initially exit the rock 'n roll scene. Down the track, far more Australians know his face now than remember his former career as drummer/lead singer for these two bands which helped to transform the R & B scene by their untamed music and their full-on antics. He has recently returned to music with the release of his first solo album, *If I'd Have Known I'd Live This Long*,

which presents a much more mature musician than the **Andy James** of old – songs about hard-living and drinking from a man who has long since intentionally and permanently given up both.

It wasn't until towards the end of RJSS – (post-James) that the band released a single which only really tickled the charts without creating any serious interest – this was *Diddy Wah Diddy* – (March 1967). **Denny Burgess** who is the brother of **Colin Burgess**, drummer with **The Masters Apprentices** was also a **Missing Link** at one stage.

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Andy James' Bands ...



Andy James' career saw him front The Missing Links (top left – *Everybody's Magazine*, 25 December, 1965 and right). He is on the rampage with The Running Jumping Standing Still at The Thumpin' Tum (left) and again (below). On drums, back in The Missing Links days (below left). (All Photos courtesy of Andy Anderson, individual photographers unknown.)



THE PURPLE HEARTS and THE WILD CHERRIES - Heading south...

Sydney and Brisbane had also been fertile proving grounds for aspiring new progressive rock bands and **Lobby Loyde's** and Mick Hadley's **Purple Hearts**, which formed in Brisbane in 1964, came at their audiences with an uncompromisingly tough and ballsy brand of blues/rock, driven even at that stage by Loyde's blistering guitar attack. Surprising to many down south, Brisbane had a very progressive rock scene in 1965 with small clubs offering hard-edged rock and blues, before they became popular here in Melbourne. Perhaps it was more the repressive and totally conservative nature of Premier **Joh Bjelke-Petersen's** Queensland police, which drove a number of cutting-edge bands southwards – to Queensland's lass and our advantage. Joh's cops seemed to have nothing better to do than harass long-haired musicians as a kind of "sport". Lobby was joined by Englishmen, **Mick Hadley** (vocals) and **Bob Dames** (bass) who had already performed in the exploding blues scene in London before arriving in Brisbane. Scotsman **Fred Pickard** on rhythm guitar and drummer **Tony Cahill** (who later replaced **Snowy Fleet** in The Easybeats) completed the early 'Hearts' line up. Hadley, playing in a local band, The Impacts, actually found Lobby:

MICK HADLEY: "Before I met Lobby he was in a Shadows style band called the Stilettoes. We told him we were forming an R&B band, took him home and played him some Yardbirds. He was in, and he, and we, just sped on from there. The boys with Benzedrine beat. With a Fender Jaguar and a Vox AC30 amp, he had a drive and a feel that took no prisoners. The 'Hearts had an energy, that I am told, paled other bands of the time as most of them played the pretty pop of the hit parade. His stage presence was unique. He had a motionless, emotionless stance somewhat akin to a gangster. A cigarette would dangle from the corner of his mouth, which would then be transferred to the



The Purple Hearts – Tony Cahill, Bob Dames, Mick Hadley, Lobby Loyde and Fred Pickard. (Photographer unknown)

neck of the fender between the nut and machine heads. Thus his face was constantly bathed in smoke. He was very fond of blowing speakers, which was a constant drain on his finances, but that never seemed to faze him. I think this was one of the factors for the name change to Lobby Loyde as speaker suppliers and the tax department chased him across the country. For Lobby, there was no tomorrow. (Sometimes 'today' went missing also.) Lobby was Australia's first Guitar Hero. Britain had Clapton - we had Lobby. He was the guitarist's guitarist." (Hadley, www.mickhadley.com)

The new band was christened **The Purple Hearts** because, musicians were in the habit of taking the little purple pills as a stimulant – not altogether unusual both overseas and in this country. They rehearsed in a Brisbane warehouse and mixed R & B with the newer beat-style hits that attracted the fans. A newly- arrived **Clive White** remembers befriending the band at a Brisbane gig:



Brisbane's Purple Hearts and their 1966 EP – The Sound Of The Purple Hearts -released on Festival's Sunshine label. They didn't get to record a LP. Mick Hadley, Bob Dames, Fred Pickard, Tony Cahill and Lobby Loyde.

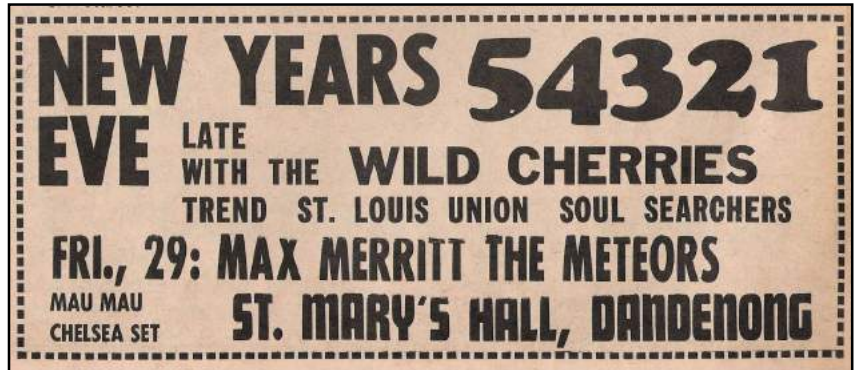
CLIVE WHITE: "I was an art student in Guildford, and like every English Art Student of the time could play Cyril Davis' Country Line Special. We used to go to the local Ricky Tick Club; the regular bands on that circuit other than the old black guys that were going around were The Rolling Stones, original Yardbirds, Cyril Davis, Animals, Graham Bond Organisation. Zoot Money, Pretty Things, Manfred Mann, Georgie Fame and so on.

We also used to go to Eel Pie Island to see Long John Baldry and up to town to see the Downliners Sect. I arrived in Australia from England on 25 January 1965 & shortly after I turned up at the Broadbeach Surf Club where a band

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was playing, needless to say I was wearing clothes that I had brought out and was dancing like they did in UK. I

was given a handful of free beer tickets for my dancing efforts and was soon in deep conversation with the band. The band played 50/50 surf and British. I learned later anybody who was obviously from UK was approached and grilled about what was going on over there, vital info such as bands don't wear uniform clothes anymore. I brought many records to Australia with me including Long Legged Baby, my favourite Graham Bond memory Early in the Morning, Yardbirds, Stones first album, Downliners Sect, Georgie Fame, Pretty Things, compilations etc." (White at www.mickhadley.com)



The band, still unsigned to any recording contract, gigged around Queensland for most of the early part of 1965. During this time, they also went into Soundtrack Studios of their own volition and recorded a 4-tracker which was never pressed onto vinyl. The shows they did were organised by Ivan Dayman and soon, he managed to offer them



The Purple Hearts line-up. (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

a recording contract with his own Sunshine label.

After a brief sojourn in Sydney, Melbourne with its appreciative young audiences, groovy places to play and more relaxed attitudes towards long-haired musicians, became a strong drawcard. **The Purple Hearts** relocated here finding an atmosphere attuned to their particular musical version of R & B Blitzkrieg:

MICK HADLEY: "Sydney was just a stopover for us. At that time Melbourne was the centre of music in Australia. Sure, there were a few nice things in Sydney like Python Lee Jackson but Melbourne was where all the energy was coming from. When we arrived it was about the time the whole disco scene exploded. Of course I don't mean discos like

today, but with live bands. In the early days the mega-trendy Thumpin'Tum was the place to hang out. The only other band that was reasonably similar to us was the Wild Cherries but at that stage they were a 3 piece with stand up double bass. We were probably the first band to hit Melbourne fairly big with R&B. Bands relocated from all over Australia to fill the demand for live music in the numerous discos all over the city. The Hearts played several times a week, mainly at the Red Door and Sebastians', and shared stages with the likes of The Twilights, Max Merritt, Running Jumping Standing Still, the Clefs and the original jazz/R&B Wild Cherries with Mal McGee." (Hadley, www.mickhadley.com)

For the next year, from their arrival in early 1966, they conquered the discotheque circuit and were accepted as the quintessential blues act, particularly at Sebastian's and The 'Tum. **The Purple Hearts** cut the trail into the clubs and dances which many other blues acts, like **Chain** and **Spectrum** followed.

But unfortunately for The 'Hearts and a number of other contemporary original and innovative bands, although their stage act blew audiences away, their recorded efforts didn't necessarily translate into solid gold hit material when they went into a recording studio. As mentioned, they did secure a contract with Sunshine which re-issued a previously recorded track, *Long Legged Baby*, during 1966. Their later recordings, *Of Hopes And Dreams And Tombstones* and *Early In The Morning* were probably too radical and experimental in sound to be major Top 40 hits, even though the momentum the band gained from their live appearances and some support from sympathetic radio D.J.s probably helped these singles to chart without making a significant impact.

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The "bad boys" image they attracted, could be attributed to their stage act and their looks probably more than their off-stage antics, despite the bands indulgence in recreational drugs which were beginning to permeate the discotheques at the time. It was traditional thinking though, that anyone who looked like they did, played the music they played and didn't have a regular day job, had to be all bad! Long hair, which at this stage meant just covering the ears, was an outward sign of rebellion and non-conformity. This was probably the catalyst in one eastern suburban Melbourne Girls' school placing a ban on the **The Purple Hearts** who were said to have "entertained" some of the girls who came to see them at lunchtimes in the nearby Maling Road, Canterbury theatre where they were rehearsing.

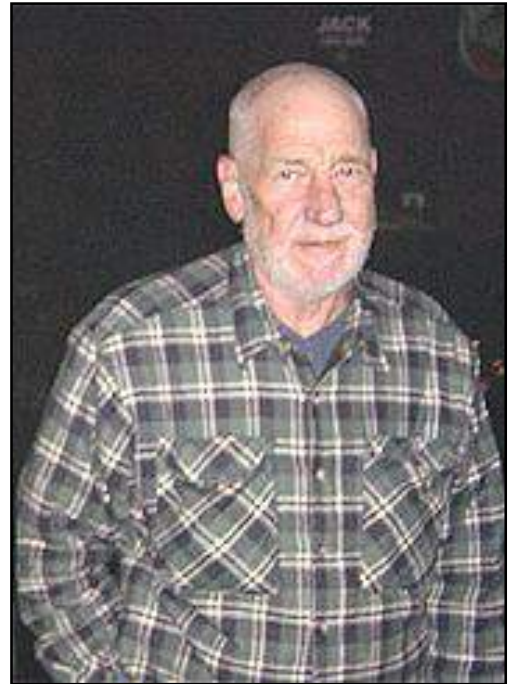
When The 'Hearts folded in 1967, (23 January to be exact!) members went on to other bands and in a move crucial to the career of **Lobby Loyde**, founding member of The 'Hearts, **Les Gilbert** invited him to join a new band, **The Wild Cherries**. (Well... the band was new, but not the name. There had already been a band of that name in existence since 1964 playing a version of R & B/Jazz around town and this band had often performed on the same bill as **The Purple Hearts**.) The end of **The Purple Hearts** was not without some regret and was instigated by Loyde's move to **The Wild Cherries**:

MICK HADLEY: "We felt we'd gone as far as we could go, we just ran out of gas. It was good fun while it lasted. Although the Hearts put up a united front it seems Lobby had seen the writing on the wall and instigated the split on the eve of an Adelaide tour! Lobby went straight into the reformed Wild Cherries and was gigging with them immediately, while the others carried on as a 4 piece for a month or so filling the outstanding engagements. Fred, now the sole guitarist, really starred in these shows and with David Bentley, from Python Lee Jackson, added on keyboards for the last ever gigs back in Brisbane their sound would have been quite different to the Lobby fuelled Hearts." (Hadley, www.mickhadley.com)

The new **Wild Cherries** immediately launched an assault on the discotheque/dance scene in Melbourne with a mixture of the more psychedelic/blues material which **Eric Clapton's Cream** and **The Jimi Hendrix Experience** had been playing in Britain. The sound that the new **Wild Cherries** served up to the audiences was long on guitar solos and the strong psychedelic overtones did little to quench the fiery guitar work and feedback of Loyde, which proved a huge success at the dances. But their relentless and loud sound was, like **The Purple Hearts**, far too freakish to be played consistently on radio. Their first single, *Krome Plated Yabbie*, released in June, 1967 made the charts but their subsequent three singles, while sensational examples of their revolutionary sound, were just a little too strong for the airwaves.

Complimenting Loyde's guitar trickery was the amazing vocal inflections of **Danny Robinson** and this combination stayed together until Robinson left in October 1968. In what was common ground for all bands of the period, members came and went often in rapidly changing circumstances. Loyde left only a few weeks after Robinson to join **Billy Thorpe's Aztecs**, and the band that was **The Wild Cherries** was as good as dead.

Although a newly-reconstructed **Wild Cherries** put together by Loyde appeared at Sunbury 1972, that band broke up immediately after the festival. However, the reputation of **Lobby Loyde** as Australia's "guitar God" was



A more recent Lobby Loyde.
(Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

well and truly cemented by his appearances in the line-ups of these two bands and although he is not recognised for any sort of charting records, his place has been assured in rock history.

FINKS, VEGETAL MOTHERS and COOL DADDIES ...

If there is any one musician able to speak with authority on the scene, it must be **Ross Wilson**. A true survivor and veteran of a number of bands which he was instrumental in forming, he consistently rocked the house down with successive bands at each and every known major venue in this period. Wilson began his career while still at school at a time when being a full-time musician was at best, a precarious occupation. This was particularly so

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when parental expectations were always high for their offspring to take on a "safe" trade or profession for life ahead. Wilson, at 16 years of age was a total convert to the new sounds emanating from Britain, produced on record by such bands as The 'Stones, **The Yardbirds**, **The Pretty Things** and **Them**. He had already made the connection between American blues and the new British R & B sounds and set about forming his first band in 1965 – **The Pink Finks** and beginning a long-time collaboration with **Ross Hannaford** who was not 14 years old then:

ROSS WILSON: "I already had a knowledge of where jazz and blues converged because I'd worked my way through my father's record collection, ... I'd taken up playing the harmonica because I was laid up in hospital with a broken leg, quickly learned how to improvise around the songs, you didn't just have to stick to the melody. Then having dug the Rolling Stones I'd made the connection in my mind between what they were doing and the blues guys they were learning from. I was getting hold of these import albums by Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker and all this solid stuff and we started applying that to the Pink Finks. I'd say there's this great Sleepy John Estes song, why don't we have a go at that?" (Wilson quoted in liner notes - *Now Listen* CD, by Ian McFarlane).



Both Wilson and Hannaford were effectively too young to enter many of the live venues they played at when they started out and had to sneak in and out through alternate entrances and exits. Hannaford, so the story goes, had to be driven to various gigs by his mum! Hard to imagine that they were so young when the band recorded *Louie, Louie* – both still had end of year exams to complete, but already they were thoroughly immersed in R & B. **Mike Rudd** has memories of **Ross Hannaford**:

got ... which was taken by Jim shows Hannaford still quite short it's hard to believe that he was and .. well, Gothically pale." (Rudd,

Ross Wilson also recalls "the ROSS WILSON: "... he was one of

this harmonica blow with Keith Glass' Rising Sons at a local church dance. They'd been playing as an instrumental band playing Shadows stuff and he was only about four foot tall... and really wide... and he was just about to turn thirteen ... he'd been in a band which had been on Channel 2 a few times... I think they were called The Shoeshine Band and they were noted for their youth. ...he's a natural. He's the same now... We both had a very good sense of rhythm and we both ended up liking the same kind of stuff. That's how come by the time we got to Daddy Cool there was this kind of intuitive interplay between the two guitars. Even listening to it now, I go. "Gee, how did we do that?". (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

They recorded *Louie Louie* and another single release; *You're Good To Me* which was written locally by rocker-turned-country-legend, **Johnny Chester**. It was given the beat treatment by The 'Finks. Wilson recalls the experience of the *Louie Louie* recording, which was a **Richard Berry** song, made into a world-wide hit by **The Kingsmen**:

ROSS WILSON: "Our version is quite interesting because it follows all the rules when it comes to garage bands – we did it in one take, it's our own arrangement, it's quite substantially different to other peoples', it's got the words

MIKE RUDD: "Hannaford was short and fat at that stage and the photo I've Colbert of the Party Machine earlier on, but just coming out of his "puppy fat" – anything other than long and scrawny op cit 20 September, 2004) other Ross":

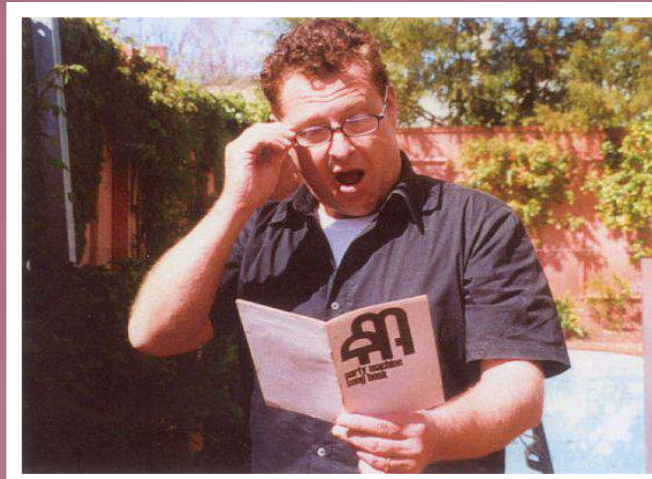
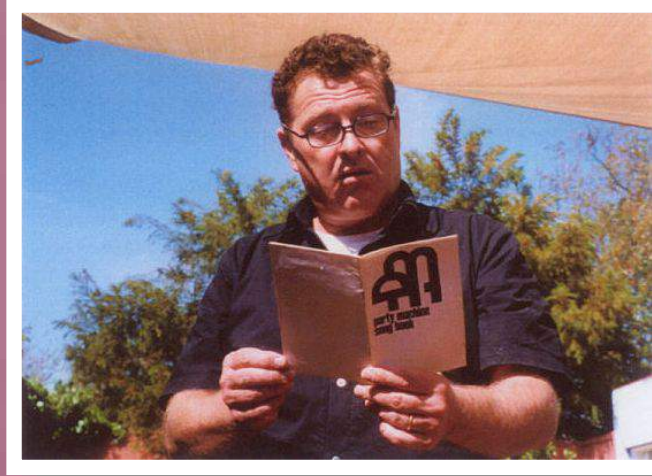
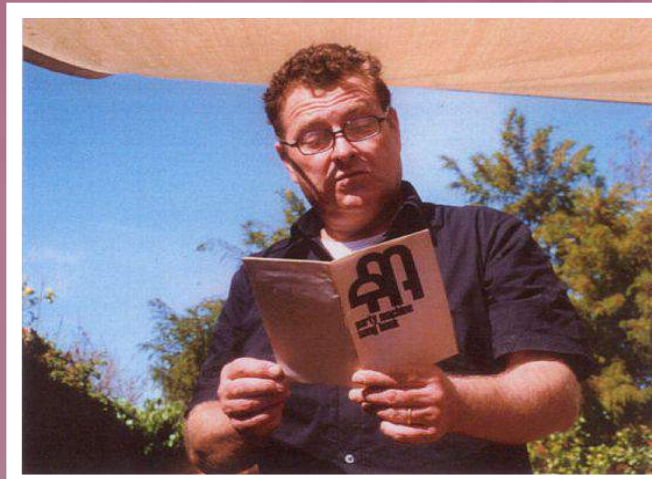
the guys who came up to me after I'd had

that I made up and don't really make sense. But the thing that distinguishes it... is that we go to this double time section in the middle with the harmonica... so that's the first time I appeared on record playing the harmonica and singing. It actually made the charts in Melbourne, so we did pretty well. We had our own label too, not so much that we were adventurous, it's that we were in a hurry and we couldn't get a deal... we didn't even bother looking for one I think, we just said, "let's make a record" and off we went. (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

They practiced and played at local dances, but only on weekends, together with other bands including local friends, **The Rising Sons, (Keith Glass)** and **The King Bees (Joe Camilleri)**. They were all blazing their own paths into the new venues which were being set up around town. Wilson's and Hannaford's schoolboy band however,

69.

Ross Wilson's Little Booklet...



Ross Wilson revisits his Party Machine Song Book and even today is suitably shocked by the lyrics which once offended Victoria's Vice Squad.

70.

lasted until the end of 1966 when several members left to pursue university studies, leaving behind the two Ross' who, by this time were more deadly serious about their music than furthering their education.

Never one to stand still for too long, Wilson moved on to **The Party Machine** in 1967 taking Hannaford with him and meeting up with ex-Kiwi, **Mike Rudd** who curiously enough played bass with the band. This was a matter of necessity for Rudd:

ROSS WILSON: "We'd struck up a friendship with Mike and his band, The Chants from New Zealand and they'd come over ... their lead guitarist was really good but it turns out he was AWOL from the Army ... or the call-up or something like that over there... and he got arrested. So they were going, "Gee, what are we going to do?" Mike was with his future wife, and they were struggling and we said, "Listen, we need a bass player, so how would you like to play bass?" He said, "Yeah... anything, as long as I'm doing something." So he took up the bass... and not being a bass player per say... he had quite an unusual style. Listening back to this track we did there's all this fuzz bass on it and its pretty good stuff." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

This was sometime before Rudd joined with the unflappable **Bill Putt** to form **Spectrum**. Wilson, influenced by American **Frank Zappa And His Mothers Of Invention** and **Captain Beefheart**, was intent on pushing the boundaries of public and parental tolerance of these new attitudes to the very limit with this band. This was particularly so when sex raised its ugly



The Party Machine – Peter Curtin, Ross Hannaford, Mike Rudd and Ross Wilson. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)



He still sounds as good as ever – Ross Wilson continues to write and record. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

head!

When *Go-Set* magazine issued a little supplement called, *The Party Machine Song Book* containing Wilson's lyrics which some considered beyond the realms of decency, it became just too much for society of the time to cope with. It all started off quite innocently with Wilson deciding to put his lyrics down on paper and hand out the booklets to the kids as a "get-to-know-the-band" publicity attempt.

Wilson has since played down the effects of the booklet on public morals at the time. He makes the point that it was nothing more than indulging in experimenting with words and fantasising a little on real things that were happening at the time. He explains how he saw the controversy as merely a media beat-up:

ROSS WILSON: "We were also playing a lot of our own material which was pretty much unheard of, so to get that across, we printed up this lyric book and sold them for, like twenty cents, or (we would) give them away or whatever... in the hope that people would get into it a bit more. ...What happened was, if the Vice Squad got complaints they had to look into them and unbeknown to us, our manager at the time, Gavin Anderson who worked out of *Go-Set* at the time,... had a pile of the books laying around and somebody decided to throw these in (to *Go-Set*) with record prizes and a mother took a look at the book and kinda said, "Yikes! This is dreadful!" ...

and complained to the Vice Squad.

So they raided *Go-Set* and seized all these books, but then realized that there was nothing that bad about them. I remember it got us on TV. I remember a very young David Johnson (currently Channel 7 Melbourne news reader) walking along the beach interviewing me for whatever channel he was with at the time, and we got some publicity. But then I got an invitation to go and join Procession in London and by the time I got back, I thought that it'd all be over but they'd only just got around to having the case. I didn't have to be there because it wasn't me they were trying to get, it was just like, "what are we going to do with these books?" The magistrate was reported in the paper as saying it wasn't that bad but he had ordered them to be destroyed" (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

71.

Certainly The Victorian Vice Squad found the following verse from Wilson's song, *Don't It Make You Sick* of great interest:



The newly-formed Party Machine – Ray Arnott, Ross Hannaford, Ross Wilson, Russell Smith and Tim Partridge. (*Go-Set* – 5 May, 1973, courtesy of Colin Beard)

*"First I got an axe and split her in two
From her head down to her crutch,
Then with a razor blade I cut her ****
And I took 'em home for lunch."*

(Reproduced courtesy of Ross Wilson)

Hmmmm ... Okay then ... maybe the Vice Squad boys had a point or two in their favour here! Certainly, the song, *I Don't Believe All Your Kids Should Be Virgins* added further fuel to the fire by seemingly suggesting that all 'teens should engage in sex against their parents' will. The booklet was summarily banned! Wilson however, did have a point – taken in context, there was really nothing to the "scandal" – it is all essentially quite innocent and naive. But, just what was Wilson trying to prove at that stage?:

MIKE RUDD: "... (Ross) was off in his own lyrical direction which was fairly challenging ... I don't know how the decision came around but Ross decided to publish this booklet. He may have known at that stage that the band was going to split, because he was going to head off to England to join Procession

... not quite sure whether that was imminent or not. Whether that influenced it or not ... anyway he did an arrangement with *Go-Set* to print this booklet. I don't know how word got out; anyway the Vice Squad raided the offices of *Go-Set* and impounded all the copies." (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

By 1969, progressive rock had firmly taken hold of the venues and the charts and on his return from his stint in England, Wilson formed his third band, **Sons Of The Vegetal Mother** - a made-for-live band reuniting Wilson with Hannaford - and Rudd, who by this time had moved on to **Spectrum**, but was enticed back. They immediately gained a substantial following at the club venues, particularly The T.F. Much Ballroom where they became the leading must-hear-and-see band on the scene. Wilson had returned from England after a less than successful stint with **Procession**:

ROSS WILSON: "I had all these songs I wanted to perform and I just got in touch with all my old friends who were doing things and progressing while I was away... Hannaford, Mike Rudd and also Trevor Griffin who came back from England when Procession broke up. Then I met **Gary Young** at the warehouse I was working at and he knew **Wayne Duncan**... then we had a horn section from The Lip... and suddenly there was this eight or nine piece band



happily stompin' away. We had about a half a dozen songs... including *Eagle Rock*. (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Gary Young was not used to the zappy-style direction which Wilson was taking, but recognised the uniqueness of Wilson's creative genius:

GARY YOUNG: "I met Ross Wilson first because of the radio bans at the end of the 'sixties. Things started happening around Melbourne because of these bans. Gigs started to close down and it got to the stage where it was difficult for professional rock musicians to get work. I'd left school 72.

at the end of '64 and I'd been playing as a professional up to the ban, then all of a sudden, there's no work. So I had to look for a regular day job and I took this job working in a book warehouse, supposedly as a storeman-packer. After I'd been working there for about a month and I saw this new guy starting and I looked at him and thought, "I know this guy!" It was Ross Wilson. I'd seen him playing around the scene with The Party Machine and The Pink Finks... and he'd been leading his bands. What had happened was that he got married and had done that thing when you travel overseas as a young man... go through Europe and do the hippie travelling stuff in India and he'd come back to Australia, flat broke!

So, I introduced myself to him ... we started talking and he told me what he was thinking of doing... forming a band ... looking for a drummer and a bass player. So I said, "I know a bass player, Wayne Duncan", and he said, "...cool, cool..". So he knew Ross Hannaford and he wanted him involved. He said, "It's going to be called, 'Sons Of The Vegetal Mother' and the music is all about macro-biotic food! "Whaaat! Run that by me again!!" I'd never heard about macro-biotic food so I said, "What's this all about?" So he told me and some of the songs he'd written were all crazy songs about food! But, the thing about it was that it all sounded like The Mothers Of Invention. So the music was actually fairly sophisticated, but I'd never heard anything like it before. It was based on Frank Zappa arrangements and it was really challenging to play, particularly for Wayne and I who'd just come out of a straight rock band." (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005)

A very rare, if not unique photo of Sons Of The Vegetal Mother. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Wayne Duncan)



Daddy Cool - Ross Wilson, Wayne Duncan, Gary Young and Ross Hannaford - from *The Best Of Daddy Cool* - Summit Records, (photo - TV Week.)

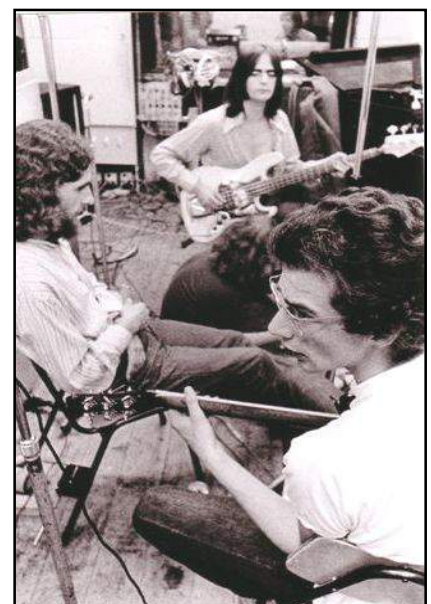


From *The Best Of Daddy Cool* - Summit Records, (photo - TV Week.)

Again, this group didn't necessarily create any more real chart activity for Wilson mainly because the music being played in a live context was not necessarily that which could be safely recorded and easily slotted into a radio program format. But from this band, came another creation which probably wasn't intended to head in the direction that it did.

Wilson's best known band, **Daddy Cool** started out ironically as nothing more than a bit of fun on the side - a 1970's interpretation of 'fifties rock, rockabilly and 'do wop'. While substantial rehearsals were taking place for the **Sons Of The Vegetal**

Mother, Ross Wilson was introducing some old 'do-wop' songs from the past into these rehearsals with the central rhythm section of the band, when they arrived early at the studio. **The Sons Of The Vegetal Mother** was the



band he had created to be the mainstay, but he hadn't quite counted on the phenomenal impact of his minor project, **Daddy Cool** on live audiences:

ROSS WILSON: "Then we stripped it back to the four guys and Daddy Cool, as a splinter group really took over. Daddy Cool's very first performance was in South Australia. We went to play this Glenelg Blues Festival in the town hall down near the beach and Sons Of The Vegetal Mother had been booked to play there. And we said, " ... and while we're here, can we try out this splinter group? ... you don't have to pay us ... we'd just like to play for half an hour." So we did.

A relaxed Daddy Cool in rehearsal – minus Gary Young – 1970. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)



Daddy Cool off to America with roadie "Scrooge" (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

of fun 'cos it's got four parts and we had the bass voice with Hannaford ... we could do all that stuff. Not only that, Gary and Wayne had come up through the rock scene from the beginning... been professional musicians since they were sixteen, playing all that with Bobbie & Laurie... they'd already been pop stars.

Out of that came Daddy Cool and Peter Andrew dropped into the first Daddy Cool rehearsal in the back of this house I was renting in South Yarra. I remember Gerry Humphrys was with him because he was MC at the (T. F. Much) Ballroom and their jaws dropped and they just went..."Wow!.. This is great". Next thing you know we had a spot there and everyone went off. Over that summertime of '70 and '71, we pretty much took over Melbourne. By the time we brought out a single, it all happened nationwide in a short space of time. It was like all the lessons I had heard playing around Melbourne, writing songs and then going off in our first away from home experience. (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

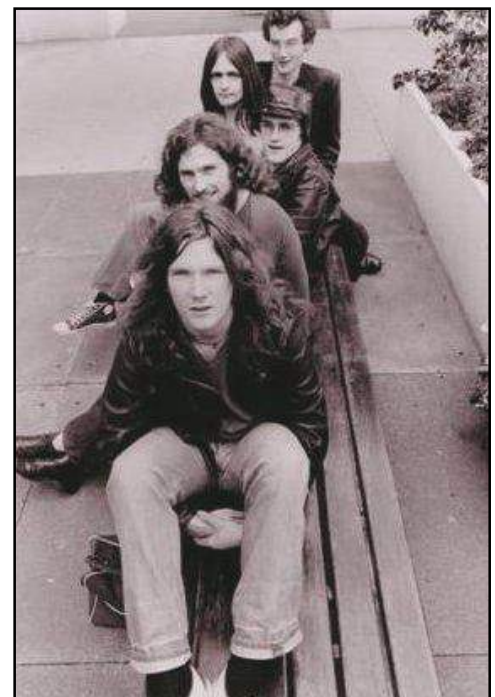
Funny thing though – old and 'fifties though it was, it caught on and gave Wilson, Hannaford, bassist Duncan and drummer, Young the long-awaited and consequently enduring chart success they had sought, thanks to the seminal hit, *Eagle Rock*. It was characterised by that outstanding **Ross Wilson** - penned guitar riff which gave Australia its equivalent to the lead riff on, for example **Deep Purple's** *Smoke On The Water* or **Keith Richards' Satisfaction** riff – everyone could hum it and learn to play it! It has that same stand out quality and quickly became a live staple at clubs:

ROSS WILSON: "I started writing *Eagle Rock* in England. I'd developed this finger picking style, like a rural blues style, and I came

73.

We played *That'll Be The Day*, ... *Eagle Rock* and a few other things. The reaction was immediate and we came back and did a gig at the T. F. Much Ballroom. Everyone used to sit on the floor and listen to long solos but when we came on everyone got up and started leaping around and that was like the start of a new era.

I was into do-wop, pre-'56 stuff. I kinda discovered it and was researching it and that's where we got a lot of our material from. It was like going to school to learn all that kind of music. That type of music hadn't really been heard in Australia... we got the stuff from Elvis onwards. I'd go in there and smoke a little pot... then start rolling around the floor laughing... and say, 'We've got to do this song, *Lollypop*' it's so stupid! (laughs) Then when you actually sing it, it's a lot



Five cool daddies? Occasional sax player, Jerry Noonan is in the middle of the foursome. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

up with this riff. There was this article in The Sunday Times and it had a picture of people dancing in a Juke Joint, and the caption said they were 'doing the Eagle Rock and Cutting the Pigeon Wing'. This is the way songwriting works, I'd got the title and that was the key to unlocking what was in my subconscious. I got back to Australia and I finished off the chorus. I'd play it to people and say 'do you like this riff?' 'Have you heard it somewhere before?' It seemed so good, I was thinking, 'gee I hope I haven't pinched that from somewhere'. After a while I figured I must have come up with it myself." (Wilson, liner notes *Now Listen*, op cit).

Young *Go-Set* writer, **Ed Nimmervoll** began writing about **Daddy Cool** around this time and possibly half of all articles which have appeared about the band over time, could be attributed to him. Wilson and Nimmervoll

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shared a passion for **Frank Zappa** which led to the writer being one of the first to hear this landmark song:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "Ross Wilson had become one of my readers and he knew my passion for Frank Zappa. He was in England with Procession and had seen Zappa. I'd never met Ross; I was never really interested in meeting these people; I was just writing about music. I never intended to get to know these people personally and Ross wrote me a letter having seen The Mothers Of Invention. So we got to meet. I went to his place and he got out his guitar and he played me this song which he'd written on the way over from England... *Eagle Rock*."

(Nimmervoll, author's interview, 23 September, 2005)

Wilson's compatriot **Jim Keays** of **The Masters Apprentices** recalls:

JIM KEAYS: "The first band I saw (on return to Australia) was Daddy Cool, who I'd only heard about. Mitch O'Driscoll (the *Go-Set* reporter) had played *Eagle Rock* for us in London and I loved the record, but it was seeing them live that really brought all the fun and excitement into focus. They were infectious." (Keays 1999, op cit, P211.)



Come back again - I doubt if they've ever been away. Daddy Cool - from left, Wilson, Hannaford, Duncan and Young in 2004. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

Despite the surprise nature of *Eagle Rock* and the retro-rock sound of **Daddy Cool**, Wilson was not surprised that it became the smash hit it did or that it became an instant favourite of the dance venue crowds:

ROSS WILSON: "That's the one we worked on the most. We recorded the first album in like... two and a half days and nights. If you listen to the album you can hear the ones that Robbie Porter put a lot of mixing time into. He took *Eagle Rock* over to Hollywood and that's what gave it that 'other sound'. It doesn't sound like other acts that were around at that time ... it's not drenched in echo. Ours is nice and dry and very stereo-y. But there are other tracks on it which are as rough as guts. *Good Rockin' Daddy* is really sloppy. (laughs) So we zeroed in on *Eagle Rock* because we thought that was the one. There was a bit of an audience resurgence. We used to play it probably twice a night... people would say, 'Can you play that song again?' It had something going for it from the start. We

had played it at our first gig and it had come through The Vegetal Mothers.

A lot of good things happened in the studio on that too. Hannaford did a couple of overdubs on it and the harmony I sing in the chorus is quite unusual in spots... I just went in and "winged it" ... made that up on the spot. It sounds like Hannaford singing but that's me singing with myself." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

The Sons Of The Vegetal Mother faded into obscurity. After yet another short-term project, **Mighty Kong**, Wilson moved on again and into the 'eighties formed **Mondo Rock** creating a new line of hits to be performed in new pub - style venues which sprung up in the suburbs as the liquor laws began to be relaxed. It happened for him all over again - new audiences, new hits and new venues to play in.

THE TWILIGHTS - Hoadley's heroes...

When mention is made of Adelaide's six-piece band, **The Twilights**, what usually springs to mind is the memory of the band with dual lead singers out front - a most unusual sight in the immediate post-Beatles days. But having two males at the microphone at the same time, singing in harmony while the rest of the group backed up on



instruments, worked really well for them. Only **The Valentines** with **Vince Lovegrove** and **Bon Scott** in charge, attempted to put twin lead singers up on stage.

For a time in the middle of the swingin' sixties, **The Twilights** were probably the most professional outfit on the circuit with a combination of well-honed stage moves, catchy pop-based songs and talent to burn. They were one of the triumvirate of leading Adelaide bands, (**The Masters Apprentices** and **Zoot** being the other two), which were the most accomplished popsters to come out of the "City of Churches" and try their hands at the "big time" in Melbourne. You could make that an Adelaide quadruple by adding in **The Levi Smith Clefs**.

The connection between the migrants from Britain and the rise of beat music in this country has already been

75.

drawn and Elizabeth in South Australia was one of those places where jobs for skilled and semi-skilled migrants were in abundance in the period of the greatest wave of late 'fifties, early 'sixties migration from Britain and Europe. Take into account also the enormous impact which **The Beatles** tour of 1964 had on the teenagers of Adelaide. Of all Australian cities they visited, Adelaide gave **The Beatles** their most rapturous and hysterical reception. The seeds which the Fab Four planted amongst the 'teens of that city grew rapidly into fruition with the formation of many beat bands whose determination and sheer talent made them a sure fire chance at success.

Along with **The Twilights**, **The Masters Apprentices** and **Zoot**, other bands such as **Bobby Bright and the Beaumen**, **Johnny B. Goode** and **Penny Rockets**, **Pat Aulton** and **The Clefs** and **The Hurricanes** worked the scene around Adelaide and suburbs. What had commenced as a nighttime and weekend leisure pursuit for a number of bands, soon had the potential to become a viable career in music. **The Twilights** were tagged as a Beatle-clone band and they were happy to cash in on this for a while riding the crest of the wave in the wake of **The Beatles** 1964 tour.

of
1967,
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done

own



They would remain keen performers and copyists of Beatles songs and on the occasion the release of *Sgt Peppers Lonely Hearts Band* in would perform the entire album and more on number of occasions at Melbourne venues, note perfect, until EMI began to air some concerns and insisted that this practice cease. However, this is not what they are entirely remembered for because they also built their distinct body of work as they matured as songwriters themselves.

Glenn Shorrock whose name has become

synonymous with **The Twilights**, his subsequent bands, **Axiom** and the world

The Twilights in Adelaide at The Arndale Shopping Centre, Woodville, 1965. (Courtesy of Robert Bradshaw)

conquering **Little River Band**, recalled how the band came into being:

GLENN SHORROCK: "It was a warm summer evening in Elizabeth, South Australia... Paddy McCartney, Mike Sykes and myself had been singing in a quartet called The Checkmates but had decided to trim down to a more efficient trio. Looking into the changing colours of the evening skyline, I suggested we call ourselves The Twilights.



We performed as a trio for a year or so ...sometimes with various bands, sometime a capella. We sang songs like *Runaround Sue*, *Surfin' Safari*, *At The Hop*, *Blowin' In The Wind* and *Tom Dooley* – sort of a cross between Jan and Dean and The Kingston Trio!" (Shorrock, liner notes for *Twilight Time*, 1982, Raven Records.)

In reasonably rapid succession, they sort of "merged" with **The Hurricanes** and in the afterglow of Beatlemania, won a Beatles soundalike competition while landing an appearance on the *Adelaide Tonight* television show. The major casualty in the amalgamation was Shorrock's friend **Mike Sykes** who was pushed aside. So **The Twilights** now consisted of Shorrock and McCartney, lead guitarist **Terry Britten**, John **Bywaters** on bass, Peter **Brideoake** (rhythm guitar) and **Frank Barnard** on drums. The first two singles, *I'll Be Where You Are*, (June, 1965) and

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Wanted To Sell, (October 1965) remained "local" hits but *If She Finds Out* began to stir the public's interest further east in Melbourne at the time that one of the few changes in the band took place with **Laurie Prior** replacing Barnard on drums for the rest of the band's existence.

It took them a couple of apprenticeship years to perfect their sound which was, at times so similar to **The Beatles** that people could be easily convinced they were listening to the "real thing":

GLENN SHORROCK: "Over the next two years, The Twilights consolidated their position as Adelaide's leading Mod band, specialising in versions of the best British rock. The Flies...(from Melbourne) were supposed to be Australia's leading Beatle-type band but when they got to the Oxford we drained them of their confidence. They honestly believed that the sounds of The Twilights live was Beatles' records being played in the Club!" (Shorrock, op cit, 1982, Raven Records.)

The Oxford Club was Adelaide's answer to Liverpool's Cavern Club and the faithful would pack out the tiny hall on Fridays and



Paddy McCartney and Peter Brideoake on stage at The Salisbury Youth Centre, Adelaide, 1965. (Courtesy of Robert Bradshaw)

Saturdays. **Garry Spry**, had already been impressed by what he had heard on Melbourne radio, but was thoroughly "gob-smacked" at the sound emanating from these Adelaide stars when he made the trip there as manager with **The Flies**. However, it was when **The Twilights** recorded the old **Velveteens** song, *Needle In A Haystack* that they had their initial number one hit nationally. The club scene in Melbourne was set for a Twilight push by the end of 1965.

Shorrock, McCartney and company were shrewd enough to realise that although their staple live offerings were still Beatle or British Beat/R & B covers, this would be a self-destructive move to do predominately Beatle songs on their first album release. Their self-titled twelve-



The first Twilights drummer, Frank Barnard, 1965. He unfortunately didn't want to relocate to Melbourne and had to be replaced. (Courtesy of Robert Bradshaw)



tracker was recorded at Armstrong's by **Roger Savage** and mastered by EMI in Sydney. It contained a number of Shorrock and Britten originals, coupled with *I'm Not Talkin'* - The **Yardbirds'** song, **The Who's** *La La La Lies*, **The Moody Blues'** *Let Me Go* and **The Hollies'** *Yes I Will* - all well-respected covers done by the band, live. They may have avoided overworking Beatles material, but didn't shy away

from giving **The Rolling Stones'** (*I Can't Get No*) *Satisfaction* a great workout. The album was a strong balance of the new and the popular.

Their time had come! They stormed Disco in Toorak – possibly Melbourne's hangout. Still not totally sure about their future of music, they actually took their

Glenn Shorrock at The Salisbury Youth Centre, 1965. (Courtesy of Robert Bradshaw)



Pinocchio's top mod place in the holidays from their Adelaide day jobs to come to weekend income for time. concept had

Melbourne, as music was still only a pursuit and not the major source of band members. That would change in

By 1965, The Battle of the Bands taken on a national persona and gained a permanent sponsor – 77.

Hoadley's Chocolates with *Go-Set* getting right behind the concept of having the top groups in the land and the hopefuls fighting it out for the coveted crown of the Best Band in Australia. To the surprise of no one – The Twilights won and scored the coveted trip to London to record. They were the Adelaide winners in 1965 but the Melbourne Festival Hall Grand Final in June, 1966 was their crowning achievement. However, **The Twilights** like **The Masters Apprentices**, **The Groop** (and **The Easybeats** as well) also found the "pot of gold" at the end of the Sitmar cruise rainbow was just not there. All hit the ground with a resounding "thud" when they began to measure themselves up with the competition in London. Still, they all did get to record at the famed, Abbey Road studios.

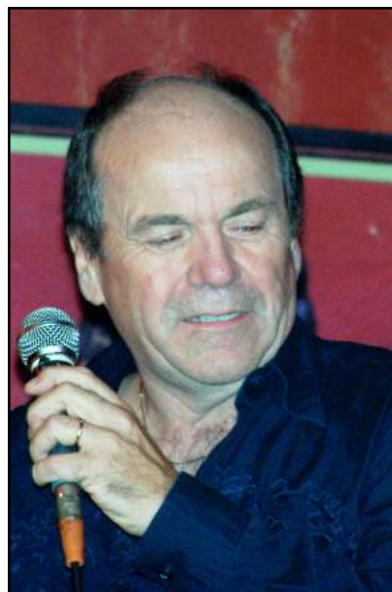
By 1968, **The Twilights** were showing the discotheque circuit just what a varied and professional stage act they were – the original hit the covers and the entertainment of their slapstick

Glenn Shorrock does his Superman act and gets caught up in the crowd. Christmas shanigans, 1967. (Go-Set, 27 December, 1967, courtesy of Colin Beard)

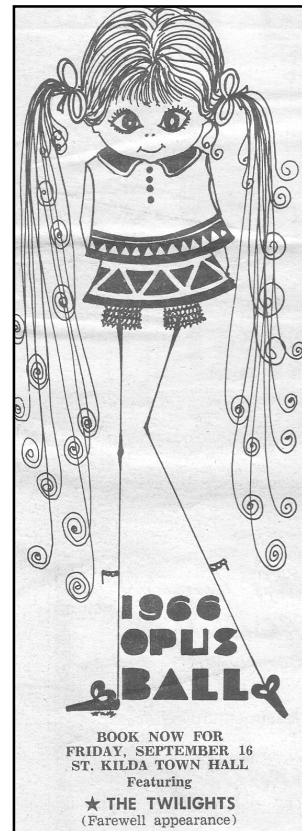
des. They were not just musicians but sheer entertainers – and the crowds loved them!

As the roller coaster went up so it also had to come down on the other side. This merry mayhem could last forever and by early 1969, with some discontent their ranks, they made the wise decision to bring the to a halt with the last ever performance at Berties in January of that year. As well as the euphoric times, were now a few small disappointments setting in.

Crowds had begun to drift away from the city venues a little. They had produced a pilot for a television show called, *Once Upon A Twilight*, shot in part at Berties, but it was destined never to be picked up by the networks. Now with several top albums to their credit it was all over – time to move on to new projects. In true "even if I do say so myself" tradition, Shorrock has declared that **The Twilights** were, "a damned good band"! No one around would ever deny him of this opinion.



tunes, and gag-laden comedy interludes. come not within band there



Glenn Shorrock in 2006 – once a Twilight, always a Twilight. On tour, he now mixes in his Axiom and Little River Band material.

CARSON – Boogie, experimentation and free-flow...

Melbourne bands **Carson** and Sydney's **Tully** represented groups which formed around already accomplished musicians who had cut their teeth in lesser known bands. By 1970, **Carson** had incorporated a catchy boogie style into their sound but still retained a broad blues base, similar to **Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs** and **Chain** and hence became popular on the discotheque and club circuit around Melbourne in the early 'seventies as the progressive rock movement flourished and this form of rock began to establish itself.

Formed in January, 1970 as **The Carson County Band**, the four-piece combined the talents of **Greg "Sleepy" Lawrie**, **Ian "Fingers" Ferguson**, **Tony Enery** and **Tony Lunt**. Over the three years during which they strode the dance and festival stages, changes in the line up took place with regularity - **Broderick Smith** from **The Adderley** 78.

Smith Blues Band and **Ian "Willie" Winter** joined the line up at various stages as did **Mal Logan** and **Mal Capewell**. This was when founding members either moved on or the band expanded to include keyboards and a brass section.

Ian Ferguson had been a Shepparton boy who had played in local rock band, **Tony and the Shondells** before arriving in Melbourne to join the final line-up of **The Moods**. He then added his chunky bass lines to **The Syndicate** which at various times was **The Bobby James Syndicate** and backed solo singer, **Ronnie Burns**. "Fergie" described how **Carson** came together:

IAN FERGUSON: "The Syndicate! One of these guys I'd known for a couple of years. They were backing Ronnie Burns about the time he was living with "Molly" Meldrum at Burnsie's place. So I joined them for a while. Then I got a call from Greg "Sleepy" Lawrie who was looking for a bass player and we practiced in an old house in Hawthorn called... Arsolo.. What a name ...'you arsolo'... always cracked us up! (laughs). So we practised there with Greg, Tony Enery and Tony Lunt. It was their call to name the band, The Carson County Band because I was just doing the vocals and playing bass." (Ferguson, op cit, 24 July, 2005).



Ian Ferguson with The Carson County Band in 1971. (Courtesy of Harley Parker)

Their first booking strangely enough, was in Adelaide, at the invitation of well-known art collector and writer, **Kim Bonythan** to play at a 21st Birthday Party for his daughter, Alice. The trip across and back for a three-hour gig, netted them a little above the going rate at the time, but on arrival back in Melbourne, their career began to leap ahead dramatically. They were quickly taken up by **Michael Gudinski's** Consolidated Rock agency to join his stable which already boasted some of the early 'seventies stars - **Chain**, **Bulldog**, **Aztecs**, **Company Caine**, **Pirana**:

IAN FERGUSON: "Soon we were working three, four, five gigs a week and this was the Sebastians, Berties, 'Tum days and we started branching



Carson's first album *Blown* which hit the record shops in December, 1972. Cover design by Ian McCausland

Within a short time, the band had changed its name, dropping the last part because they were being taken for a Country band even though their fare was strictly heavy, progressive blues and boogie. They were influenced strongly by the Chicago heavy blues sound in the style of America's **Canned Heat** with whom they were later to share the Mulwala stage.

Their first booking strangely enough, was in Adelaide, at the invitation of well-known art collector and writer, **Kim Bonythan** to play at a 21st Birthday Party for his daughter, Alice. The



out to the suburban gigs like the Ringwood Town Hall, Q Club where I'd already played before with The Moods.." (Ferguson, op cit, 24 July, 2005).

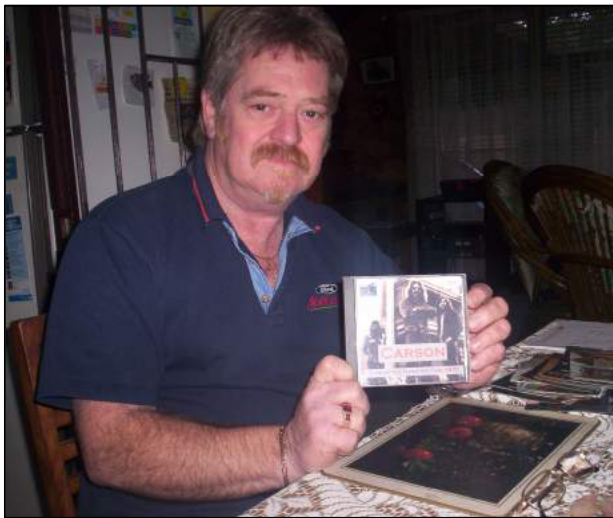
Carson soon recorded their first single, *On The Highway* backed with *Resting Place*. When the inevitable band changes came along, the re-structured Carson however, didn't change their strong brand of Chicago blues and boogie. Nevertheless, the inevitable defections took place:

IAN FERGUSON: "So after Tony Eney left Carson County Band, we got John Capek in. He was a fairly established musician and he'd been on a few talent shows on TV. But he had this uncanny ability to split his mind so he could play two pieces at once – great ability. He was a very talented

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musician when I knew him, but we didn't quite click together and it *has* to click.

Then we decided to change our name to Carson because that's what everybody called us anyway. True, the original name sounded a little bit Country, but it wasn't really a transition musically for the band. We'd only just changed the keyboard player and the name but we were still doing the same material. John Capek left and went on to King Harvest." (Ferguson, op cit, 24 July, 2005).



Ian Ferguson continues to play bass today.

Then about the time that The Thumpin' Tum was kickin' on, we went three-piece for a while. That time was absolutely fantastic and I loved it because we were playing progressive music, the crowds loved us because we were like a second-string Chain band – (if the promoter couldn't get Chain, he'd get us.) In fact, we even had Matt Taylor in the band for a week before he joined Chain. He was available, but he was waiting to hear from the Chain boys. So I left Carson, late '71." (Ferguson, op cit, 24 July, 2005).

About the time the band discussed adding Broderick **Smith** from The **Adderley Smith Blues Band**, Ferguson decided it was time to part company with the rest of **Carson**. This was not before playing on the track which was to be their next single, *Travellin' South*, ironically recorded on the day he handed his resignation in. The single was released in August, 1971 with Smith's vocals, but as Ferguson has revealed, *he* was responsible for the vocals on the original cut. These were subsequently overdubbed when Smith joined the band and he left. Ferguson's motives for leaving were clear, however he is not bitter about parting company:

IAN FERGUSON: " ...they wanted to get Brod Smith in ... they were successful and it would have been good to have enjoyed that success but I wouldn't have sacrificed my musical direction to get

A happy Broderick Smith on stage at Berties about 1971. (Courtesy of Harley Parker.)

Ferguson too, began to become a little restless as **Carson's** sound began to solidify into the brand of blues which they were so much loved for – long boogie/blues numbers with the extended guitar blow somewhere in the middle. Like their compatriots, **Chain**, they made their mark on the live scene for the excitement and mesmerising rock/blues which they created on stage. Similarities between these two bands existed and they often played the same bills and venues. Ferguson was, for a while settled into a routine which allowed him to expand his horizons, albeit temporarily:

IAN FERGUSON: "Then we got Paul Lever on vocals ... interesting person .. very shy with an inferiority complex. He thought everybody was against him. Nobody was actually against him, it was just his own fear factor taking over his mind. He didn't last long though.



His days with Carson are long over and Broderick Smith now lives and works in country Victoria.

it. Because early Carson was a progressive boogie/blues band, to me some of the later Carson stuff was all right, but a lot of it was too much the same for me. I was sick of playing the slide 12 bars stuff." (Ferguson, op cit, 24 July, 2005).

Carson did continue to achieve their measure of success after adding Ian "Willie" Winter in a temporary move before he left in March, 1972 to momentarily join Ross Hannaford as Daddy Cool's guitar attack. On Ferguson's suggestion, former Chain bassist, Barry "Big Goose" Sullivan took over the role and Mal Logan brought his keyboards to the ever expanding Carson.

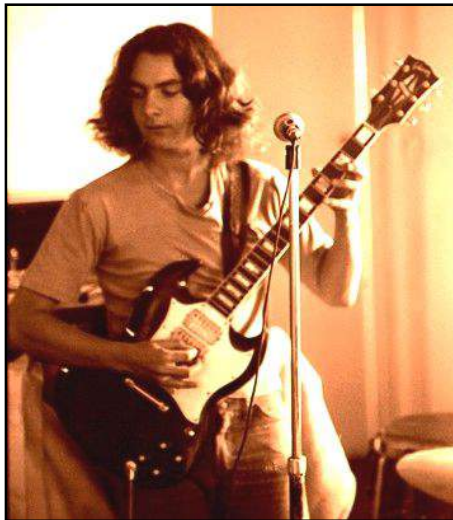
They played the Sunbury Festival (1973) just prior to breaking up after Winter and Logan left the fold. Although Carson was heavily influenced by American bands like Canned Heat, they adapted this style to suit local audiences

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with a more free-flowing form of the blues which engaged the crowds when Carson played on the live stage. Many would remember their one and only studio album, *Blown*, released on EMI's Harvest label with its alien-style, writhing, exploding-head, cover art by Ian McCausland. It is fitting for such a dynamic band which made its name on the live stage, that their final LP should be an all-live album, capturing their entire set at Sunbury, that year –and released as, *On The Air*. It hit the record store racks only weeks after the band had come to a final grinding halt.

TAMAM SHUD – Goolutionites on sand...

Tamam Shud, formed first in Newcastle in 1967, they quickly earned for themselves the "psychedelic" tag because of their musical influences in Sydney



A young Tim Gaze recording for *Morning of The Earth*. (Courtesy of Albert Falzon, *Morning of the Earth*)

town. In due time because of their strong support base there, they wanted to venture down to Melbourne, although it took them until June, 1970 to do so. The Shud had established themselves in Sydney as an original progressive rock outfit influenced by a wide variety of overseas bands. From Janis Joplin's *Big Brother and the Holding Company* to Pink Floyd, their sound was bitey and free-flowing acid rock. They were originally a R & B band

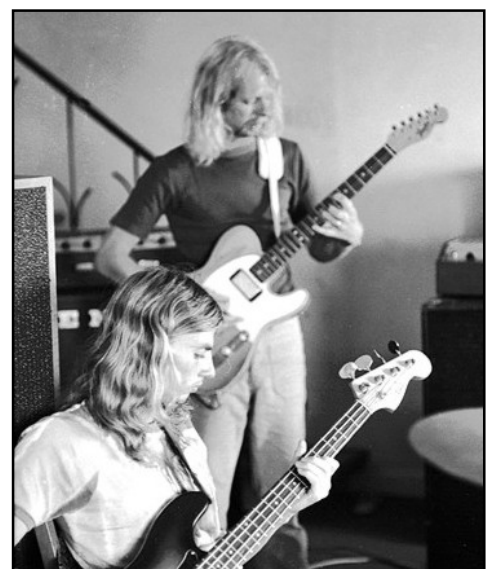


Evolution - the first Shud album, recorded on primitive equipment and released on CBS in 1969.

who also managed to combine the acid rock with the surf sound creating a distinct blend – prompting many to label them as a surf band, which they were not. Lindsay Bjerre joined the original members of the band that began their journey as *The Four Strangers* then *The Sunsets* - guitarists Alex Zytnic and Gary Johns, bassist Eric Connell and drummer, Dannie Davidson. With Bjerre's inclusion, they took on a distinctly new look and feel. Taking the name **Tamam**

Shud from the last words in the *Rubaiyat* by Omar Kayam, they rapidly became established in Sydney thanks to their appearances in 1968 through 1970, and they quickly gained a strong following at Sydney's Underground Dances. Their first album *Evolution* is now something of an underground classic adding to their mystic, cult status as an early influential, progressive band.

The album however, was not anywhere near a high-tech production because the recording equipment used was not approaching state-of-the-art at that time. As a project, the album was financed by documentary film maker, Paul Witzig in return for the use of the tracks in his surfing film of the same name. *Evolution* has a live feeling to it with a certain spontaneity and a rugged, primitive quality. It is obvious that it was recorded live as Bjerre is heard at one point to



remark quite audibly that the bass amp had not been turned on – indicating also that it was a hurriedly recorded performance and all tracks were probably one-take recordings. The brief liner notes on the back cover of the album tell us:

*“Their “thing” didn’t have to be manufactured.
It evolved as they lived and played together.
The same applied to their recording.
It was done “live” in the studio.
It began one Monday morning.*

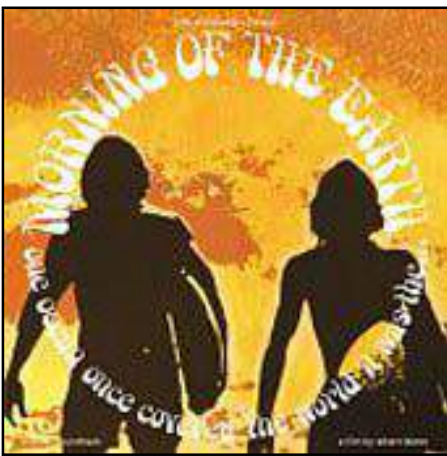
This photo was taken during The Morning Of The Earth sessions with Peter Barron on bass and Lindsay Bjerre, (standing). (Courtesy of Albert Falzon, Morning of the Earth)

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*Two and a half hours later it was finished bar
the mixing.
Some way to do a record!”*

(Liner notes, Evolution, CBS Records, 1969)

When Zytnik left the band late in 1969, another new dimension was added with the recruitment of **Tim Gaze** to



The compilation surf album, Morning Of The Earth on which three Tamam Shud tracks appear.

handle guitar duties. He was recruited through a newspaper advertisement and Bjerre, looking for power, had no hesitation in hiring Gaze when he auditioned for the band. In May, 1970, with Gaze on board, they recorded their concept album, *Goolutionites and the Real People*, released towards the end of the year. Concept albums were in favour around this point in time and this one, which like most concept albums contained some sort of continuity and connection between tracks, was looked upon as their zenith. Like all bands, they had their personnel departures and recruitments along the track, including bringing in drummer, **Nigel Macara** until Bjerre called the band to a halt in August, 1972. However, this was not before recording three tracks for the surfing movie, *Morning Of The Earth*. These songs were recorded under much better conditions than they experienced with their previous album:

TIM GAZE: “We recorded the tracks at Channel 9 in Melbourne - TCS it was called and it was all done 'live' - except

for vocals. The Shud was 6 piece at that stage with Lindsay Bjerre (guitar and vocals) Peter Barron (Bass) Nigel Macara (Drums and vocals) Larry Duryea (percussion) Richard Lockwood (Saxes, clarinet, and flute and vocals), and Tim Gaze (guitars and vocals).

The recording of these songs pretty well went down 2nd or 3rd take because we were playing so much all the time that we were pretty comfortable with them. This music relied on feel - that was its magic, and playing 'live' as a band was how it was done. There was separate tracking done in those days as well, here and there, but mostly just the band at once. I think *Evolution*, the Shud’s first album was recorded all in - just set up in the studio and hit the red button.” (Gaze, Milesago, courtesy of D. Kimball).

Due to the strain of consistent gigging around the Melbourne scene at that time, both Bjerre and Gaze were having some throat and vocal problems on the day of the recording. Gaze filled in on vocals which apparently came out acceptably well, but were subsequently wiped from the tape and ex- Adderley Smith Blues Band vocalist, **Broderick Smith** was brought in to overdub the vocals. This occurred it is believed, without the knowledge of either Bjerre or Gaze! Both were not happy, but Smith explained at a later stage:

BRODERICK SMITH: “Tamam Shud had already cut the track with Lindsay Bjerre or Tim Gaze singing it but the vocal apparently didn't quite capture what they had in mind. This can happen sometimes when you've cut a track and maybe the vocalist's voice isn't suited to that key. I was called in to sing the track which I hadn't heard. I can



He pops up from time to time – Tim Gaze. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

remember instantly hitting it off with the members of Tamam Shud, especially Lindsay and the bass player. Thinking back on it, it was probably hard for Lindsay (or Tim) to accept another singer on the track but believe me there was no animosity, and I still see Lindsay and Tim occasionally over the years.” (Smith, Milesago, courtesy of D. Kimball).

Tamam Shud came to Melbourne again in May and July, 1972 and played most of the discotheques in Melbourne in that year. Their final performances were at Sebastians on 1 and 3 September and Garrison on 2 September, 1972.

Often spoken about in tandem with **Tamam Shud** is **Kahvas Jute** which also formed in Sydney, this time around 1970. In fact, both Gaze and Davidson had defected from The Shud to form **Kahvas Jute** with other seasoned musicians. These two top bands not only shared members but also had equally unusual, mystical and exotic names.

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Both bands played uncompromising, progressive rock and both have a continuing and strong cult following up to the present day. They also shared the honour of a brief stay in the Australian rock spotlight and it's unfortunate that both bands did not get a real chance to build on their early work. The record-buying public probably didn't get to see long-term benefits in the creative promise which they showed.

Kahvas Jute did produce an absolute gem of an LP, *Wide Open* which earned enormous praise when it was released in January, 1971 and still continues to be a most sought after collector's album today. But, as was the tradition of that period, many bands formed quickly, did their thing and then disbanded all in quick succession as their members sought out something new to stretch their talents. This also happened to **Kahvas Jute**. *Wide Open* was recorded on Festival Records' new label, Infinity and by the time it was released, Gaze had returned to **Tamam Shud**, but not before recording this classic album - one of the undoubted high points of progressive rock. Although comparisons have been drawn with **Eric Clapton**, **Jack Bruce** and **Ginger Baker's Cream** and **The Jeff Beck Group** in Britain, it was still a true Aussie masterpiece which brought in elements of the psychedelic experience into the mix. The cover itself had a distinctly distorted and mind-bending feel to it. Witness tracks like *Free*, the solid nine minute long, *Parade Of Fools* and *She's So Hard* and it's easy to see that a moment in history was born with Gaze and **Dennis Wilson** (not the Beach Boy of the same name) trading guitar licks. It was easy to see how **Kahvas Jute** was eagerly sought after as a live act in both Sydney and Melbourne until the departures prematurely brought the band to a halt in early 1974. Members quickly moved on; the remnants of the band evolved, the name **Kahvas Jute** disappeared and a glorious moment in rock history was over, probably far too soon.



A one and only – Kahvas Jute's 1971 LP – *Wide Open*. A strikingly, innovative album featuring 17 year-old Tim Gaze before he returned to Tamam Shud.

SPECTRUM - I'll sing my song and I'll be gone...

Melbourne can claim **Mike Rudd's** creation **Spectrum** as its own, even though the former bass guitarist with **Ross Wilson's Party Machine** had ventured over from New Zealand with his own band, **Chants R & B**. There was the arrival and relatively quick demise of the Christchurch group:

MIKE RUDD: “The Chants left Christchurch for the unknown and possibly hostile Melbourne climes late in 1966. Australian magazines available in Christchurch, like *People* and *Pix*, told lurid stories of sharpies (skinheads) and mods (mods) doing battle in the streets and alleys of Melbourne and bands (such as *Ronnie Burns' Flies*) occasionally getting in



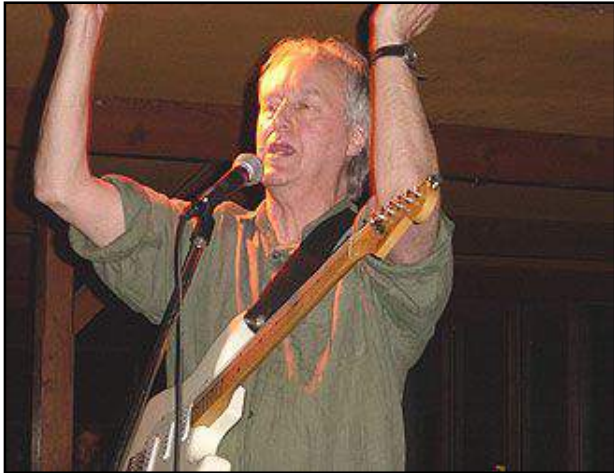
the way. Mike and Trevor (Trevor Courtney – the Chants’ effervescent drummer) read these stories with foreboding - and promptly had their hair cut. But they needn’t have worried about the mods and the sharpies – the innate tensions in the band, exacerbated by the move, ensured the Chants’ premature (and largely unreported) demise in Melbourne just a few months after leaving Christchurch.

In New Zealand before heading to the unknown frontier of Melbourne’s discotheques, clubs and dances - Chants R&B in 1966. From left, Pete Hanson, Mike Rudd, Jim Tomlin and Trevor Courtney. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

... So, what happened to Chants R&B when they got to Melbourne? They made a couple of TV appearances – they

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won a heat of Bert Newton’s New Faces and mimed Witchdoctor on *Kommotion* – and played gigs like the Catcher and the Thumpin’ Tum. It was at the gigs they discovered they weren’t alone – bands like the Wild Cherries and the



You can’t keep a good guitarist down – Mike Rudd gets the crowd going yet again. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

Purple Hearts were playing the same Anglophile slant on the blues they were. The band had a dilemma – whether to follow Mike’s preference for soul and blues or go with Trev’s passion for Tamla and r&b. The Chants did one more recording session in Melbourne before they split.” (Rudd, in www.mikeruddbillputt.com).

Although lasting only six or so months in Melbourne, the Kiwi band had developed a fierce and uncompromising sound and stage act. This however, wasn’t enough to save the band:

MIKE RUDD: “We ran into problems right away ... trying to find out where we fitted into things here.... we’d been working for two years in the one place – Christchurch - we’d been able to do anything we’d liked to, but I’m still kinda eclectic by nature – I like music... period. It doesn’t have to be any particular style, I’d just do what I like at the time... and the band reflected that. But when we got here we found we were under pressure to go in one direction or

another and as there were kinda two very strong directions happening in the band as represented by me and by Trevor in particular, we ended up by squabbling and then we broke up. It was very unpleasant and messy. (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

After his stint in **The Party Machine** where he survived the controversy of the *Party Machine Song Book*, which had been published by *Go-Set* and promptly banned, Rudd set about forming his own band, **Spectrum** in April, 1969:

ROSS WILSON: “My pal, Mike Rudd had started up Spectrum and he’d only written a couple of songs. One



was with The Party Machine but because of his experience with us, he had decided that that was the way to go... if you

couldn’t really write your own stuff you couldn’t call yourself a creative musician. So he formed Spectrum with some other pretty cool people. They were hooked up with the new-boys-on-the-block agency which was ‘Let It



Early Spectrum – from left: Mike Rudd, Mark Kennedy, Bill Putt and Lee Neale. (Photo Richard Rudd, courtesy of Mike Rudd)

Be' - John Pinder and Peter Andrew - and they were doing really good things." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

A Spectrum family reunion – Bill Putt meets up with Mark Kennedy again. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

This was at a time when the Melbourne dance venues (some referred to them as discos some didn't) couldn't get enough progressive rock bands to fill their stages. As typical of many psychedelic rock come-progressive bands of the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, **Spectrum** rose quickly through the ranks and burned brightly in the night sky for a few years or so

before suffering from the same problems which dogged all bands of the era - the movement of key members towards "greener pastures". For such a successful band, these line-up gaps were

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often difficult - if not impossible - to block up and impending disbandment was often the only alternative.

For **Spectrum**, Rudd who played bass with **The Party Machine** switched to lead guitar after meeting **Bill Putt**, who played lead guitar with local band, **The Lost Souls** and accepted the challenge to play bass – confusing?...

Not really! It just required swapping instruments and amps! Since then, the partnership of Rudd and Putt has endured the decades of time and the hundreds of frenetic gigs they performed around town from the stages of Sebastians, Berties, The Thumpin' Tum and all the other disco and dance venues of that period. They currently do pub and restaurant gigs in 2006 – still as **Spectrum**. Through it all, their high point was to create one of the most enduring and recognisable tracks – the 1971 number one hit, *I'll Be Gone* - which stands alongside such great Aussie classics as **Chain's** Black and Blue, **The Easybeats**, *Friday On My Mind*, **Stevie Wright's** *Evie, Parts 1 & 2*, **Daddy Cool's** *Eagle Rock*, and **Russell Morris' The Real Thing**. In a

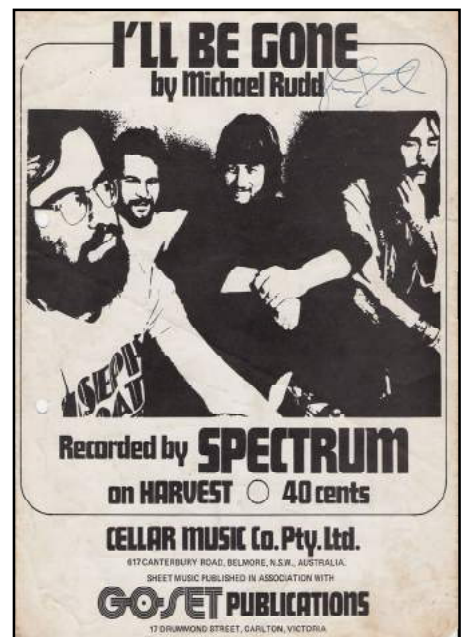


The later Spectrum: from left, Lee Neale, Bill Putt, Mike Rudd and Ray Arnott – from TV Week, 1973. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

recent interview, Mike Rudd remembers

the circumstances surrounding the release of *I'll Be Gone*:

MIKE RUDD: "I didn't even have a band when I wrote the song. I got together with David Skewes and we eventually had three songs which were partially written and gradually built up a band around very little material. That's the way the song probably started and I had some cutesy ideas at that stage which were probably commercial in a sense. It was only when we started rehearsing this stuff that we realized that we only had half a dozen tunes.



Sheet music for the great hit which defined the career of Spectrum – *I'll Be Gone*. (Author's collection)



A ground-breaking album in all respects – *Mileago*.

The band would take an idea and expand on it musically so the song would expand with a drum solo for ten minutes and I would go...(laughs)..oh, good... only four more tunes to go! So that's really, really where it came from but what happened was we did a demo acetate of *I'll Be Gone* and sent it to EMI and... I think it was Cliff Baxter.. said... *Nooo!* Then coincidently we were rehearsing and I used a harmonica. That was the big transition – adding harmonica to the song...

subtracting guitar and adding harmonica... and Ross Wilson came back from England ... He listened to the rest of the rehearsal but gave us the wink after listening to *I'll Be Gone* and said, – “that’s the one”.

We got into the studio and, I’m not sure how we did it but Howard Gable ended up in there with us and he’d just arrived from Sydney via Auckland. He’d been put on a sort of “roving commission” by EMI as a producer and he just ended up in the studio with us. We did *Launching Place Parts 1 and 2* and he said, “Have you got anything else?” So I said, well... *I'll Be Gone*... so we cut the tapes.” (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

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Spectrum’s rising success was due to the commercial chart triumph of their newest hit record, whereas other bands were content with just playing their material on the live circuit. **Spectrum**, which initially was made up of



Just as Spectrum morphed into The Indelible Murtceps, so Rudd became My Crudd. From the cover of the EMI album - *Warts Up Your Nose*. (1972)

Rudd, Putt, **Mark Kennedy** (drums) and **Lee Neale**, (organ) had found that even their progressive sound often precluded them from getting major gigs, until their commercially successful, *I'll Be Gone* became a hit record. Some promoters and disco owners found that they were just too progressive for the crowds to relate to until they came up with a solid, commercial hit record to act as a base for them. Their lasting contribution to the scene should never be underestimated as their approach to writing and performing their music was fresh and experimental. Rock historian and broadcaster **Billy Pinnell** was one teenager who was thoroughly mesmerised by Spectrum:

BILLY PINNELL: “Spectrum... at that time they were so different. I remember them playing most of the tracks from “Spectrum, Part 1” at a hall opposite St Brigid’s church in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy. I remember sitting on those steel-backed chairs when Mark Kennedy was still the drummer and Lee Neale played the organ and there was this music I had never before experienced live. There was nobody like Spectrum – they were absolutely amazing. I had never experienced anything like them in my whole life.” (Pinnell, author’s interview, 19 September, 2005)

After being coupled with **Ross Wilson’s Daddy Cool** on a number of tours, **Spectrum** had settled into a more serious musical mode which meant not necessarily expecting the audience to jig and dance around but perhaps to sit and listen to the music – something which Rudd had hoped the public would accept. However, in a clever peace of wit, he turned **Spectrum** around (yes.. literally!) to create **The Indelible Murtceps** – same band, same line-up – but now a band which could get the crowds on their feet to dance while Spectrum played to their more restrained crowds. Rudd has always liked to add the odd, unusual twist to his stage performance and to his songwriting and this was the ultimate bit of tongue-in-cheek fun. (As well, on a number of songwriting credits, **Mike Rudd** became My Crudd!).

By 1973, a major shift was underway in the way Melburnians wanted to hear their music. Coinciding with both the growing maturity of the original discotheque audiences of the late

‘sixties and with the liberalisation of Victoria’s drinking laws, **Spectrum** found it just that bit more difficult to make the change to the suburban pub venues. Rock ‘n roll or however you want to categorise it, was as popular as anytime before, it was just the changing way the public wanted to receive their music that made a significant difference. The suburban pubs were booming and beer could be consumed legally from about 1973 onwards. Bands like **Spectrum** which had always done exceptionally well at the outdoor extravaganzas like Sunbury and in the intimate clubs in and around the city, struggled to survive



in the new environments. The clever creation of **The Indelible Murtceps**, however prolonged the bands' tenure on the live stages as their more vigorous sound matched that of bands like a rejuvenated and perennial **Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs** who quickly established themselves as "THE" rock band for the early Melbourne pub circuit.

The "other-half" of the core of Spectrum / Murtceps and Ariel - Bill Putt.

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Either as **Spectrum** or **Murtceps**, the band recorded a number of superb albums including *Spectrum Part One* in 1971, *Milesago* and *Warts Up Your Nose* (1972), *Testimonial* and *Terminal Buzz* both from 1973. *Terminal Buzz* was to be their final live bash. It was recorded on 15 April, 1973 at Melbourne's Dallas Brookes Hall and released as a double set soon after they had broken up.

Spectrum/Murtceps was blessed with a degree of stability at rare times but inevitable changes were to take place, throwing the core of the band - Rudd and Putt, back to the drawing board several times. On a number of occasions before Rudd dissolved the band in April, 1973, self-destruction for Spectrum was really not that far away.

MIKE RUDD: "...when Mark (Kennedy) left Spectrum that was catastrophic for us because he was the focus for the band in so many ways, instrumentally speaking. He did drum solos and you can't just say - "That's just a time filler - he's not really contributing", but he was! He was a focal point for the band so when he left, that changed the band. At the same time we were adding material. Then the Murtceps thing came along shortly after Ray joined and so the *Milesago* album pretty much represents the feeling and it was markedly different from Spectrum Part 1." (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

Rudd has always been one of the most adventurous, probing and experimental musicians; always willing to take a calculated risk on his music and at times, seemingly sacrificing his own personal emotional well-being on a punt at success. But, when **Ray Arnott** left the band, Rudd believed it was time to fold this deck of cards and deal them out again.

ARIEL - Dealing with the scars...

The new Poker hand which Rudd dealt to the public turned out to be **Ariel** - which was the product of a



A publicity photo of the (almost) all-new Mark III version of Ariel with, from left, Harvey James, Nigel Macara, Bill Putt, Mike Rudd, Glyn Mason. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)



Ariel - the first version, live - from a rare EMI test pressing and alternate cover for *A Strange Fantastic Dream* - (Courtesy of Graham McCarter)

marriage between two ground-breaking Aussie bands. When Spectrum folded in 1973, this allowed Rudd, Putt and keyboardist **John Mills** to re-acquaint themselves professionally with **Nigel Macara** and **Tim Gaze** from **Tamam Shud**. The result was a band which in the early 'seventies moved beyond the progressive tag into a more pronounced bluesy-rock format which seemed to suit the pub venues and the Saturday night drinkers more. **Ariel** also played the university campus' and was extremely popular at Monash University at a time when Australia's commitment to the conflict in Vietnam was winding down. It seems that in a matter of personal choice, they weren't as well accepted at LaTrobe University at Bundoora.

The Rudd-Putt partnership grew even stronger despite the inevitable changes in personnel for Ariel. If they are to be given the over-worked title of "supergroup" because of the combination of highly respected musicians on stage at the same time, they also suffered the inherent problem which seemed to plague such bands - a short life span due to the separate and strong egos and the often acrimonious break-ups and departures.

Such was the fate of the first incarnation of **Ariel** with Gaze, Mills and Macara quitting in April, 1974 after less than twelve months together. It all developed in the super-heated atmosphere of a Perth tour when the friction between various band members came to a head on the return trip stop-over in Adelaide, when Mills was told not to bother stopping off, but to keep going back to Melbourne! The partnership was further splintered when Gaze and Macara, formerly a rock-solid team

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began to fragment and implode under the pressure and tension of constant touring and recording. This virtually split Ariel in three, much to Rudd's disappointment:

MIKE RUDD: "...that was a shame. I guess we tried to keep the momentum going from Spectrum to Ariel. ... we picked guys who were probably going to be the most durable kind of guys. In the case of Ariel it was spectacular. We came up with a spectacular album...(A *Strange fantastic Dream*). It was just full of energy and inventiveness, but unfortunately the personality side didn't last the distance." (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004).



Guitar specialist, Tim Gaze, from the '73-'74 version of Ariel. From an EMI publicity folder – (Courtesy of Graham McCarter)

The resilience and determination of **Mike Rudd** was the telling factor in the re-building of this band. Then came the phoenix-like re-birth of Ariel as the Mark II version:

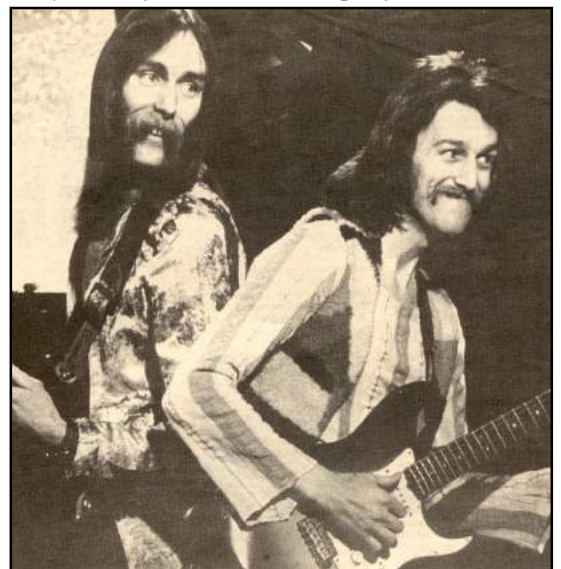
MIKE RUDD: "...when Ariel Part One (that's Tim Gaze, John Mills, Nigel Macara, Bill & I) aborted, I went away and sulked for a while. But while sulking I wrote this piece, (which became *The Jellabad Mutant*) because Rock Operas were the go – *Tommy* had happened and everybody was writing Rock Operas like you wouldn't believe! And this was one, and so then I got together with Bill and said, oh, let's rehearse this and we worked out all our parts. And then we thought we better get a drummer in, and I'd seen this drummer with The Dingoes, John Lee, and I thought "let's get him". And we can rehearse with him, which we did, and rehearsed for awhile. And then John suggested, why don't we get Harvey James, a friend of his, to play guitar? And so we rehearsed with him as well, and before you know it we had an entity." (Rudd, interview with Steve Kernohan, www.milesago.com, 2000).

As discussed later in conjunction with the psychedelic influences which were coming through from San Francisco, **Ariel's** second album after *A Strange Fantastic Dream* was meant to be the concept album, *The Jellabad Mutant* but unfortunately it was rejected by the record company as too weird

and not commercial enough to put out on the market (not the company's official reasoning though). **Mike Rudd** recalls in his liner notes for the Rarevision CD issue of 2002 (the first release of *The Mutant* nearly 30 years later) that there may have been more to EMI's decision:

MIKE RUDD " ... So we did the demos. ... I'm not quite sure what happened next. EMI (somewhere) rejected *the Jellabad Mutant* as unsuitable content for our next album. We were told the reason was that they (EMI England) had a basement crammed full of rejected rock operas. I just don't know. At the time I was a little crushed, but not as much as one might expect. After all, I had no particular ambition for the project. It was just something to fill in time. ... It's interesting to speculate what might have happened had we been allowed to proceed with *the Mutant* with an intact budget ...I regret that I didn't go into bat for it at the time. We had a fabulous opportunity with the best technical assistance any band could have wanted. But I didn't sell the dream, even to myself" (Rudd, liner notes to *The Jellabad Mutant*, Rarevision, 2002)

Because of the rejection of *The Jellabad Mutant* by EMI in 1974, **Ariel** released *Rock and Roll Scars* which only contained four new songs and a London-recorded version of *I'll Be Gone*. The rest were



Joined at the hip throughout the whole Ariel saga, Putt and Rudd. (Go-Set, 1 September, 1973 – Courtesy of Philip Morris)

songs from their live gigs which were already well-worked in Australia. Even though Rudd was far from happy with it, the album sold well enough. After **Harvey James** left to join **Sherbet**, **Ariel** brought in **Tony Slavich** and a single, *I Can Take You Higher* along with the album, *Goodnight Fiona* was recorded and released. At this point musical directions were changing and **Ariel** met the challenge to get tougher and harder in line with the expectations of the punters in the newer pub venues of the suburbs. But on 21

88.

August, 1977, **Mike Rudd** called it all to a halt with a final concert at Dallas Brooks Hall, given the title of "Island Fantasia" which resulted in the release of *Aloha Ariel*. Had the band run its course or should it morph once again into another phase?:



A reunited Mark III Ariel in 2003, with (from left) Glyn Mason, Bill Putt, Mike Rudd and Harvey James.

MIKE RUDD: "Oh, I think that by that stage we were keen for it to be over. You've got to remember the Spectrum thing ending at the same venue a few years before. I think with Ariel the energy had well and truly run out. I must say that I, in particular was highly principled about it. I thought that there was a certain integrity when you had members of the band who contributed so much to the music. I might have had an original idea but the band contributed so much to the music – what individual members did with that music was highly important. So for the band to keep

the same name but with different musicians... I didn't ask those musicians to replicate what those members had done before and I asked them to put in their own thing. By the time we came to that last concert, Tony Slavich, Iain McLennan and Glynn (Mason) were all contributing material to the band and it was quite a different animal to the first Ariel – a dramatically different animal. So I thought by then, to hold onto the name and to be so dramatically different was probably not a good thing and it was time to move on." (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

MADDER LAKE – Defending the Garrison...

London art schools had become successful breeding grounds for mid-'sixties Beat groups and a number of rock legends – Jagger and Richards for example - were essentially art school drop-outs. Melbourne band **Madder Lake**, which formed in 1971 comprised a nucleus of arts students from Hawthorn's, Swinburne College – though these boys were not necessarily drop-outs. Even before taking up Graphic Arts at Swinburne, guitarist/vocalist **Brenden**



Mason and bass player **Kerry McKenna** had already formed an earlier band – **San Sebastian** and continued to study by day while playing and working around the dances and clubs at night, sometimes completing three gigs on the same night as was the practice at the time. It wasn't an easy existence for them to be juggling study and playing many long gigs in numerous suburbs throughout the week:

BRENDEN MASON: " ...it wasn't until Madder Lake that it became a problem. At that stage with San Sebastian, I got good enough marks to get into Melbourne High. It was when I got there that I had to knuckle down and music and bands were becoming a big part of

**Madder Lake playing at The Station Hotel, Prahran.
(Photographer unknown, courtesy of Brenden Mason)**

typography and all of that.. something inside me said, "I don't want to do this. I just want to play with a rock 'n roll band." So basically, I just got up and walked

89.

out of my exam – much to mum's and dad's dismay. Then I came back twelve months later with a gold LP!". (Mason, author's interview, 19 October, 2004).

Some fellow musicians from Swinburne who already were on the musical merry-go-round before meeting Mason and McKenna, were **John McKinnon** (keyboards), **Mick Fettes** (vocals) and drummer **Jack Kreemers**. As with most bands, their early years were spent developing their sound and repertoire, until they felt confident enough to unleash their music on the public. The transition from being a covers-only band to writing originals eventually came about as **San Sebastian** gave way to **Madder Lake**:



A first-up beauty! Stillpoint is a musically dynamic set.

BRENDEN MASON: "We became a little obsessed with creating our own slant on the songs. We would get to the point of altering a song so radically, that it was almost like we'd written a whole new song. We'd use elements of the original song but we'd start to think to ourselves, "Well, we've nearly written a song here". So, from San Sebastian ...one of the first songs we wrote for Madder Lake, *Goodbye Lollipop* was like a statement – it was goodbye to all that cover stuff and 'hello' to doing original music." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

By 1971, the **Madder Lake** sound had come together. They had a bluesy focus based around the strong vocals of Fettes which set them on their own track, although early **Genesis** and **King Crimson** British progressive rock influences can be found. At the time, their album *Still Point* was reviewed in *Go-Set* on release:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "Madder Lake is one of the most original musics to have developed in Australia. ... (they)

...offer something in their creations that's totally new and refreshing. It's complicated, aggressive music, a tightly knit arrangement of all their parts, where lead guitar plays no more important role than any other aspect of the music, including vocals. It's all intricately woven into punchy, complex pieces that reveal concrete structures... Their single "Goodbye Lollipop" was an extreme example of how within one song they can encompass a great number of musical transitions and changes of mood." (*Go-Set*, 1 September, 1973)

Meanwhile, **Brenden Mason** was inspired by the sound created by compatriots, **Spectrum** and this encouraged him and the other band members to explore the freedom that there was at the time to experiment with songwriting. **Madder Lake** found that by immersing themselves in the process of welding parts of a song together that they could achieve the results they wanted. Having progressed to a full original band with their first single, they set about honing their technique and before too long, they were writing most of their own material and

STILLPOINT
Madder Lake

This album has enjoyed enormous success since its release and it has remained on the Victorian Top 20 albums chart at the No. 2 position for eight consecutive weeks. This is the first album venture by this group who have also enjoyed enormous success on the singles charts with *Goodbye Lollipop* and *12 lb Toothbrush*. Madder Lake have just completed their second album titled *Butterfly Farm* and this should be released late January to coincide with Sunbury '74.

"The album 'Stillpoint' bursts with an odd mixture of progressive sounds and infectious commerciality. The band have a great interest in invention without forgetting the entertainment side of the music. Despite a rough recorded sound this manages to shine through." — Ed Nimmervoll

my life. When I was doing my Diploma of Art at Swinburne, we were touring during that time. I got to my final year Methods exam – printing,

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perfecting these songs in rehearsals at Mason's parents' Hawthorn home, often rehearsing until the wee small hours:

BRENDEN MASON: "Where I lived in Hawthorn was the family home and we had a weatherboard house. But from earlier days, my mother's mother and her husband had a dairy right beside the house and it was a big double-brick building and basically, we took over one of the rooms and I lined it with egg cartons ... we put in carpets – the

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works. We just used to get in there and rehearse – flat out!" (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

They quickly developed a catalogue of their own material and found a home at Prahran's Garrison Disco where they were essentially the "house band" for a long period of residency.



Bassist, Kerry McKenna and guitarist Brenden Mason with their Mushroom Gold Record for *Stillpoint*. (Courtesy of Brenden Mason)

the band had for *Stillpoint* was, like a number of albums of the time, refined and reworked from what the band would perform on stage – so as to conform to the standard format for a twelve-inch LP:

BRENDEN MASON: "We wanted to take *Stillpoint* a lot further than the end product became. When we first went to Consolidated Rock which was the early stages of Mushroom, they said to us that they weren't interested in us at all. We then got a lot of work through the Gay scene (not that we were that way inclined!) – those people were great to us. It was through this build up that Mushroom finally thought, "...maybe you're not doing too badly at all – maybe we will have a look at you." When we first went to record *Stillpoint*, we were not into the three-minute singles thing and our biggest problem was how the hell do we pare down any song that we've got. We had *Goodbye Lollipop* and *12 Pound Toothbrush* which were our main songs but to bring them into a radio format was like.. oh my God! Which arm do we cut off? Our original concept when we wanted to do songs was that they were not isolated tracks but one big, continual thing. We had segways, (sounds in between tracks) and someone, maybe Michael Gudinski or John French said that we had to split it up more and make it more conventional. We thought that we would have to conform a little bit here... at that stage.. conforming wasn't in our vocabulary." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

The cover was designed by **David Drakopolous** – another Swinburne arts graduate who also acted as roadie for them, while **Ian McCausland** can be credited with creating the **Madder Lake** logo. 1973 also saw them on stage at

Important for **Madder Lake** and as a tribute to their musicianship, their musical output and their following, they were booked to be the support act for **The Rolling Stones** 1973 Tour for the Melbourne leg and for the concerts held at Kooyong Tennis Centre - at that point virtually our only stadium-style outdoor venue. Mason has acknowledged the part that this tour played on the future career of **Madder Lake** in terms of the boost it gave them.

They had previously been among the first signings for Michael Gudinski's new Mushroom label and had already released a single, *Goodbye Lollipop / Bumper Bar Song* which, despite the 1970 radio ban had charted well. Their debut album, *Stillpoint* was, like many albums produced by Aussie artists of the time, fairly adventurous and musically and lyrically strong. It may well be the first all-Australian album – entirely written, produced and distributed by Australians to make Gold record sales. It basically went Gold on Victorian sales alone. However, the original concept which



Publicity photo - courtesy of Brenden Mason.

the Sunbury Festival as they continued the never ending round of gigs at the local discos and dance venues. Sunbury in fact, was of the greatest importance to **Madder Lake** and served to cement the band in the minds of the local fans.

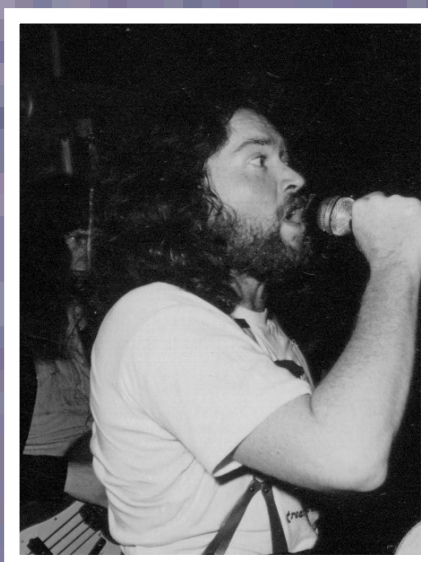
However on the studio front, things were fast developing into a stand-off situation with their record label, Mushroom as their second album, *Butterfly Farm* was released. This situation was exacerbated not by lack of support from Mushroom, but by perceived inconsistencies in residuals paid by management and promoters which

91.

Madder Lake at Garrison Discotheque - 1 ...



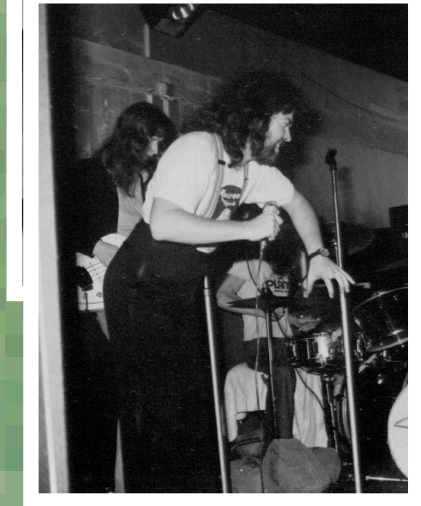
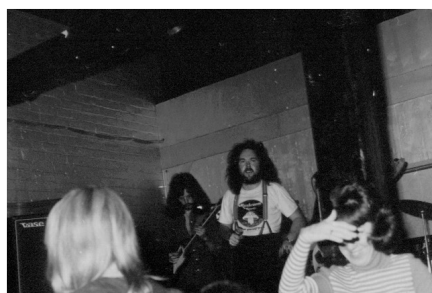
All photos were taken at Garrison Disotheque in High Street, Prahran in 1973 and are reproduced by courtesy of Brenden Mason.



92.

Madder Lake at
Garrison
Discotheque - 2

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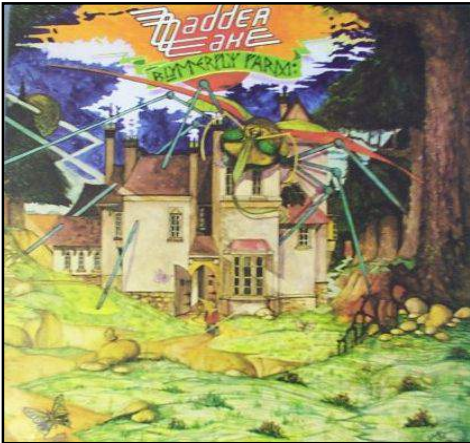


**Photos courtesy
of Brenden
Mason.**



93.

did not meet the band members' expectations. Not an unusual situation for a band to be in, with many promoters and management companies around at the time proving untrustworthy in that particular department. The opportunity was there – why not go it alone?



The second of their brilliant albums – *Butterfly Farm* was released in April, 1974.

based on **Aldous Huxley's** *Brave New World*, while presenting an exciting prospect for adventurous musicians, unfortunately took the band away from their all-important fan base in the discos and pubs:

BRENDEN MASON: "What actually happened with *The Brave New World* situation was that we basically went over to Perth. We did some concerts with a band called Chalice which had come over and we were just starting to break through with *Butterfly Farm* and we met a chap called Harold Aspinall who was head of ABC's Light Entertainment in Perth. Harold, in turn introduced us to David Measham who was classically trained but had this incredible love for rock musicians. David and I got along like a house on fire. Whenever David would finish his ABC duties we would go out raving and he was just a phenomenal free spirit. Essentially what happened there was that David liked the rock 'n roll aspect of Madder Lake and he liked our inventiveness and he put it to us to do the classical orchestra-with-band concept. Now, this was not a legitimate ABC project, it was a side project. There was not a great deal of money there, so we got to the point where the *Brave New World* project was canned." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Recording for this venture took place at a studio in Port Melbourne and was never to be released. **Mick Fettes** believes that the project was a "living piece" that should have come to fruition:

MICK FETTES: "I do remember that from that point in Perth it started, and we came back to Melbourne, and we started writing and rehearsing the thing - this was with Andy Cowan - and we spent months and months working on the piece. We virtually took ourselves off the road. Instead of doing half a dozen shows a week, we'd do one a fortnight. So it was back to baked beans on toast! ... the stage it had got to was that ... everybody obviously read the book ... and the lyrics were in place that related to the story. We were actually looking at it as a living piece -- it got to the point where it was far beyond the rudimentary stage, it was actually ... music pieces and lyrical developments were all in place -- and it got to the point where it was ready to be taken to the next stage.

BRENDEN MASON: "At that stage, we thought we were big enough to go it alone. Mick and I used to do The Matthew Flinders in Chadstone regularly and we'd absolutely pack the place out. We had an absolutely fantastic relationship with the manager there... it was like home away from home. I remember going there one afternoon and we saw the manager and said, 'Hey...we're here, we've just left Mushroom...we want to book independently.' He said, '...I've heard! If I book you and the word gets out, I'll never get another Mushroom band again!' Mick and I both looked at each other and went, '..Oh..oh!.., we could be in trouble'. And we were!.. They essentially locked us out.." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

By this time their best known and strongest charting single, *12lb Toothbrush* had impacted on the public, but experiments with self-promotion and departures from the band line-up further weakened the structure of **Madder Lake** as a unit. A foray into a project (later aborted) to supply music for a **David Measham**-commissioned concept piece



Brenden Mason now runs his own guitar shop – Real Guitars in Glen Iris, Melbourne.

But we got it to a point where it was roughed out, and there was about an hour and a half's worth of music - Brendan's still got the stuff on tape. But then it all started to unravel, as these things do ..." (Fettes, Interview, www.milesago.com,

The eventual departure of Fettes in late 1975 robbed the band of its major focal point – that is the growling vocals which many found reminiscent of **Joe Cocker** at his demented best. **Brenden Mason** has always held his bandmate



Living in Ballarat and continuing to play in blues bands - drummer Jack Kreemers.

in high regard and has rightly credited Fettes with a degree of creative genius; and his antics provided a focal point for the band on stage:

BRENDEN MASON: "Mick was terrific. He was a wonderful improviser, even to the point that when we went to record our first LP, we had all the music ... all the framework worked out. But, from night to night, Mick would change the lyrics. Mick in fact, never had anything written down at all. I fondly remember the first time we went to do vocals ..., John French was recording at TCS and he said, "Let's do a sound check here." Mick wailed off into a song. John French soloed the button and it was just Mick's voice and he turned around to us and said, "What's he singing?" Everybody in the band said, "...we don't know!"

To a certain degree, he used his voice like an instrument. The thing that used to absolutely intrigue us was the interpretations that people would read into our stuff and quite often it was... "bang"... straight off the top of Mick's head! The other thing that was in keeping with the Madder Lake thing was the... "Mad Mick Fettes from Madder Lake" ... and he was really quite crazy on stage. Later, the one thing he really got hurt about was when he walked into rooms, it was, "...there's that mad Mick from Madder Lake" and people backed off from him. Then he started to straighten up his whole

act, but he was better doing what he did naturally." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

However, when Fettes left, the band was not able to make a complete recovery from this telling loss. Mick reflected on some rather hard times through 1974 and 1975 when their problems were magnified by management and promotional concerns:

MICK FETTES: "... we just hit a brick wall at a million miles an hour ... in those times you were just on a merry-go-round, and you just went on it in concentric circles until you reached the centre, and then it spat you out. It wasn't just us - it happened to so many people ..." (Fettes,. www.milesago.com, op cit)

Brenden Mason believes that circumstances dictated that Mick needed to find a more permanent and settled occupation to make ends meet for him and his family:

BRENDEN MASON: "Obviously at that stage, Mick probably felt the urgency to get money in or ... to get something else. Mick at that stage started to head back towards the Graphic Arts side and again, needed a bit of solidarity and a bit of money. Anyone in a band will tell you that while there is at least a job to go too... while there is something happening, while the vibe is up and we still have something to look forward to, that's fine... but when doors closed, we started to get niggly at each other. So at that stage, we haven't got any money. My wife and I had a child and Mick was about to start a family... things like that start to get to you too. You get to the point of ... "are we hitting our heads against a wall?" It was like when Mick and I started to take over the (management) reins of the band, we had all the confidence in the world but after a while when you start to run into a few closed doors..." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

The band persevered as a three-piece for some time before coming up with a few singers then finding **Colin Setches** who had been touring and performing with *Hair*. Eventually, they found **Tony Lake**:

Mushroom Records
Garrison
Wed 6th to Sun 10th June

Garrison looks for the last time on Sunday the 10th of June. But [sob] all is not lost because Mushroom Records are recording the last five nights (that's 30 hours of music) and the best tracks will be released on an album. (sniffle)

So come along and dance, skip, shout and scream to some mighty music, and be part of the Garrison double album. (sigh)

WED: CHAIN MATT TAYLOR GREG LAWRIE
 THURS: CHAIN MATT TAYLOR GREG LAWRIE
 FRI: ONE TONGYFSY ALA MIRA RED HOUSE ROLL BAND
 SAT: SID RUMPO THE DINGOES
 SUN: FRIENDS, MADDER LAKE

Garrison Disco 166 HIGH ST. PRAHRAN

BRENDEN MASON: "... we hooked up with Tony Lake, who nearly rejuvenated the whole Madder Lake thing again. The moment we heard that his name was "Lake" he got the gig in the band ... we thought he was having us on ... and that section of Madder Lake was great. Mick was more of your madman. If you want to draw a parallel, Tony was more of your Lou Reed. Tony was far more stylish looking, had a terrific stage presence when he finally got himself into gear. But his destruction was drugs. Madder Lake had always enjoyed a smoke but that's where we

would draw the line. So once we realized the severity of where he was going, it polarized things a lot and that really started to grind the band to a halt." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Madder Lake has never officially broken up – all members at one time or another have come together for several "reunions" and it is believed that there are many songs in storage, yet to see the light of day.



The 1973 version of Chain – Phil Manning, Barry Harvey, Barry Sullivan, Ian Clyne and Mal Capewell as photographed by Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio.

CHAIN - Toward the blues and beyond...

No investigation of the period in which Melbourne teenagers and those just a little older, who enjoyed the great discos, would be complete without a mention of the great band, **Chain**. By the time they had reached Melbourne they had already relocated themselves from one side of the continent to the other (Perth to Brisbane) and had already experienced those line-up changes which beset almost all bands of the time. Probably close to fifty individual musicians have been incorporated into the **Chain** story since the band's early days in Melbourne, circa 1968. The "core" of **Chain** has always been **Matt Taylor** (vocals), ex-Tassie boy **Phil Manning**, **Barry Harvey** (drums) and **Barry Sullivan** (bass) regardless of those musicians who have passed through the ranks.

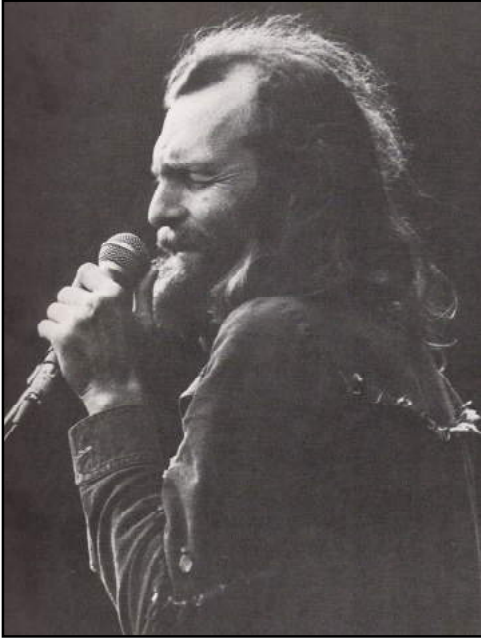
Probably Australia's best ever blues band, they can still genuinely claim to be the only true blues outfit to have a number one blues hit on the charts with *Black and Blue* back in 1971 (and as well, a #2 hit with *Judgement*). *Black and Blue* was probably as close to real blues that many disco goers, or for that matter most of the general public got. **Phil Manning** has taken the time to point out however that **Chain** had other influences apart from American rural blues:

PHIL MANNING: "... we had so many diverse influences. I mean, from Traffic, Cream, The Rolling Stones, back to The Beatles. You can't separate one particular influence and say 'this is my influence'. They were all so important. (But) we put our own mark on it. That's what Chain was about. Injecting some originality into it, some personality. The thing that was nice about it was that it was a nice selection of good players and people who got on well together." (Manning, interview, Freedom Train, 1994, quoted in www.milesago.com)

Their other memorable song, *I Remember When I Was Young*, has taken on more of an aura of a great working anthem as time has progressed. **Chain** wrote a number of songs in Brisbane, from input by all band members, before venturing south. *Black and Blue* was written in this way - and topped off with the honest vocals and harmonica from Taylor.



The long flowing mane of Phil Manning in 1971 – He led Chain's guitar attack. (Courtesy of Phil Manning)



Matt Taylor – a blues voice unlike anyone else’s – at Sunbury 1973. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber – Australian Rock Folio)

band changes followed until **Chain** recruited “Big Goose” and “Little Goose”, (**Barry Sullivan** and **Barry Harvey**) to form a tight and solid rhythm section.



Phil Manning on stage at The Myer Music Bowl with Chain, 1971. (Courtesy of Phil Manning)

us 3 guys musically and as a person because we were already friends from the ‘sixties, but the two Geese hadn’t played with Matt until then.” (Harvey, email interview, 19 October, 2004)

This generally accepted best of all Chain line-up of Matt Taylor, Phil Manning, “the Geese” (Harvey and Sullivan)

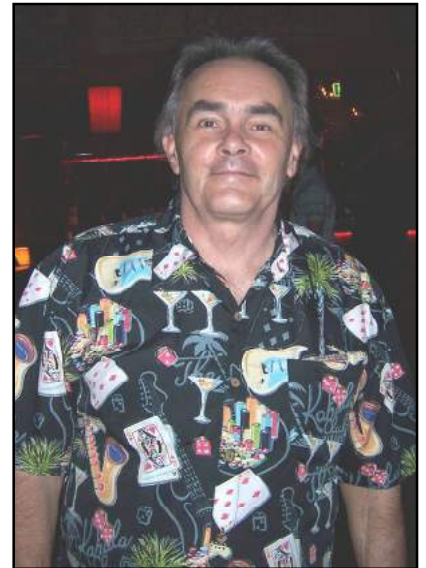
Formed in the watershed Woodstock year of 1969 in Perth and spanning the Sunbury years up to ‘74, **Chain** had momentous line-up and locality changes over those years, yet these did little to outwardly unsettle the band or diminish their raw, driving output whether on record or on stage. They seemed to knit back together superbly with every new line up.

Undoubtedly, they created a distinctive Aussie version of the blues, recognisable from a long way off. An enormous (make that gigantic!) number of musicians could count themselves as Chain members at one time or another. The initial Perth-based band then known as **The Beaten Tracks** included **Dave Hole**, who is now a blues great in his own right and singer **Wendy Saddington** as well as keyboardist **Warren Morgan** (later nicknamed “Pig” by Mr. **Billy Thorpe** when he joined the “Sunbury” Aztecs). Brisbane lad about town, **Matt Taylor** began guesting with **Chain** and when Wendy left the band he stayed on at Manning’s request.

Re-locations for the band to Sydney then Melbourne and more

At this point in time, (‘70 to ‘71) studio recording time produced the groundbreaking (and shattering!) album *Toward The Blues*. This album hit number 6 on the Album Charts nationally and *Black and Blue*, the single which has become another Oz working man’s anthem over time, continued to tear up the dance venue crowds, big time. With its clanking, rattling, convict chain-gang style chorus, it made a distinct imprint on the charts for Australian music – not just blues. Based possibly on the Black American slave style chant, it probably fitted the image of Australia’s convict past, as well. Drummer, **Barry “Lil Goose” Harvey** recalls the story behind *Black and Blue*:

BARRY HARVEY: “Matt Joined Chain in 1971 and we recorded *Black and Blue* after writing it in Brisbane. When Warren (“Pig”) Morgan left Chain to play with Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs, Chain continued as a 3 piece band with Phil Manning, Big Goose & Lil Goose. We worked in Brisbane for around 6 months at a resident gig to get the trio thing happening, then Phil decided that he was tired of singing and playing guitar as he wanted to concentrate on his guitar playing. We all agreed to ask Matt Taylor to join the band and Matt had no hesitation in flying up to Brisbane and playing with Chain. That was the start of the classic Chain line-up. Matt clicked with



One half of arguably the best rhythm section in Australian rock ‘n roll – Barry “Lil Goose” Harvey.

plus keyboards, worked the club scene in Melbourne at Berties, Sebastians, and later, the TF Much Ballroom and Garrison, as well as hitting the Sunbury and Mulwala outdoor stages. At Garrison Disco in Prahran, they gained a following to almost rival that of Garrison's "resident" band, **Madder Lake**. When the venue was forced by the local council to close in June 1973, two **Chain** songs were recorded live inside on 17 June and were incorporated in a compilation tribute to the disco – *Garrison: The Final Blow*. The songs recorded by **Chain** on that night were: *Grab A Snatch And Hold It* and *Do What You Wanna Do*. The on-and-off **Chain**, at times reduced to a three-piece unit, released in December '73, *Two Of A Kind* - an album which didn't really do much for them at all.

Their performances both on stage and on record are equally well remembered, unlike some bands which really functioned for live gigs alone. What sort of impact did **Chain** have on Melbourne?:

BARRY HARVEY: "Chain was a great live band and whatever was recorded in the studio, the band could always re-produce on stage live, but better, as we just loved to play, and especially live where we could jam out the songs a bit more and improvise new ideas to the songs. You could say that the songs evolved as the band did at the same time by playing them and slightly changing parts to keep ourselves interested in the songs also, because that was a very creative time in Australian music.

Chain had already built up quite a following in Melbourne from the previous band and the fans wanted to hear more originality in the music, which is what Chain really is all about. So what the people wanted to hear was what we were writing, not the bubblegum music that every Melbourne band was playing.



The current version of Phil Manning. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

They wanted to hear a more down to earth type of music, and the old saying "that honesty is the best policy" proved to be true. Down to earth won out as we played honest music and from the heart. There was nothing pretentious about the music we played, it was all completely sincere. I think the people can see through pre-conceived music, designed or written to supposedly please the crowd or what the record companies think will sell.

We found out by playing honestly how we wanted to, the people picked up that vibe and had a lot of faith in the band. AND the songs we recorded that we thought no one would buy, because we knew they weren't what you would call commercial, ended up selling like crazy and the songs we thought would sell, flopped. In other words, you can't fool the people you play to, they are too aware, and can feel music as real or concocted, or as bullshit or real music." (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Perhaps American blues legend **Albert Collins** who visited Australia in 1983 should have the final say on **Chain**. He admitted:

ALBERT COLLINS: "I hear what you're playing and I know it's the blues. But it sure don't sound like any blues I've heard before." (op cit, *Freedom Train*, 1994, quoted in www.milesago.com)



From *Planet* magazine – 20 October 1971 – actually, it wasn't their last gig!

CHAIN

are recording a
live album at
GARRISON
166 High Street
Prahran
on
Wednesday, 6th June
and
Thursday, 7th June
with Matt Taylor and
Greg Lawrie
Admission only \$1.00

Mushroom
 MUSHROOM RECORDS

CAM-PACT - Snotty-nosed bastards...

Several other bands from the period of progressive rock stand out and their contributions shouldn't be ignored. In 1967 **John Pugh, Mark Barnes, Chris Stockley** and **Keith Glass** came together as firstly, a potential soul act, cashing in on the soul craze. Guitarists Glass and Pugh had just come from **The Eighteenth Century Quartet** with



Future Cam-Pact founder, guitarist and vocalist Keith Glass at the microphone with his former band, The Rising Sons in 1966. (Photographer unknown)

Hans Poulsen where the band had been custom-designed to match the sort of baroque/folkish sound of **The Lovin' Spoonful**. **The Eighteenth Century Quartet** had truly original songwriters in Poulsen and Glass who were writing and performing almost

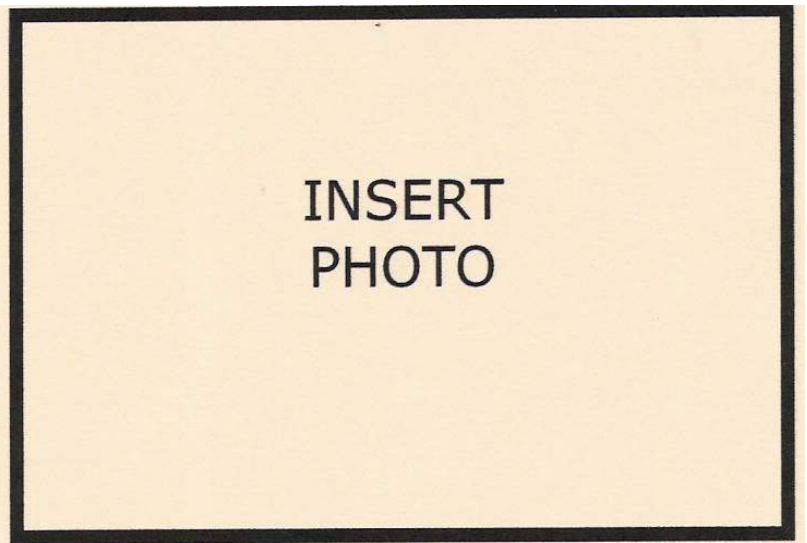
exclusively their own original material to make up virtually the entire set list when they came to the live stage. However, by March, 1967, this band had strayed a long way from their original concept ideas into heavier R & B which suited the Pugh and Glass combination, but didn't necessarily please Poulsen. The personal dynamics within **The Eighteenth Century Quartet** at the time of its demise were getting complex:

KEITH GLASS: "John Pugh and I were over reacting to our previous year and a half as one half of The Eighteenth Century Quartet, a band originally built around the songs of Hans Poulsen. We had been lured into (it) with visions of overnight/overseas fame and fortune. So what had we done? Kicked Hans out of his own band just because he was personally unbearable and turned the remainder into a pseudo soul group anyway. This was the music we loved. Southern soul specifically." (Glass, "A Life In Music", Rhythms, August 2001, P.34) .

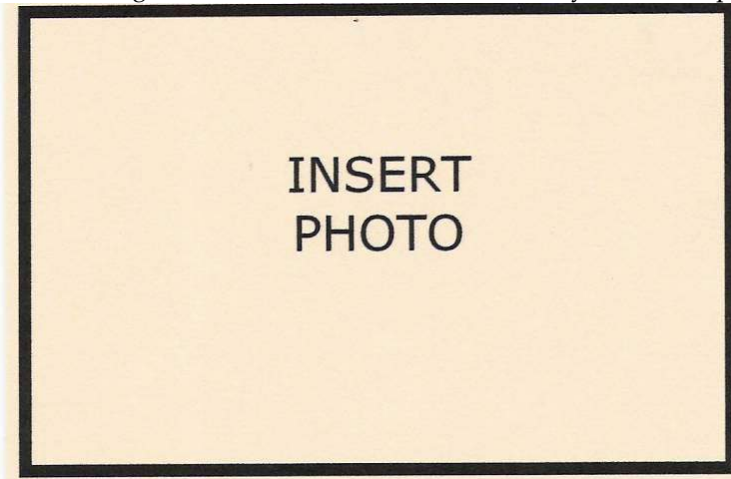
And so, **Cam-Pact** was born. Well... not quite. The original name they devised for the band - **The Camp Act** was thought to be perhaps a bit too risqué even for the liberated and progressive Melbourne teen audiences of the Swingin' Sixties, given that the more liberal attitudes towards overt homosexuality were still a fair way off. They found their name in an unusual way:

KEITH GLASS: "There it was on the wall of the men's public toilet at Her Majesty's hotel in Toorak Road, South Yarra. 'Be modern, be camp' someone had scrawled and in a flash we had our group name... 'The Camp Act' (as it was initially) was fairly fitting in the sense we were all extremely heterosexual but also fairly fey. Of course some were more fey than others. Barnes in particular cultivated the sweet little boy act but underneath was a cuttingly cruel tease of both sexes with an acid tongue and a razor sharp mind." (Glass, op cit. P.34).

Cam-Pact members approached **David Flint**, owner and manager of The Thumpin' Tum with the possibility of arranging a few gigs. So impressed was Flint with the new band that he took over their management as well



as offering them spots at The Tum. Before playing at The Tum for the very first time however, they managed a spot the same night, 4 March, 1967 at The Queensberry Hotel. Despite abandoning their initial name as being just a bit



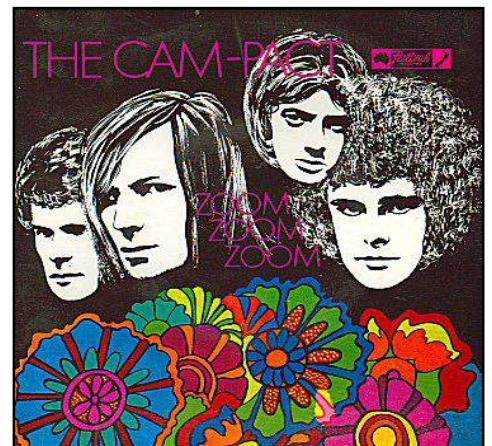
too far to the left of centre, they were still keen to make their name by projecting the wilder side of their image. They were not even averse to “camping-up” their image for the sake of publicity. But even their first publicity shots were just too wild for the time:

KEITH GLASS: “(Mark Barnes) and Stockley would perform a lingering mouth to mouth kiss in our first film clip to accompany the song “Something Easy” just outside in Toorak Rd. It only just made the cut as they came out of the clinch but the intention was clear. We wanted to get somewhere by shock tactics mild for today but wild for the time. Our first publicity shots included all five of us seemingly naked in the one bed and when we couldn’t get it published it was pinned to the wall of The Thumping Tum disco, which became our “nerve centre” of operations;

until some shocked patron objected to it and our manager and Tum operator David Flint took it down.” (Glass, op cit, P. 34).

Cam-Pact’s second line up which included drummer **Trevor Courtney**, who had come over from New Zealand with **Mike Rudd’s Chants R & B**, and **Greg Cook** was probably the most successful combination. They set themselves the task of pushing hard to gain a niche in the soul/R & B department around town with both covers and originals:

KEITH GLASS: “Our mission was to grab ourselves a solid repertoire of soul classics and after some intensive rehearsals at a space across town in Carlton we had about 60 songs down with the emphasis on Otis, Sam & Dave, Wilson Pickett and a smattering of Detroit stuff if it was hard edged enough, from the Four Tops, The Temptations and Marvin Gaye. We had the records so no-one had a better set list. In the months that followed, except for a few must keep classics, if another band started playing any of the songs we did, we dropped them. The Chelsea Set and The Groove caused us a few heartaches in that department. (Glass, op cit. P.34).



The EP with their major claim to success - the single, *Zoom, Zoom, Zoom*.

Just like other bands of the period such as **The Masters Apprentices**, **Zoot**, **The Missing Links** and many others, the fan bases that they set up, created certain headaches for the band members. **Jim Keays** of **The Masters Apprentices** recalls the notorious “Band Moll’s Paradise”, a section of Carlisle Avenue, St Kilda, which was a popular area for bands to find cheap accommodation and to be together to rehearse. It was however, often awash with female fans just waiting to catch a glimpse (and probably more) of their long-haired heroes. Sometimes they actually managed to find their way indoors – at times by personal invitation or perhaps more likely, uninvited. **Cam-Pact** experienced the same fan adulation from the girls as other bands. But, there was one particular incident which still holds some lingering regrets and concerns for Glass and Barnes:

KEITH GLASS: “We were sort of bad boys in sheep’s clothing.... We wanted it both ways, teen appeal and musical credibility - this caused us to have a bit of a love/hate relationship with the fans. There was one obsessed fan who paid the ultimate price. After lurking around outside a group member’s house all night she was in a fairly delirious state. Deciding to go to the local milk bar for nourishment she was hit by a bus and after lingering for a few days died in the hospital without, to our eternal shame, a visit from her idols. In fact we did arrive just in time to find her parents leaving, crying but not apportioning blame to the snotty nosed bastards who had in effect

caused her demise. I'd like to say it affected our behaviour after that but it probably didn't. (Glass, op cit, P.35).



I walked past would say "Just doing some promotion, man". (Glass, op cit., P.34, 35.)

Cam-Pact came to the notice of medical - turned musical - turned sporting, entrepreneur, **Dr. Geoffrey Edelsten**. He is the same

flamboyant Dr. Edelsten who took the helm of the Sydney Swans Aussie Rules footy club after the South Melbourne club had been unceremoniously packed off to the harbour city in the first early interstate move out of Victoria for Aussie Rules footy. "The Doc" had commenced *Hit Productions* and was dabbling in investing some of his excess cash into recording deals with Melbourne groups:

KEITH GLASS: "We were playing four nights and some days a week while juggling day jobs or in my case and Mark's, tertiary study. The infamous Doctor rubber stamped a deal one night at The Thumping Tum and into the studio we went. I think the pure soul thing in me had diluted enough by then to realise we should record an original if possible. Together with Greg I concocted "Something Easy" with some cringe inducing lyrics over a solid beat group approximation of an uptempo soul groove and a horn section we gathered from members of the Ram Jam Big Band and my ex-girlfriend's twin brother on trombone..." (Glass, op cit. P.34)

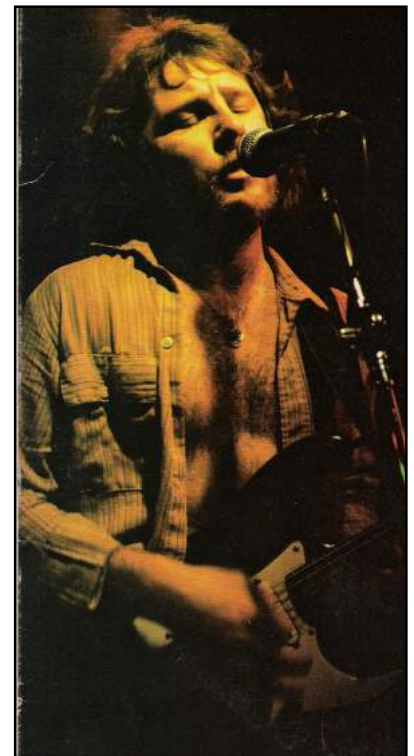
The now-accepted personnel changes happened to **Cam-Pact** quickly after about June, 1969 and by the time they eyed off the Sydney scene as a new proving ground, the band consisted of only four members. Bassist Barnes had become a tad unreliable by this time forcing the versatile Glass to switch to bass about the period they recorded, *Potion of Love/Cry My Heart Out*. The extremely capricious nature of the recording industry however, conspired to ensure that this single, which they considered to be their best, simply faded and died without causing the slightest ripple on the sales charts. Stockley and Glass felt that the band had lost direction and left - (Glass for the stage with "Hair" the musical, Stockley for **Glenn Shorrock's Axiom** and later **The Dingoes**), leaving only two members to carry on. Looking back though, **Cam-Pact's** potential and impact have been summed up by Glass:

KEITH GLASS: "Cam-Pact was a pretty tight little outfit most of the time with a lot of talent in it. It stretched in too many directions however. Soul/pop/psychedelic and more. It was a sign of the times. Those times were between

With defections from the band, **Keith Glass** was thrust towards the microphone as vocalist, and they cut a few singles, but unfortunately they didn't get to record a full album. Their singles which were produced on Festival label included, *Something Easy/Michael*, (March '68), *Drawing Room/I'm Your Puppet*, (May, '68), *Good, Good Feeling/And It Won't Be Long*, (September '68), *Potion Of Love/Cry My Heart Out* (June '69) and *Zoom, Zoom, Zoom/Getting Myself Together*, (September '69). Although not making the upper reaches of the charts too often, they nevertheless worked very hard around the discos and even found a novel way to promote their singles:

KEITH GLASS: "With the work we'd been doing and a certain teen appeal we had, the record (*Something Easy*) made the Melbourne charts, peaking in the 20's. One of our hot spots was the lunchtime gig at Tenth Avenue in Bourke Street. Play for the extremely young... just teenage girls who skipped school to be there and get 'em to go across the road to Coles and buy our single. Trev especially used to sit one on each knee during breaks and as

Keith Glass left Cam-Pact in 1969 to star in "Hair", the musical. Since then, he has broadened his scope and writes regularly on music. He lives in Mobile, Alabama and frequently returns to home-base - Melbourne.



Chris Stockley was a founding member of Cam-Pact in 1967 and left the band in mid-1969. (Photographer unknown)

the pure 'beat' days when it was exciting just to pick up an instrument and the emerging big Australian rock sound of the seventies which really got going with outdoor festivals and licensed premises. Cam-Pact wouldn't have been at home there. We really belonged in the so-called 'disco's' such as The Thumping Tum, The Catcher, Berties, Sebastians and the list goes on. The Rococo period of the swinging 60's, complete with frilly shirts, tight pink trousers and ambivalent sexuality. (Glass, op cit, P.36)

Cam-Pact became something of a launching pad for future bands like, **Chain, Axiom, The Dingoes, The Vibrants, Stylus, Mondo Rock** and of course, **Company Caine**. Individual band members have moved on to become record producers, songwriters, music industry writers, film makers and can boast many other accomplishments both in and out of rock music.



A very rare, 2006 re-union for Cam Pact – some thirty-five or so years after they broke up. From left, Chris Stockley, John Pugh, Keith Glass and Chris Lofven. Pugh and Glass are founding members of the band.

COMPANY CAINE - Products of broken reality...

Just as **Mike Rudd's Spectrum** evolved into **Ariel** a little later, their colleagues on the Melbourne club stages

Cam-Pact, had evolved into **Company Caine** by 1970, with surviving **Cam-Pact** members, bassist **Cliff Edwards**, drummer **Ray Arnott** (fresh from **The Chelsea Set**) and guitarist **Russell Smith** (not to be confused with **The Ram Jam Big Band's** trumpeter/trombonist of the same name) joining with Melbourne's unique performer, **Gulliver** (or **Gullifer**) **Smith** (real name Kevin!). A truly eccentric being, Gulliver had been around the Melbourne scene from the early 'sixties where he had perfected a rather outrageous stage act and presence which included a free form of music punctuated with ad-libbed type monologues, throwing up anything that came across his mind at any particular stage. Before a sojourn in Sydney from late 1966 he had formed his band, **Little Gulliver and The Children**. They did the dances around Melbourne and Gulliver appeared at the early discotheques as well as making many solo small screen appearances on *Kommotion* and *The Go!! Show*.



A zany duo – Gulliver Smith and Russell Smith – (Courtesy of Graeme Webber – Australian Rock Folio)

Company Caine had a brief, but stellar career which unfortunately lasted less than two years, although an incarnation of this same band emerged again in 1975 only to fold before the end of that same year. **Russell Smith** and **Gulliver Smith** continued along with **Cliff Edwards** and **Ray Arnott**, adding saxophone/ keyboardist **Jeremy Noone** to create the new band which quickly established something of a cult following around town in a very short time. This was because of their



musical and stage presence which propelled them headlong onto their audiences. Their style was not just blues or progressive rock, but a true amalgam and fusion of styles bringing jazz, soul, a bit of avant-garde and R & B into the mix – much to the pleasure of the dance/club crowds.



Company Caine – their first album – *Product of A Broken Reality* with cover design by

Those inevitable changes in personal in a few short years found **Company Caine** taking a number of well-known journeyman musicians on board for the ride from time to time. These included **Eric Cairns, John McNerny, Tim Partridge, Les Stacpool** and **Mal Capewell** to name just a few who graced the ranks. In mid 1971, they recorded *A Product Of A Broken Reality* at TCS Studios which was situated behind GTV 9 in Richmond and this has become accepted as a landmark album in Australian rock – an eclectic mixture of styles which makes the album all the more appealing. There is bluesy rock, with tracks bordering on a later heavy metal style and covering the gamut to free spacey, jazz rock. Some of it is freaky; some is crazy but it isn't in any way a disjointed conglomeration and comes together just as a great album should. Unfortunately, way too soon, **Company Caine** fell apart and the band had broken up by October, 1972 but not before a deft name change – **Co. Caine** (you've probably noticed – cocaine!) added a little twist to the band's final few months.

JEFF ST JOHN - The ultimate big time operator...

When discussing unique personalities, **Jeff St John**, originally from Sydney and now currently residing in Perth, must surely be one of the finest soul/rock/blues vocalists that this country has produced. Like many of his contemporaries, he has never been afforded the accolades that he so richly deserves. During a long residency at Melbourne's Thumpin' Tum, throughout 1967, he captivated his audiences with his power despite being confined to a wheelchair due to his congenital condition – Spina Bifida. This affliction did little to hamper him or restrict him in delivering his brand of rock magic to the crowds. Over



Being confined to a wheelchair was no handicap for St. John whose voice was his calling card with a number of bands he formed around him. (Everybody's magazine, 8 March, 1967)



His first album, *Big Time Operator*, issued in March, 1967 with The Id.

time his backing bands included:

The Id, from 1966 to '67, **Yama** in '67 through '68 and **Copperwine** from 1969 to '72.

Jeffrey St John (born Jeffrey Newton) walked with a calliper throughout his teenage years and endured a number of painful operations culminating in an unsuccessful operation in 1967 which he, in typical fashion turned into a positive. He then accepted that he was wheelchair bound from then on, but in typical upbeat fashion, said that this left him free of his crutches and therefore he could use his hands on stage! His wheelchair, in fact was one he designed specifically for the stage.

Thanks to his particularly understanding and caring parents, he was taught not to look upon his circumstances as a disability. This enduring and upbeat attitude has been a part of his make up for so long and has coloured his desire to succeed:

JEFF ST. JOHN: "...If you want something badly enough and put the work in, there's always a solution to your goals. (St. John, *Who Weekly*, October, 2000)

Jeff certainly put the work into **The Id** (meaning: Intelligent Design) and it is with this backing band that he had the greatest success both in Sydney and in Melbourne where his most recognisable hit single, *Big Time Operator* reached number 12 in the charts in January, 1967. This band recorded a number of other singles and an album, also titled *Big Time Operator* which unfortunately didn't repeat on record the live stage success that they had found. **The Id**, however disintegrated when St. John left and after an unsuccessful operation on his legs towards the end of 1967, he bounced back with **Jeff St. John's Copperwine** in early 1969 which saw him return to the live stage. May, 1970 saw the release through Mushroom, of the highly acclaimed album, *Joint Effort*, (perhaps a little play on words here!) which actually sold reasonably well and still presents a perfect appraisal of just what a superb band **Copperwine** were:

PAUL CULNANE: "Other tunes on the debut album, like the jazz-tinged instrumental *Any Orange Night* and the ensemble piece *You Don't Have To Listen* displayed Copperwine's diversity. The towering opening track, a surging, organ-led rendition of The Temptation's *Cloud Nine*, showed off Jeff's commanding soul stylings, superbly backed by a power-drive performance from Copperwine that, frankly, puts the original in the shade. That's the third point demonstrated by this album: here was a band that, uniquely enough, balanced their obvious progressive tendencies with strong



Bassist for The Id, John Helman goes off into astrospace. (Everybody's magazine, 8 March, 1967)

retro-psych and funk-soul leanings. What a potent combination that was ... for too short a time!" (Culnane, www.milesago.com.)

The band toured heavily and consistently throughout the years 1970 and 1971. They blew everyone away at the New South Wales, Ourimbah "Pilgrimage For Pop" Festival and for a short time added former **Chain** vocalist **Wendy Saddington** as a second vocalist. However, **Copperwine** found that like **The Id** before, problems within the structure of the band were causing discontentment, particularly with St. John who had never been known as an easy person to deal with. Jeff left that band in January 1972. Drugs usage, the pressure of constant touring, increasingly erratic behaviour bordering on the bizarre and ongoing health problems probably led to his final decision to move out of the mainstream, if only for a short time:

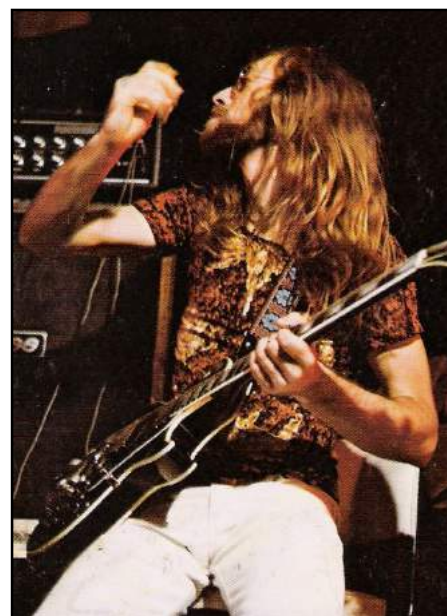
JEFF ST. JOHN: "The madness, the speed at which we lived ... it's amazing any of us survived. All I can put my survival down to is God had reasons for me to hang around. Drug dependency -- it was an accepted part of what we did -- isn't a place I'd suggest anyone go to. I lost a bunch of friends because they got it wrong." (St. John, op cit, October, 2000).

MACKENZIE THEORY - Extra-terrestrial boogie with viola ...

Speaking of underrated, surely the title of the "most underrated performer" in the period of progressive rock music must go to the multi talented guitarist **Rob MacKenzie** - or at least he must be a final contender! Here is what the pop paper, *Go-Set* said of the experimental



The Id's, Bob Bertles joined the band in early 1967. (Everybody's magazine, 8 March, 1967)



Rob MacKenzie. From *Out Of The Blue*. (Photo - David Few)

musician in a contemporary article: “Rob MacKenzie’s original futuristic music exploded on stages and in concert halls throughout the country literally stunning audiences with the sheer energy of this changing, visually exciting, powerful, dynamic new rock ‘n roll that made audiences stop in their tracks and look, listen and be hypnotised by this new experience. MacKenzie Theory specialise in the bizarre, the wonderful, the mysterious, the unexpected... it was obvious to all they were a smash” (Go-Set, 23 December, 1973)



MacKenzie Theory – from left, Pearce, Leadabrand, MacKenzie and Majewski. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

perfecting his guitar technique throughout his teenage years. According to many, he lived for music and constantly talked about his theories – hence the name of the band.



Cleis Pearce, (Planet, 29 December, 1971, photographer unknown)

In September, 1971 he met **Cleis Pearce**, a classically trained Viola player and eventually persuaded her to move to Melbourne with the intention of forming a band. This they did, recruiting bass player **Mike Leadabrand** (an American who frequently visited Australia) and drummer **Andy Majewski**. Their first public performance was at The T.F. Much Ballroom in early December, 1971.

They were essentially a live music act rather than a recording band, regularly playing Berties, The T.F. Much Ballroom, Sebastian’s and other venues in the period as well as the Sunbury Festival in 1973 where they were scheduled to follow up **Billy Thorpe’s** thundering set which blasted everyone away. How is it possible to follow up a **Billy Thorpe** at full throttle, you may ask? Well... **MacKenzie Theory** did it - much to the joy of the audience which needed something to take them back down to ground level again.

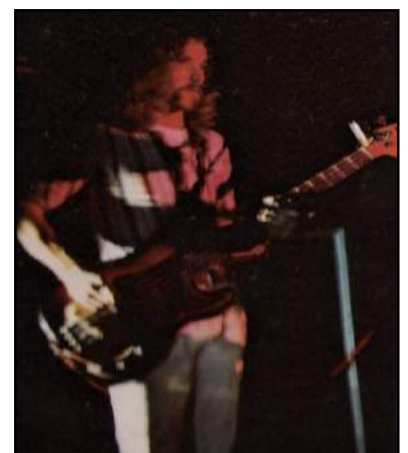
The use of a classical music instrument within a rock band structure was not necessarily new. **Lou Reed** had matched his guitar against **John Cale’s** electric viola in **The Velvet Underground** some years before but this Aussie combination was different – their instrumental sound was at the forefront of the progressive movement, combining rock, classical elements and jazz. Possibly the closest at the time was British band **Family** and in America, **The Flock** but neither pushed the limits of fusion as they did. *Go-Set* attempted to sum them up:

“MacKenzie Theory music can be described as spatial – that is to say it has no real chordal limits depending mainly on the improvisational abilities of its members

MacKenzie, born in Melbourne, had played with a number of bands including **Friends** and **Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs** as guest guitarist. He had been surrounded by music at home and he had absorbed a number of styles,



McKenzie Theory’s first album - the spatial, *Out Of The Blue*, Mushroom/Festival’s 1973 release with the superb cover photo by Graeme Webber.



Mike Leadabrand from *Out Of The Blue*. (Photographer - David Few)

for its sound. Although their pieces are called by different names and do seem to have various time limits they are by and large variations on the same tune tempered by the groups feelings towards a particular subject at a particular moment in time. Thus they do not play tunes as such rather cerebral Happenings that only have an existence at the time of their creation and can be utterly different if heard a week, even a day apart. There is an organic totality about a performance by the band because there is a consistence of feeling that pervades each such song/experience. Vocals are unnecessary such is the depth of involvement they display and engender in their audience" (*Go-Set*, 12 August, 1972)

In a contemporary interview, MacKenzie described the spontaneity of the San Francisco Electric sound of the band:

ROB MacKENZIE: "Music is feeling expressed in sound – I'm not interested in getting tied up in technicalities, beyond the ability to be able to reproduce the sounds I hear in my head: technicality means being able to co-ordinate mind and sound as you hear it. When we're playing the whole physiology of every player is right into every note and phrase we're playing ... Ultimately, we'd like to make up music every time we play and it'll be great all the time, just by communication between players..." (MacKenzie in *The Daily Planet*, 29 December, 1971).

Throughout their time together, Pearce and MacKenzie formed the core of the band with other members arriving and leaving at points during the three or so years that the band stayed together. Pearce reflected on being in what was essentially a male-dominated world of rock music:

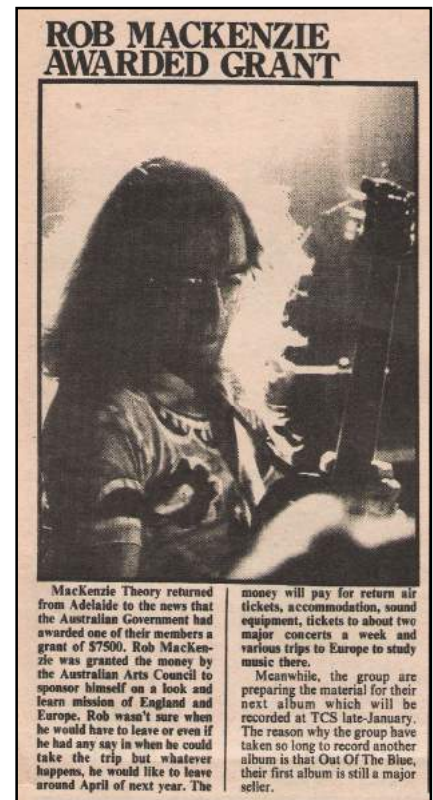
CLEIS PEARSE: "I never thought about the novelty of being a chick in a band – if some people like to see it as that, then perhaps that's all they're capable of seeing (that's not putting them down or anything.) I don't play like a chick – I mean, so many girls think that there's something wrong with playing, they don't put their whole minds and bodies into it. As for my classical training, well, I haven't got over that yet" (Pearce in *The Daily Planet*, 29 December, 1971).

However, with all these glowing sentiments, the band did not seem to translate well from a live band to recording and Pearce accepted that her unfamiliarity with studio recording processes and her differences with the recording staff made a studio album difficult to complete to a satisfactory level. The resultant album, *Out Of The Blue* ended up by being a "recorded live" set which most people who had heard them live, seem to agree did not capture anything like **MacKenzie Theory** - really live. After Rob accepted a new Whitlam Labor Government's Grant to study overseas in 1974, **MacKenzie Theory's** life was effectively over, save for a final "goodbye"

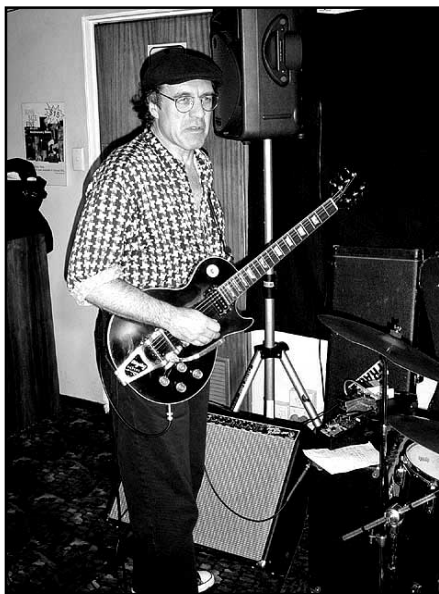
concert at the virtual home of "farewell" recordings, The Dallas Brooks Hall in East Melbourne. This was done on 15 May, 1974 and released as *Bon Voyage*. Thus, the career of one of the most diverse of all Melbourne bands was over.

BLACKFEATHER - The seasons keep changing...

Hailing originally from Sydney, **Blackfeather** was one of the rare bunch of progressive rock bands of the early 'seventies which successfully maintained a very strong following in Melbourne AND Sydney, at roughly the same time with a combination of a top live act and two major hit single releases. Ultimately though, any band which

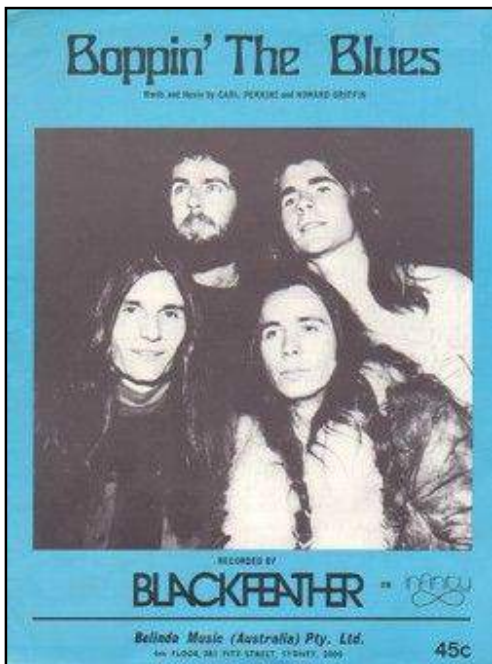


**Go-Set, 23 December, 1973.
(Photo – Graeme Webber)**



**He lives and works overseas now, but Rob MacKenzie sometimes pops back into town.
(Courtesy of Mike Rudd)**

commanded such a following would almost inevitably find the incredible grind of touring in both cities and regional areas, recording and performing, an extremely debilitating task.



Sheet music for The Boppin' The Blues - Blackfeather.

The stability of the band was quickly tested and like a few other bands such as **Chain**, they found it rather difficult to keep a steady line-up together for any amount of time. Formed in April 1970 in Sydney, Blackfeather originally comprised **Neale Johns** on vocals, guitar specialist extraordinaire **John Robinson**, **Leith Corbert** (bass) and **Mike McCormac** on drums. The last three musicians came from the ashes of **The Dave Miller Set**, which had come to Sydney from New Zealand. Robinson had already established his credentials with Miller's band:

DAVE MILLER: "He had great aptitude; he had very good styling, and very good ears. He had a very set direction about the types of things that he wanted to do, and conceptually how he'd go about doing that. And certainly he ended up with fairly legendary status, and I know that the band very, very quickly became a "boy audience" type of band. I hope that doesn't sound like some silly sexist remark, but it was still a male domain industry in those days; they were male groups - four, five guys in bands, etcetera. We were the archetypal head-bangers', air-guitar-players' band. They doted on John Robinson, and later on when Leith Corbett came in with his flying mane, and his theatrics on stage - well, I mean the rush, and the queues on the street

were to stand in front of either the bass player or in front of the lead guitarist. That's the type of thing that it had, and The Dave Miller Set - particularly in Sydney NSW and its excursions to Queensland and some of the industrial areas - were quite legendary for being trendsetters and paving the way." (Interview with Dave Miller by Steve Kernohan, www.milesago.com, 26 November 1999)

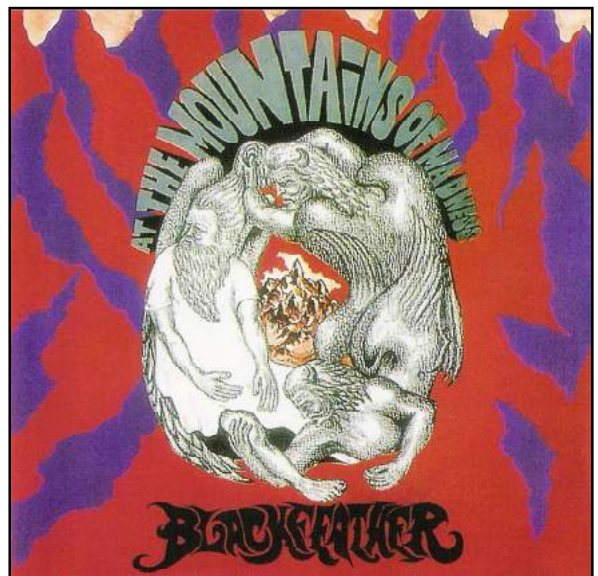
Once the three had severed their connections from **The Dave Miller Set**, they quickly found an extremely exciting and powerful vocalist in Johns who was only eighteen at the time:

JOHN ROBINSON: "Leith, Mike and I went looking for a singer. It didn't take long before Leith turned up with Neale Johns. A small guy with a huge voice, Neale was very taciturn. He was into the blues and had excellent range. We rehearsed in my garage in Epping at first, then at the Hornsby Police Boys Club on weekdays. We pulled up every blues standard and original we could think of and soon had an impressive song list." (Robinson, www.geocities.com/~blackfeathermp)

Johns himself remembers how he came under scrutiny:

NEALE JOHNS: "That came about because I was performing at The Whisky Inn place... (There were a lot of 'Whisky somethings' around Sydney at that time.) I was performing there and at Taylor's Square in a sort of a jazz/rock band and it so happened that there was already a falling out by John Robinson and Leith Corbett with Dave Miller and they came down and saw me. The particular players in that band were in their 'thirties and I was only eighteen or something. A guy who was working there came up to me and said, 'this guy has given me his phone number and wants to speak to you.'... and it just worked out like that. I went along and had a bit of a sing with them ... and it was on!

I mean, John was a bit of a hero then and when I joined the band, John was considered, if not the top guitarist,



Very adventurous and "out-there" - At The Mountains Of Madness featured Johns' vocals against Robinson's inventive guitar bursts.

certainly in the top three in the country... fast, speedy innovative guitarist. I'd started out doing the jazz thing and then, they were very loud. It was like me learning my licks in the previous band and then learning about projection and I was with the loudest guitarist in the country, John Robinson.." (Johns, author's interview, 24 November, 2004)

Johns and Robinson set about the task of writing songs almost from the word go. Within rehearsal time at the



The centre foldout from *At The Mountains Of Madness* LP with, from left, Al Kash, Neale Johns, Rob Fortesque, John Robinson. (Photographer unknown)

Hornsby Police Boys Club, they began the intense rounds of putting down original compositions to suit the direction in which the band was heading. According to Johns, they were unique at the time in Australia, having only Clapton, Baker and Bruce's Cream to compare their emerging sound to. He considers that in Australia, Blackfeather and perhaps Kahvas Jute were the only bands attempting this blues/heavy metal sound. Johns, by coincidence had previously

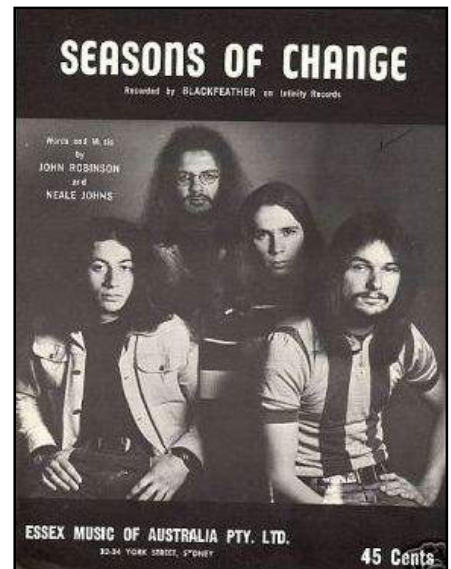
auditioned for Kahvas Jute' guitarist Dennis Wilson in his living room before that band adopted that name, but nothing came of it. Speaking about the early times as a Sydney-only outfit, Robinson has remarked on the origins of the Blackfeather name:

JOHN ROBINSON: "We were looking for a name - a drummer friend of mine, Wayne Thomas of 'Flake' gave me a book which had about 500 possible band names in it. 'Whitefeather' & 'Heavyfeather' were two of them. Heavy became 'Black' and we had it." (Robinson, www.geocities.com/~blackfeathermp)

Corbert and McCormack both moved on within a short time. Robinson believes that it was just beginning to happen for the band when Dave Miller "poached" his two original band members for his (Miller's) new recording project. There may have been a hint of some friction between band members beginning in these early stages or they may have just wanted to move on. So, from a promising early start, the band then hit the ground with a thump shortly after take-off. This was just what the band didn't need. This split may have affected the senior band members more than lead singer, Johns because he was still quite young, intensely focussed on climbing the success ladder and was less inclined to be worried about re-building a band around him. Whereas for Robinson, he had lost his entire rhythm section. Throughout the distinguished career of Blackfeather, there was a steady revolving door of musicians coming and going with a personnel listing only just short of Chain's massive rotating inventory of musicians. Probably up to six different versions of Blackfeather strode the stages of the festivals and discos in both major cities throughout the 'seventies.

Some have blamed lead singer Johns for the departures which often occurred in quick succession, but he is keen to point out that this is not the truth and that inconsistencies within the structure of the band and lack of organisation led to the band's unintentional rotation policy. Far from being an unsettling mechanism for Johns, he admits that he actually enjoyed singing with different combinations. Co-founder Robinson, who looked at stability as an essential platform from which to work, would not have shared this enthusiasm for the changing line-ups.

However, within a short time, Blackfeather (Mark II) was in the air again with two new members, Bob Fortesque and Alexander Kash, (who sported a huge afro hairstyle earlier in the piece) on board. As well as band problems,



Blackfeather, by the time *Seasons Of Change* was released, had been through drastic changes themselves. Sheet music for the single.

there were personal problems:

JOHN ROBINSON: "My career had stalled - it had been months since I'd earned any money, and my marriage was heading for the rocks. I busied myself writing more riffs and an instrumental called Mango's Theme which was inspired by Leone's Dollar Westerns. Neale contacted me with good news - he had found a rhythm section recently arrived from Perth. Al Kash, an American, played drums, and Bob Fortesque, bass. They were simpler players than Leith and Mike and the music gelled immediately. We were booked into the Manly Vale Pub soon after, and the crowd went wild. Blackfeather had finally arrived!" (Robinson, www.geocities.com/~blackfeathermp)

Their first album, *Mountains Of Madness* lived up to the promise that **Blackfeather** had shown and has since created one of the timeless slices of Australian rock music with inventive guitar work featuring on adventurous and ambitious songs. There are long and riffy guitar solos typical of, and clearly set in the progressive period in Australian rock music. Robinson recalls the recording of some of the tracks and the guest artists in the studio, including **Bon Scott**, whose cool recorder can be heard on *Seasons Of Change*:



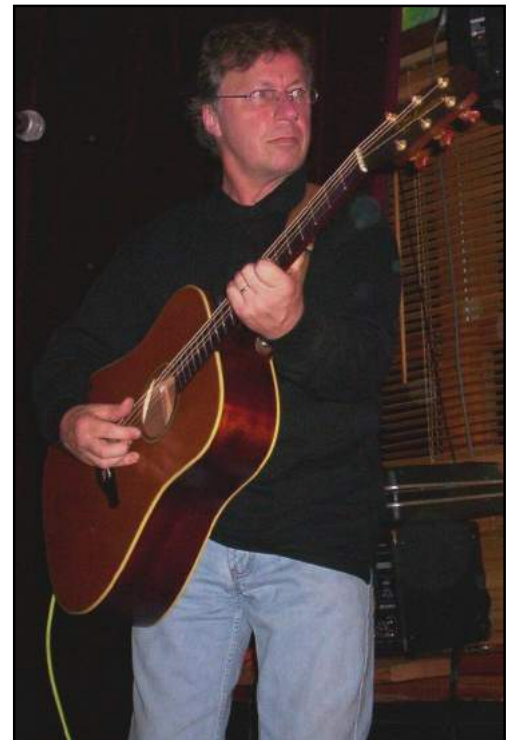
One of a number of acts which recorded their set(s) from Sunbury rock festivals and released them as live albums. Blackfeather's 1973 appearance was the basis for this album.

The Rat, last on the LP, had a free improvisation section in the middle. The concept was to blow and then edit the best bits together later. At the date, things were going well until I broke the whammy-bar off my Strat - Al took over with a drum solo and Bon followed him on Timbales. Upon playback, I felt it lacked something, and after a few sleepless nights, decided to add backward tape effects plus flanging and half-speed dialogue. Batchens scratched his head then wheeled in two more tape machines. If you listen to this section carefully, you can hear where I broke the whammy bar plus make out the words: 'It's uptight, outta sight baby, ooh it feels good right up there'.

The cover art Sinclair decided on was good, but miles away from the original submission which depicted the devil emerging out of the top of a mountain - very similar to one part of Disney's Fantasia movie. The title, *At The Mountains Of Madness* came from a H.P. Lovecraft novel. By the time the LP was released I had become a very good friend with Bon and all the members of Fraternity. (Robinson, www.geocities.com/~blackfeathermp)

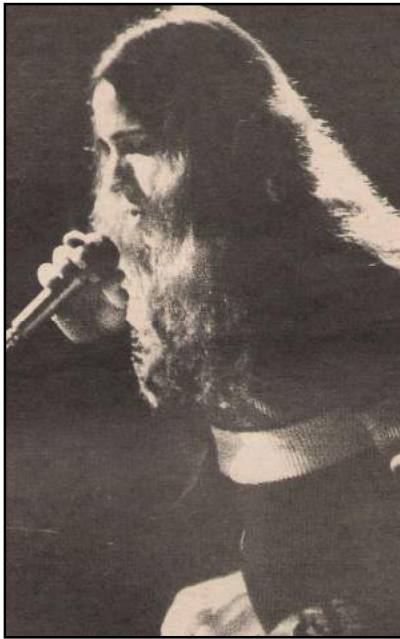
Johns remembers that the sessions were all new territory for him as a young performer. The recording equipment used was actually the very unit which had been used at Apple Studios in London to record **The Beatles' Abbey Road** and other early Beatle classics. It had been bought by Festival Records second hand and brought to Australia.

JOHN ROBINSON: "'Mango's Theme' - this also featured a string section. Festival would not let me take a copy of the backing, so I had to sit in the studio counting the bars and cue points and then working from memory at home. Still, I was happy with the result and the section leader, Lal Kuring, was very helpful. The music was based on quasi-eastern scales and was basically an improvisation using a bolero rhythm in the middle leading to a key change of F sharp for the solo. The recorded version is only a shadow of what the track was like live - people used to riot at venues.



Neil Johns, the voice of Blackfeather is now living and working in Melbourne, tunes up on stage for an appearance in 2005.

Much of the creative work was done by Robinson who scored both string and orchestral sections with The Sydney Symphony Orchestra for the first time. The Festival board debated the merits of the finished product for somewhere



Neale Johns as the voice of Blackfeather – 1973. (Go-Set, 19 May 1973, Courtesy of Phillip Morris)

around three weeks because they were concerned that the content of the LP was very drug-related. However, after much deliberating, it was released and from the album came one of two seminal hits for **Blackfeather** - *Seasons of Change* which in itself, like many progressive rock songs went through a metamorphosis:

JOHN ROBINSON: "Seasons of Change had started life as a jam on stage at Coffs Harbour, and was developed at Hornsby Police Boys Club. Neale supplied the title and the chorus, myself furnishing the rest. It never made it on stage - always sounding empty and half-baked. It reminded me of 'Ye Olde English Tudor Music', but, as luck would have it, other people loved it. That included Bruce Howe of Fraternity, and the Flying Circus of 'Hayride' fame. Bon Scott played Recorder on Blackfeather's recording of the song, and the key was changed from E minor to E flat minor to accommodate Neale's range. We had a lot of trouble getting the recorder to play in tune and there are still notes that make me cringe when I listen to it. I used an old gut string acoustic of Richard Batchens', detuned a semitone. (we) ...were still stuck using to 4-track recorder a la Sgt Pepper. for the LP. Considerable time and audio quality was lost in the process

of bouncing sub-mixes from machine to machine. At one point, we had to erase a brilliant vocal take from Neale to overdub a string section for *Seasons of Change*. He was NOT happy. The vocal that was released was not as good, as Neale was suffering from a cold at the time - he really had to push to reach the high B-flat in the verses." (Robinson, www.geocities.com/~blackfeathermp)

Johns himself blamed his frequent attendance at all of the studio sessions - in and out of the air-conditioned environment - for a bout of tonsillitis after the initial recording. He had gained a reputation for a "one-take" singer, keen to get the recording down first time and this was done for *Seasons Of Change*, but was wiped in the circumstances spoken about by Robinson. Subsequently, the effort required by Johns to reach the high notes was a telling factor on his already overwrought voice and the overall track suffered from a strained vocal sound.

The dissatisfaction within **Blackfeather** was to continue when **Fraternity** recorded, then released a version of *Seasons Of Change*, probably as a little reward to them because the members of both bands had become friends throughout the recording process of *Mountains Of Madness*. Not that having another band record their song was a problem - it was what came next! In a round-table discussion with Festival Records, the **Blackfeather** members gained a firm promise and guarantee from the company that their version would not be released in competition with **Fraternity's**. But almost instantly when the **Fraternity** version began to chart, Festival pulled a classic double-cross and released the Blackfeather original. I suspect that in hindsight this was a blessing in disguise for **Blackfeather** as it gave them their first substantial hit and a lasting memory of the great band. These events weren't substantial enough to cause friction between the two bands according to Johns. A deliberate set up on *Happening '71* whereby John **Robinson** and **Bon Scott** exchanged "blows" in a mock on camera dust-up just acted as

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Blackfeather play out in the suburbs, 1972. (Go-Set, 12 February, 1972)

further publicity for both bands and created an additional excuse for the musicians to continue to cement their strong relationship.

However on the debit side of the ledger, the circumstances surrounding the classic recording company double-cross and release of the single *was* to be the catalyst for splitting **Blackfeather** apart yet again in what can only be described as acrimonious circumstances:

JOHN ROBINSON: "This really sullied my relationship with the guys. I could also no longer respect David Sinclair. To top all this off, my marriage had broken down permanently. Part of the reason was we were out touring



Fraternity in 1971, with Bon Scott third from left - recorded and released *Seasons Of Change* only to have it "swamped" when Blackfeather's record company released their version. (Photographer unknown)

in the boon-docks a lot and weren't getting paid for weeks after. ... There was in-fighting in the group as well - Al Kash, the drummer, particularly was very disheartened. As 'Seasons' rushed into the national top ten, even more pressure was being applied. It got to the point where no-one was on speaking terms in the band. The album and single were doing very well in the charts and the Press were having a field-day with us, but we had lost Al Kash. Hastily, he was replaced with Terry Gascoigne, a jazz-rock drummer. It didn't work. Next Bob Fortesque left, Harry Brus replaced him and brought in new drummer, Steve Webb. This was better but the rift between Neale and myself was widening. We called it a day after a heated argument at Festival one afternoon. Unfortunately for me when Neale left he

took the name and agent with him." (Robinson, www.geocities.com/~blackfeathermp).

Johns records that at that stage, he was actually "sacked" from the band by the roadie! So, he took with him the van, (which was his) and the name, **Blackfeather** and while Robinson went in one direction, Johns went about assembling yet another **Blackfeather** line up. The single, *Boppin' The Blues* came along at the exact right time:

NEALE JOHNS: "...*Boppin' The Blues* was a suggestion by the drummer out of Flake. He ran a store and he said, "have a listen to this song". And we listened to part of it and liked it and we incorporated it into a medley that we did... this is not with John Robinson... this is with the keyboard line up, and it used to bring the house down. So we thought, "let's do this as a single... get it out there". (Johns, op cit, 24 November, 2004)

Johns had decided to think outside the square and had added a keyboard player to his revitalised line up. In a rather bold move in an era when all progressive rock bands were virtually built around the guitarists, he went without one! Making it big in both Sydney and Melbourne was rather a juggling act for the new **Blackfeather**.

Relocation to Melbourne was a necessity for the band because although they were still performing in their home town, most of their gigs were done around the discos in Melbourne. Neale Johns believes that because Sydney had just gone through the disco phase and **Blackfeather** had been enormously successful there due to their dynamic stage act, that this was the reason that they were also successful here:



Neale Johns on stage at Melbourne's Nighthawk Blues Restaurant in 2004.

NEALE JOHNS: "The first line-up of Blackfeather, which was *The Mountains Of Madness* band was a more concert-oriented band, obviously clicked with the Melbourne audiences. The second line-up when we came down in maybe... late '71' early '72, which was the *Boppin' The Blues* line-up, really clicked BIG. We actually moved to

Melbourne and Bill Joseph, as promoter then managed us. We became a Melbourne band that was based in Sydney. It was quite strange because most of our work was here. We used to do 14 spots a week, which was a bit of a problem with a lot of Melbourne bands because they thought we were entering their turf and taking money away from them. So there was a bit of animosity that went on during that period." (Johns, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

By this time, Johns' **Blackfeather** was experiencing a popularity they had never imagined. He puts this down to taking a concept and presenting something out of the ordinary to the public:

NEALE JOHNS: "Oh.. it was just radical. We just went from one extreme to the other... it was totally deliberate. It was just a break away, because I looked at the concept of Daddy Cool and I went, "Well, it's so simple guys." You break away from the pattern that everybody's doing and you stand out like dogs balls! Then if the piano is the dominant feature, again, you stand out. Everyone in the country wanted to be a guitar hero. At one stage, we didn't have any guitarist. That was when the discos were really pumpin' and we hooked into Melbourne. It was quite bizarre! But we worked like demons here.. We were probably becoming the most overworked band in the country." (Johns, op cit, 19 October, 2004).



Recorded live in September, 1972, the new four-man Blackfeather, minus guitars, used the title of their best known single, *Boppin' The Blues*. An Ian McCausland-designed cover.

The pressure of working intensely as a unit was again placing stresses on the band causing further tensions on a band which was intent on maintaining their persona. But the music was suffering:

NEALE JOHNS: "...the music wasn't up to scratch. The last band with the new line-up was only in it for a month but I was just sick and tired of it. We were mostly working in Melbourne – we were based in Melbourne because there just wasn't any work in Sydney. Everything was stale. We didn't have any time to think of any good material to work on because we were working most of the time. ... I wasn't happy with the musical side of it at all." (Go-Set, 19 May, 1973)

In September, 1972, now sort of based in Melbourne, Johns, **Paul Wilde**, **Trevor Young** and **Greg Sheehan** - the "guitarless" **Blackfeather** recorded a number of live tracks at The Melbourne Town Hall and "Q" Club at Kew Town Hall for a proposed album. Produced by **Howard Gable**, the album, using the *Boppin' The Blues* title was released in December of the same year. Johns however, was not happy with the result as he felt that it didn't have the sound quality he required. But, it

was the "album they had to have", because Island Records, based in America was showing interest in the band. However, the decisions made by Festival Records effectively wrenched control out of Johns' hands and he believes that the company needed to turn out a quick product to satisfy a potential overseas market:

NEALE JOHNS: "...the time factor wasn't there. Festival Records knew we needed another album out. This should have been enough for Festival to say, "Right... you have to get off the road and get another album happening." It would have been worth it. We did the live one, firstly at Q Club and we also did half of it at The Melbourne Town Hall. Now, at both venues, something was missing... little things really. It was as silly as... at the Q Club, the bass was missing.... Then at the Town Hall, something went wrong there and it was like, "Oh, my God!" It was a bit disastrous and the sound quality was poor and I wasn't very impressed at all. Unfortunately, it had to come out. I mean... it did all right. But it was one of those things that I had no control over." (Johns, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

However, when Wilde quit, they returned to the harder-edged style of rock that fans were used to, just in time for the ultimate guitar-fest, Sunbury, '73. Interviewed just post-Sunbury by **Darel Nugent** for *Go-Set*, **Neale Johns**, then band-less, cited that Sunbury performance as the high point in **Blackfeather's** career:

NEALE JOHNS: "... that performance was with the most musically competent band with Lindsay Wells and Tim Piper. Warren was playing bass really well too. I hadn't really noticed it that much because I was really concentrating on vocals myself and after hearing the Sunbury album I just noticed that the bass lines were really good. We sort of got the whole thing together. It was more of a musician's band. (Go-Set, 19 May, 1973)

Johns went on to construct Flake and to complete session work in England. While there were a few **Blackfeather** reunifications over time, none was as highly successful as the early 'seventies versions of the band.

THE LEVI SMITH'S CLEFS – Big Barrie's band...

Emanating originally from Adelaide, **The Levi Smith's Clefs** first joined their local circuit with the likes of **Zoot**, **The Masters Apprentices** and **The Twilights**. Formed around the core of the original Clefs which had been in existence since around 1963 when the band was formed by "Tweed" Harris. They were much in demand around the thriving dance circuit in Adelaide. However, like many bands of the era, they progressed into more R & B territory in keeping with the trend towards beat music and away from rather outdated Shadows-style early 'sixties rock.

It was when they recruited the larger-than-life **Barrie McAskill** that the band took on a new direction, making the move to Melbourne in 1967. **Robert Bradshaw**, who served as the band's lighting technician amongst a number of jobs which were relegated to him, says that the move to a more R & B format was not to the liking of Harris:

ROBERT BRADSHAW: "Barrie McAskill, an old rocker complete with leopard skin suit came over to Melbourne with them in the mid 60's. They gradually drifted to R & B and became the Levi Smith's Clefs, which caused "Tweed" to leave and form The Groove, a more bubblegum group." (Bradshaw, email interview, 1 November, 2004)



Barrie McAskill and Les Stacpool – (Courtesy of Robert Bradshaw)

both **Johnny Chester's Chessmen** and **Merv Benton's Tamias**. One of the most interesting inclusions was a petite female singer with a huge voice:

ROBERT BRADSHAW: "Inez Amayah was the only female singer to be part of the Levi Smith's for any length of time. She was of African-American origin and although only about 4ft 11in tall and about 40 kilos, soaking wet, but she had a hell of a blues voice. She ended up leaving the group while they had a 12 month gig in Sydney and joined the cast of Hair. Inez had a habit of burning the candle at both ends and was more than capable of singing herself to a standstill. As the bands "roadie", one of my duties was to stand at the side of the stage and grab her, as she usually only made it to the side before collapsing. I always had "something" on hand to revive her, which didn't always work, which meant I had to drive her home to the "Kommotion" House



The Levi Smith's Clefs – with Barrie McAskill and Bob Jeffries at The Biting Eye. (Courtesy of Robert Bradshaw)

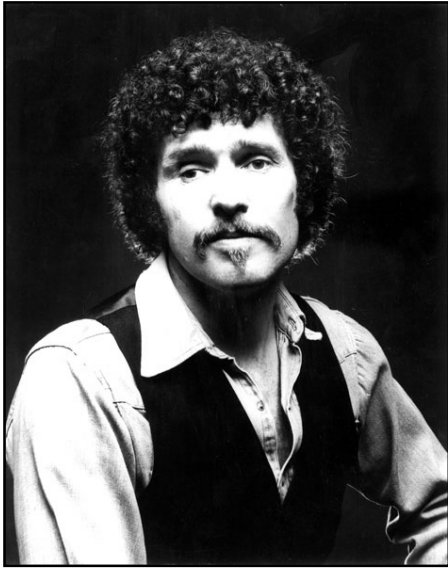
McAskill, who had an enormous stage presence something like that of

Bob "The Bear" Hite of the American band **Canned Heat** (which incidentally toured Australia in 1972 and played at Mulwala in that year), then assumed leadership of the band. He remained its central figure until the band finally broke up in 1975. At the point when the band moved to Melbourne, they were a five piece unit with McAskill on vocals, **Bruce Howe** (bass), **Les Tanner** (guitar), **Bob Jeffrey** (sax) and **Vince Jones** (drums).

There were countless line up changes to the band as they recorded and released three singles in 1966 – *I Can Only Give You Everything/ Roberta, A Boy Like Me/Bring It To Jerome, and House Of The Rising Sun/We'll Meet Again*. One of the most successful was the recruitment of guitarist **Les Stacpool** who had already made a name for himself with



in Dalgety St., St. Kilda. She usually bounced back after 4 or 5 hours sleep.” (Bradshaw, op cit, 1 November, 2004).



Max Merritt – a portrait taken around 1975. (Publicity photo – photographer unknown).

cities of Auckland, Christchurch or other spots in Kiwiland could offer them. Certainly it was the chance of that extra bit of fame and money which was



A relaxed Max – publicity photo. (Photographer unknown)

The constantly changing line up meant that often, a whole new band had to be assembled around McAskill with keyboardist **John Bissett** and ex-**Bay City Union** drummer **Tony Buettel** joining the fray to record the band’s only LP, *Empty Monkey* which matched a number of styles in a rather progressive rock package. Even when the band moved on to Sydney, constant changes meant that the line up swapped around many times.

MAX MERRITT AND THE METEORS – A performer’s performer...

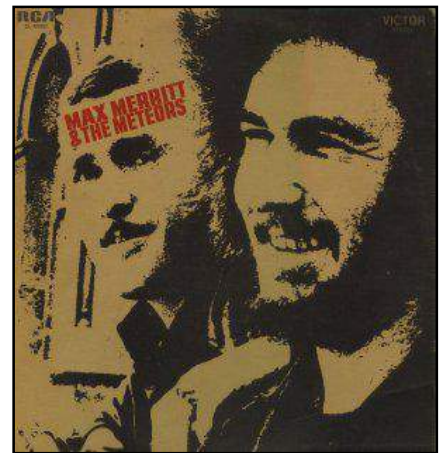
In much the same way as Canadian artists of the calibre of **Neil Young**, **Celine Dion**, **Alanis Morissett**, **Joni Mitchell** and others have made a significant impact on the rock/folk culture of America when they crossed over the U.S/Canadian border at various points in history, so a strong contingent of New Zealanders took the challenge to cross The Tasman Sea to try their luck in Australia. Australian music has been made all that much richer by those musicians who either came across with established bands or tried it solo in a “bigger pond” than their home cities of Auckland, Christchurch or other spots in Kiwiland could offer them. Certainly it was the chance of that extra bit of fame and money which was the incentive but compared with New Zealand, Australia was also where there was a stronger and more vibrant music scene. Most came and stayed.

Soloists **Alison Durban** and **Dinah Lee** (Diane Jacobs) made strong impacts on the pop charts here and New Zealand bands, like **Ray Columbus and the Invaders** matched anything **Johnny O’Keefe** and **Ray Brown And The Whispers** were doing here. The pop-orientated **Columbus** whose **Kirk Douglas**- style chin dimple marked him out had, like many musicians,

been obsessed with rock/beat music from an early age. In November 1963, they arrived in Sydney for appearances on *Bandstand* and O’Keefe’s *Sing, Sing, Sing* and immediately scored with a number one hit, *She’s a Mod* and a stage act which was complete with head-shaking stage antics, “yeah, yeah, yeah’s”, fancy matching outfits and neat footwork a la **The Shadows**.

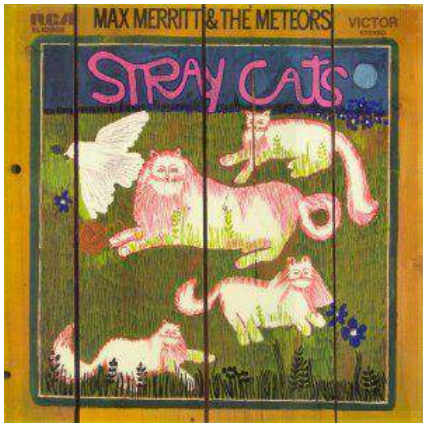
Dave Miller had likewise caused a sensation in his native Auckland before moving on to Christchurch with his band named **Dave Miller And The Byrds** which did mainly covers of British beat material in the style of **The Pretty Things**. In 1967, they made the Tasman crossing and based themselves in Sydney, calling themselves **The Dave Miller Set**. The Sydney disco scene was just the place for their **Led Zeppelin**, heavier sound.

Members of this band were to go on to form the basis of **Blackfeather** as a hybrid N.Z./Australian band.



An album with a simple title yet an impressive set – plenty of brass and blues matched with gutsy soul. The album produced the single – *Hey, Western Union Man*.

Mike Rudd and Glyn Mason came across with **Chants R & B** and **Larry's Rebels** respectively and went on to other bands, specifically in Rudd's case, his creation - the seminal Australian band, **Spectrum**. Mason enjoyed stints with **Chain**, **Home** and **Copperwine** before linking with Rudd in **Ariel**.



Stray Cats was released just prior to an extensive tour of Britain but struggled with sales here, because the band was not performing live at home to support it.

This brings us to **Max Merritt** who is probably New Zealand's greatest musical export and who is looked upon by many as THE quintessential rock performer - one who brought the crowds in huge numbers to the Melbourne clubs - one who is still loved now just as he was when he strode the stages at The Catcher, The Thumpin' Tum and other 'sixties venues.

Raised on a diet of blues records which visiting American servicemen would slip into his possession when they saw him performing in Christchurch, Max had the full support of his mum, Ilene who decided to give the 'teenagers who were hanging



VERY early Meteors back in New Zealand in 1960. From left, **Johnny Dick, Peter Williams, Max Merritt and Billy Kristian.** (Photographer unknown - courtesy of Bruce Sergent.)

around Cathedral Square in Christchurch, something to do on a Sunday afternoon. She hired the Railway Hall in Sydenham and set up The Christchurch Teenagers Club as a spot to highlight her son's talents. It became enormously popular and up to 900 would be there each Sunday between 1 o'clock and 6 o'clock. Not only was young Max the drawcard, but Mrs. Merritt's scones, sandwiches and hot dogs must have been a huge hit as well! A younger and very impressionable, fellow Kiwi musician was there on many occasions to hear Max:



The classic Meteors, taken following their near-fatal car accident in country Victoria, (note Stewie's walking sticks!) (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique.)

DAVE MILLER: "He was somewhere in our own age group ... but he had a family that really pushed him to the fore, and that's why he got there before us. Right to the point where the family actually hired halls, and created The Teenage Club, so he (had) a venue to work from -- so that gave him a hell of a big head start over the rest of us. There was a place in Carlisle St, which was just in behind the railway shunting yards [Railway Hall]. It was a bit of a run-down old hall, but that was run by Max's mother and father. I suppose of all the venues it would have come closest to what maybe The Cavern was in Liverpool ... it had probably one of the best

atmospheres. But the great thing about it was that it was a Sunday afternoon venue, and for most of us, who could only hear music out of the juke boxes in the two or three town hamburger joints, that's

where we *all* went, of course." (Interview with Dave Miller by Steve Kernohan, www.milesago.com, 26 November 1999)

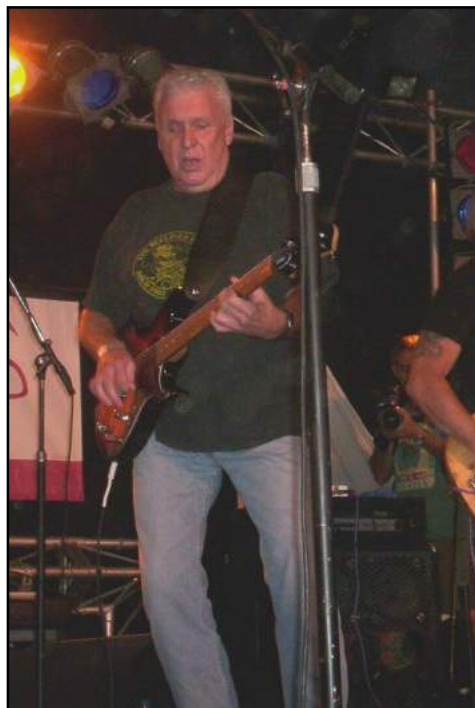
Merritt made his first trip to Sydney in November 1963 – a visit which almost saw him starve to death. Unfortunately for Merritt and his band, he had played "second fiddle" to another band of kiwis, **Ray Columbus** and his **Invaders** back home in New Zealand and initially, the same was to happen when both

hit Sydney town at roughly the same time. Playing at out of the way second-rate places, **The Meteors** literally had to beg for gigs.

Unphased by this near career-halting experience, his second tour with **The Meteors** was a much more professional effort and resulted in sold-out performances over months at Sydney's Rex Hotel. **The Meteors**, in keeping with the times, underwent many changes from the first 1956 line up of **Ross Clancy, Peter Petene, Ian Glass** and **Pete Sowden**. Through the early 'sixties a number of players came and went as **The Meteors** moved ever so slowly forward.

By September, 1965 band members, **Teddy Toi** and **Johnny Dick** were "stolen" by **Billy Thorpe** for a new line up of his **Aztecs** necessitating Merritt to fill their spots in **The Meteors**. After further arrivals and departures, the key recruitment of **Bruno Lawrence** catapulted the band in an entirely new –

and successful - direction. On the recording front, *You Deserve What You've Got / I Want So Much To Know You* didn't create much chart action, but in July 1966, the single *Shake/I Can't Help Myself* made an impression. In August, he recorded what was to become his live staple, *Fannie Mae* backed with *Baby Come Home* although neither did well at the time. Even before departing on an inglorious working sea cruise aboard a Pacific liner doing bland, cabaret-style entertainment, **Billy Christian** and **Peter Williams** jumped ship, (from the band - not the cruise liner!). Max and his depleted Meteors were left to ponder their future, yet again.



Max Merritt at The Queenscliff Music Festival, 2004.



The Meteors as most people remember them best – performing live! Captured at Sunbury 1973. (Courtesy of David Porter, aka Jacques L’Affrique)

It was at this time that the 'classic' line up of **The Meteors** came into being with **Bob Bertles** on saxophone, **John 'Yuk' Harrison** bass; and one of the most respected jazz drummers around, Melbourne-born, **Stewie Speers** (Stewart Speer) replaced Lawrence. After only one Sydney gig they re-located to Melbourne and began to infiltrate the burgeoning discotheque scene.

Just when it seemed like things were looking up and Melbourne audiences began warming to the band, tragedy struck when they were involved in a serious car accident. After lunch on Saturday, 24 June, 1967 the band set out for the Gippsland coal-mining town of Morwell to do a country gig, just to get some money. According to **Robert Bradshaw**, they had swapped a gig with **The Levi Smith's Clefs**, borrowed a Commer van from **The Wild Cherries** and headed off south-east down the Princes Highway. As they couldn't afford any "flagons of fight" (their term for Sherry) it was going to be a long, dry trip. Just as the van approached the small township of Bunyip, a 1961 Dodge convertible which had pulled out from behind a truck to overtake, hit them head-on, killing the female passenger in the car, who by coincidence lived not far from where Merritt and the band lived.

Max was driving and was thrown sideways, striking his head of the hand-grip above the door, losing his right eye

and suffering a broken jaw in the process. Stewie was seated next to the passenger door on the Commer's bench seat and as a consequence of taking the brunt of the force down the left side of the van, had both arms broken, his legs crushed and lost the tops of fingers on both hands. Seated in the middle, Bertles came out of it with a broken leg but neither he nor Speers regained full mobility again – yet they could count themselves very lucky to have survived at all. Only “Yuk” came out relatively unscathed as he was cushioned to some extent by the equipment he was lying on in the back – his glasses being the only casualty!

Not long after news of the accident reached the music community, benefit concerts were being organised around Melbourne, although Speers was to remain in the Alfred Hospital for four more months and could not be a part of them. Within a couple of weeks of the crash, Merritt turned up at a benefit gig at the Winston Charles in South Yarra, still with his jaw wired and he insisted on singing! On 2 December, still minus Stewie, they played a sell-out gig at Berties.

If some sort of twisted humour can be found in this situation, Bradshaw remembers that at the time, Stewie had a rather attractive girlfriend – a fairly shapely Go-Go dancer from Adelaide. She frequently visited him in his 20-bed public ward at The Alfred Hospital always wearing very short mini skirts. This created such a furore amongst the male patients in the ward that the matron banned her from visiting, “unless she dressed more decorously.”



The Meteors 1976 album, *Out of the Blue*, which they promoted on their return to Australia.



Max Merritt in 2006 – still a hot ticket item wherever he plays.

With the major trauma of the fatal accident behind them, they gathered strength and by 1968, they were the most talked about outfit in the country with a stunning live act to boot. They looked rather unlike any regular progressive rock acts of the time – Max had short hair when everyone else had long hair, Stewie looked like a retired house painter in his cut-off overalls and long greying hair and “Yuk” and Bertles looked rather freaky and wild. They continued to catch the publics and the music press’ attention and now they could work hard and had the money to play hard, as well.

By 1968, Merritt had his own city venue, Max’s Place; perhaps echoing his original Christchurch Teenagers Club back in his native New Zealand. Recording followed and by January, 1970, **Max Merritt And The Meteors** were the headline act at The Ourimbah Festival. Their performance however suffered from the legacy of their now established high-living ways and “Yuk” Harrison was the one to bear the brunt of a sub-standard and drunken set – he was fired!

Much has been said about Max’s desire to take his music to Britain and his decision to tour there may have been at the expense of further glory in Australia, begging the question – could he have been the greatest of all time if he had stayed here? For **The Meteors** to be away from their major fan base made it difficult for them when they came back to Australia to achieve anything like the adulation they enjoyed in their halcyon years of the discotheque period. Appearances at Sunbury, 1972 as headliners to crowd chants of, “Max is back, Max is back”, and a final tour in June 1976, which led

them to the “home of goodbyes”, Dallas Brooks Hall eventually brought to an end, one of the great rock bands in Trans-Tasman history. For a short while at one point, Max even briefly went back to his former trade of bricklaying to once again make ends meet! However in 2006, Max is back (again) on the road and constantly touring.

THE MASTERS APPRENTICES – Living in a rock ‘n roll dream...

Essentially pitched to the kids as a pop-oriented, progressive garage band preferring the standard three to four minute pop songs, **The Masters Apprentices**, was nonetheless a successful live band, particularly when they played at places like at The Catcher which may be considered an unusual venue for a hits-only pop band. This is not to underestimate their impact on the discotheque and club crowds when they first arrived in Melbourne in August 1966, having established a solid following in their native Adelaide. Hits like *Turn Up Your Radio*, *Living In A Child’s Dream* and *Because I Love You* followed until they finally folded in 1972 at a time when music was changing and loud was good!

Mick Bower, Brian Vaughton, Gavin Webb and Rick Morrison had performed around town as **The Mustangs** since early 1965 and auditioned a young migrant kid from Scotland, **Jim Keays**. They clearly needed to update their style as **The Shadows/The Ventures** instrumental style was being phased out as the Beat groups arrived on the scene. One Thursday evening, the young, aspiring vocalist was invited to audition for **The Mustangs**:



The original Masters Apprentices line-up - Morrison, Vaughton, Webb, Bower, Keays - back in Adelaide. Smile boys - it’s easy from here. (Photographer unknown - courtesy of Jim Keays)



Another early ‘Masters line-up. (Photographer unknown - courtesy of Jim Keays)

JIM KEAYS: “The boys were just about to set up when I arrived and they introduced me to their manager, Graham Longley. I was impressed, a manager, this was a professional outfit. ... The band started jamming on a twelve-bar blues. After another twelve bars I joined in, making up words from bits and pieces of other songs as I went along. It sort of petered out after a while and nothing was said. Nobody uttered a word.

I kept my head down and kept quiet.

After a gut-wrenching pause, Mick finally suggested we run through some of the songs we’d previously chosen, ‘Johnny B Goode’, ‘Route 66’, ‘Too Much Monkey Business’, ‘Round and Around’, ‘Oh Carol’, mostly Chuck Berry stuff.

When the audition was over still nothing was said. ... Did I pass? Was I in?

When I came back on Tuesday, the same situation prevailed. ...By the end of our third rehearsal, we were beginning to get to know each other

and things loosened up a bit. But there was still no official word as to my status.”

Graham had organised a regular gig on Saturday nights at a fish and chip shop in Bay Road, Glenelg. They suggested I come along and sing some songs in their last set. ... Still, at no time was I formally asked to join the band or told I passed the audition.” (Keays, 1999, P 24, 26.)

Now they were firmly styled, **The Masters Apprentices**, based on a suggestion that they pay respect to their



Their debut LP – released in 1967. Note: the apostrophe had not yet been discarded.

blues and rock masters, (Don't worry about the apostrophe!). Adelaide boy, **Bobby Bright** had seen the band and had already made the trip across to Melbourne where the scene was bigger and brighter than Adelaide could offer. On his return, he made the comment to Astor Records that this band commanded attention.



The Masters Apprentices again in early days. (Photographer unknown - courtesy of Jim Keays)

ordinary they looked from the outside. Still, they were full of enthusiasm and their first single, now a garage classic, *Undecided / Wars or Hands of Time* was getting airplay on radio and hence, chart action. *Undecided* was recorded in Adelaide and the name came about because they couldn't figure out a suitable title and that was what was written on the master tape before being sent to Astor in Melbourne. Astor released the single even before signing the band to any sort of a contract! The boys couldn't really complain because it was all happening for them and on arrival in Melbourne, their manager succeeded in lining up two gigs – one at The Biting Eye and one at The 'Tum. The 'Tum was at its height of popularity and the gig was looming as a crucial one:



The five-man 'Masters just prior to the departure of Peter Tillbrook – 1968. Publicity photo – photographer unknown).

JIM KEAYS: "I could feel the magnitude and importance of this gig as soon as we took the stage. ... I really gave it my all and we launched into our opening number with a great sense of purpose.

The thing that hit them, apart from our music, was our appearance – I suppose we were classed as mods. Our clothes and haircuts were radically different from other groups they'd seen, but we were cutting edge and they embraced it." (Keays, 1999, P 49, 50.)

The reception was the same at The Biting Eye and they retreated to their squalid caravan park, now totally oblivious to the mud but well pleased with their first foray into Melbourne. As *Undecided* raced up the charts it all seemed

to be happening at once – interviews for *Go-Set*, appearances on *Kommotion*, (miming *Undecided*, of course). It was only tempered by the unfortunate loss of manager **Graham Longley's** wallet containing all of the band's money in the mud at the Sunshine caravan park, on the eve of their departure back to Adelaide.

This trip, late in '66 was enough to convince them that a return visit was necessary. **Stan Rofe** had picked up on

It was winter in 1966 when The 'Masters reached Melbourne and far from being feted in the best accommodation, they found themselves in a boggy, rain- sodden caravan park in Sunshine, on the western outskirts of the city. Undeterred, they drove around trying to locate the major discotheques that they had read about in *Go-Set*. They were, however disappointed to see how

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THE MASTERS BREAK UP?

A strong rumor has it that the Master Apprentices could break up completely within a week.

At the moment, it seems definite that Tony Summers (lead guitarist) and Steve Hoggood (drummer) will be leaving the Masters.

Go-Set spoke to Jim Keays over the weekend and asked him whether the unconfirmed rumors were true. Jim refused to make a statement, but gave strong indications that Tony and Steve would be leaving them.

Tony Diastato (manager of the Masters), emphatically denied the reports, and went so far as to say that the Masters have never been more settled.

It would be a great loss to the Australian Pop Scene if these unconfirmed reports are true, as the Masters over the past year have built a strong following and have helped to raise the standard of the growing song-writing ability of Australian groups.

The Masters' success in the last seven months has been amazing. Their three singles have reached the national top ten and their live appearances, live on various radio shows, have earned them an Australian *Go-Set* award as Australia's Most Successful Group for '67 and one can only hope that the Masters may well be here this time next year to win the same award.

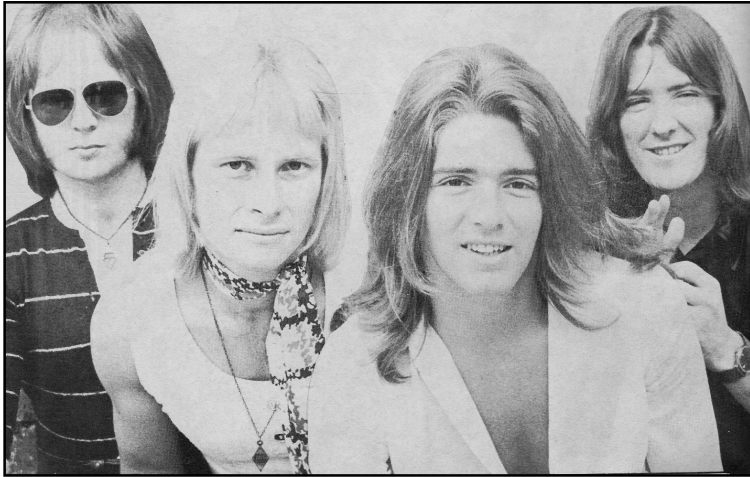
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ROSS DAVID WYLIE presents
JEFF ST. JOHN AND THE YAMA

Well... almost, but not quite right – as reported by *Go-Set*. They re-structured and survived. (*Go-Set*, 27 December, 1967)

the band and *Go-Set* did a second article on them, pushing the “bad-boy” image a little more than the “pretty-boy” reputation. In February of 1967, they re-located permanently to Melbourne, moving into a Toorak house with two young ladies they had met previously. Despite an extended round of gigs at all the major city discos – evenings and lunchtimes - and the regular suburban venues, their finances were not improving. Keays reports living on milk stolen from neighbouring doorsteps and peaches and plums taken from local fruit trees, until a telegram from The Thumpin’ Tum changed their fortunes.



From 1970, the classic Masters Apprentices outfit – Ford, Wheatley, Keays and Burgess. (Photographer : Vera Kaas-Jager)

They were now a firmly established pop band with a huge frantic and passionate following in both major cities of Melbourne and Sydney and by 1968, a number of departures within the band, (including the loss to the band of Mick Bower after a rather severe nervous breakdown) eventually led up to the so-called “classic” Masters line-up. Firstly, **Doug Ford** was recruited and then bassist, **Glenn Wheatley**. Ford had been living in St. Kilda in the famed Carlisle Avenue “band moll’s paradise” when Keays made the approach to him to join, which he did after completing his commitments with **The Running Jumping Standing Still**.

Wheatley recalls that after experiencing struggles with his band, **The Bay City Union**, it was all coming together for him. An initial approach by the

‘Masters came his way:

GLENN WHEATLEY: “Two days after we (The Bay City Union) signed the single deal, Jim Keays... asked Tony and me up to his flat. “Come in, fellas, take a seat”. Jim pegged his shoulder length, wavy hair behind his ears and got straight to the point: the group was getting rid of its drummer and rhythm guitarist and Jim was looking for replacements for both. His speech and manner were effervescent: first he was crouching on his chair, then straddling it, but not keeping still for a moment” (Wheatley, 1999. P 21)

The answer from Glenn was, “no”! But, after a second discussion, this time with Ford, (who had just joined the ‘Masters himself), the answer was in the affirmative, despite Wheatley’s reservations about how his departure would affect **The Bay City Union’s** stalwarts, **Matt Taylor** and **Phil Manning**. Keays had no reservations about Wheatley:

JIM KEAYS: “The one thing I did know about Glenn was the driving energy he put into his band. When everyone else was asleep, he’d be dressed and down to the agents to hustle up gigs. ... I thought the Masters could do with someone like that.... I discussed the idea with Doug, who knew Glenn better than I did and we agreed that Doug would approach him. ...the word from Glenn was that he was ready to throw it in and go back to Brisbane to mow lawns.” (Keays 1999, P 105, 106)



Doug Ford at the Benefit for Lobby Loyde, August, 2006. (Courtesy of Harley Parker)

So the finest and last line up of **The Masters Apprentices** was almost complete (although Wheatley had not yet

moved to bass): all that remained was to dress appropriately to uphold the image that the band created – frilly shirts and ladies shoes!

Like many of their contemporaries, theirs was a roller coaster ride of euphoric highs and seemingly bottomless lows – the heartbreak of the Hoadley's Battle of The Sounds, the joys and disappointments of the trip to England and yet the elation of chart-topping singles, ground-breaking albums and numerous sensational tours within Australia.



Jim Keays has a formidable catalogue of Masters Apprentices' songs to perform to appreciative audiences.

songs. I was unhappy with everything. We tried to do things we were not capable of doing.

The recording took its toll. There was lots of tension and I was only going through the motions; my heart was not in it.

I tried to convince everyone to call it a day. I felt that the dream was over. I wanted to keep the memories of the Masters Apprentices as good ones. I wanted to break up while we were on top. Jim, Doug and Colin disagreed with me. I was faced with the biggest decision of my life. I decided to leave the band." (Wheatley, 1999, P 64).

With Wheatley gone, it was just prolonging the agony for the others to continue, so on foreign soil, so far from home, one of Australia's legendary bands came to an end – no fanfares, no dockside welcomes at Station Pier or spectacular homecoming concerts. And amid some tears each individual member made his way home separately – how different to when they set out not long before!

By 1972 with the trip to London behind them and a couple of cutting-edge albums like *Choice Cuts* and *Nickelodeon* (recorded live in Perth) to their credit, they continued to experience further problems with money and they grew increasingly dissatisfied with the way they were being ripped off by promoters – something that spurred Wheatley on to greater things. The recording in London of *A Toast to Panama Red* seemed to herald the gradual disintegration of the group and it was manifested when they got together in the recording studio at Abbey Road. **Glenn Wheatley** is completely honest about the end:

GLENN WHEATLEY: "The night before we started recording, I had dropped a tab of LSD. It was the dumbest thing I could have ever done; what possessed me, I will never know. I became completely paranoid. ... We arrived at Abbey Road and our first day of recording was a disaster. I couldn't cope. I was unhappy with the



Doug and Jim together at The Ashburton Festival. (Courtesy of Martin Roulston)

A "band of agro-rock bandits" – Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs.

No survey of the bands which defined this period of rock 'n roll music in Melbourne would be complete without the band which had its collective fingers not just on the pulse of the progressive music of this nation but firmly on the volume knobs of their amps, turning them all the way up – namely, **Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs**. Yet, apart from perhaps **Chain** and **Max Merritt's Meteors**, no band self-destructed on so many occasions only to be re-invented yet again, gaining strength, power and legions of fans each time.

But way back in 1963 in Sydney, an already seasoned 17-year old Billy Thorpe was partnered up with an existing band, **The Aztecs** and the whole saga began. By the time Thorpie and his Aztecs reached the stage at Sunbury in 1972, not a trace of the original Aztecs remained – either in personnel or in sound. With determination, Thorpie continued to build a better beast every time the band seemed like it was gone forever. The first Aztecs were already

a Shadows-type band doing the rounds of the Sydney dances. They were **Colin Baigent** on drums, Englishman **Tony Barber** the rhythm guitarist, **Vince Maloney** the lead guitarist who was handling vocals at that stage and **John "Bluey" Watson** on bass. Thorpe had arrived from Brisbane and had met the boys at Sydney's Surf City

before getting the chance to get up with the band. Even at that stage, Thorpe had had a chance to assess the band:

BILLY THORPE: "I got the impression that Vince wasn't a particularly vocal or aggressive person, but definitely the most intelligent and best educated of the group. ... There was no doubt that Vince, Col and Bluey were the serious core of the Aztecs. ... their personalities, style and talent clashed... . Sooner or later they were destined to spin off into other things. This line up would have to change in order to succeed. (Thorpe, Sex and Thugs and Rock 'n' roll, 1996, p. 106).

The first gig with **The Aztecs** saw Thorpe, in a customary manner, exhibit all the brashness we now connect with him:

BILLY THORPE: "We went up the stairs together and the band went back on stage to the applause of the crowd.

The place was still pretty packed. ... I stood behind the curtain listening to my introduction and felt the butterflies in my stomach playing basketball against my ribs. Butterflies are not being nervous, they're the adrenalin build-up, the anticipation of what's to happen, and I always enjoyed the feeling. It psychs me up. I didn't get nervous any more, that stopped when I was a little kid. Years of performing every conceivable gig from circus sideshows to television had given me steel balls as far as performing in front of audiences was concerned. I loved it." (Thorpe, op cit, 1996, p.108).

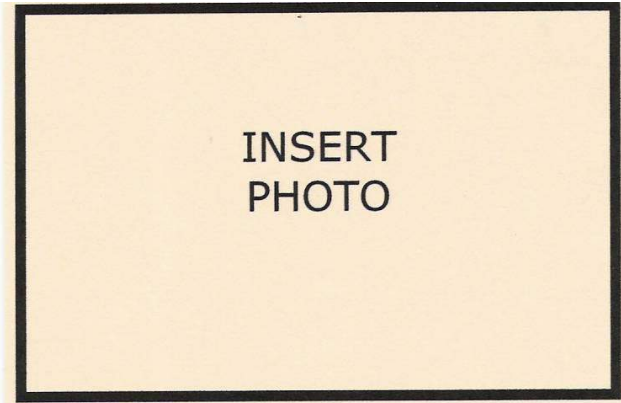
After a shakey start that night and very little initial audience response to their chosen song, *Shout*, Thorpe felt the audience gradually warm to the new combination and as he described it:

BILLY THORPE: "I looked around the stage and the whole band was jamming, grinning from ear to ear. Colin gave me a wink and Bluey mouthed 'Get Fucked'. Vince smiled as he pumped out the guitar rhythm and Valentine was playing solid and smiling as he pumped along with them.

It was magic! I took the microphone over to Vince and held it for him to sing his 'Shout', then moved around the stage from player to player, giving them all a share of the spotlight as I belted out the lead vocal. When I got back to Col on drums he looked at me like a big friendly dog and his eyes filled with tears. What was happening on stage was one of those magic moments that all performers strive for and dream about. I'd never felt anything like it." (Thorpe, op cit, 1996, p.108).

The magic lasted for a couple of glorious years for **Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs**, as they became known. Appearances on *Bandstand* and recording hits like *Poison Ivy* cemented their place in the Australian beat scene. But, as Thorpe had predicted, it was only a matter of time before the band split. This happened in 1965 when Barber and Maloney were removed at a time when Thorpe had taken full control of the reins and had pushed the band in a different direction by recording ballads like *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* and *I Told The Brook*, which nevertheless became hits.

Thorpe reconstructed **The Aztecs** with **Colin Risby, Mike Downes, Jimmy Taylor, Johnny Dick and Teddy Toi** and they found success when *It's All Happening!* Began on Channel 7 in March, 1966 and gave Thorpe and his new Aztecs valuable exposure time allowing them to compete favourably with the newer bands coming through. Thorpe was thrust forward as compare and **The Aztecs** became the house band for this non-stop musical

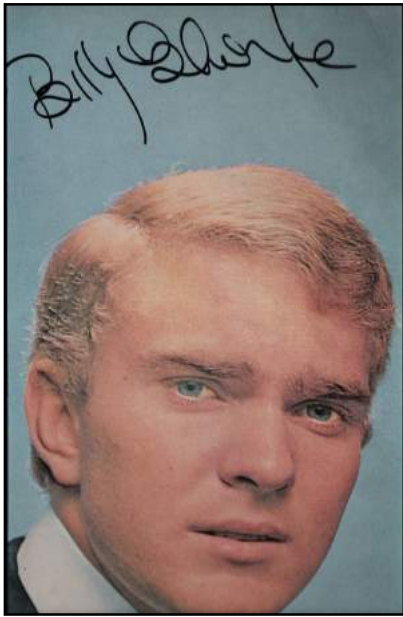


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The Aztecs, Mark II - Johnny Dick, Mike Downes, Col Risby, Teddy Toi and Billy Thorpe. (Publicity photo - source and photographer unknown)

extravaganza, but I the show was not destined to last beyond the year – and neither was the Mark II Aztecs!



A young Billy Thorpe from the cover of his 1965 Parlophone/EMI LP – *The Best Of Billy Thorpe* -- and signed by Thorpie. (Author's collection)

McTaggart on bass for a short time; replaced by **Paul Wheeler**, **Jimmy Thompson** on drums, and Loyde. This Mark III line up stayed together for a couple of years but Thorpe felt that despite having Loyde on stage with him, they all did not fully gel as a competent rock outfit. Still, Loyde passed on to Thorpe some of his guitar magic and Thorpe, now brandishing his own guitar on stage, emerged into the light sporting pigtails – something quite unusual, even for that time.

But it wasn't until 1971 that the group of musicians which eventually became known as the "Sunbury Aztecs" came into being. Thorpe had met **Warren "Pig" Morgan** in Perth in 1967 when he performed as a solo artist on Thorpe's *It's All Happening*. When it came time to audition a bass player, **Paul Wheeler**, clean-cut with blond hair and thick rimmed glasses was the man to fill the spot. They instantly got on well. Then came Gil "Rats" Matthews.

One night in February, 1971, Thorpe and Wheeler who had been performing with temporary drummers, visited a dance at Coburg Town Hall where blind DJ and singer **Grantley Dee** was performing with his band. Thorpe was particularly impressed by the drummer, Matthews who called Thorpe backstage:

BILLY THORPE: "Without another word he pulled a pair of drumsticks from his back pocket and started playing the tightest single-roll I've ever heard on the dressing-room bench. He held it for about thirty seconds, fanning and tightening it until his hands became a blinding whirl, all the while grinning at me like a loon. ... He was a dead ringer for Jughead from the Archie and Jughead comics. Without missing a lick he rolled off the mirror and jumped it across the corner and onto the wall." (Thorpe, *Most People I Know Think That I'm Crazy*, 1998, p.276).

The following Thursday at Sebastians, Matthews joined in the fray and the "new" Aztecs were complete. He had

After a couple of years in the wilderness, where Thorpe struggled to define his own musical direction he moved down to Melbourne. A two-week excursion to check out the scene changed his life and career:

BILLY THORPE: "Quiet, historic, prim, puritanical old Melbourne town, with its self-proclaimed image as the classical and cultural centre of the universe, was being violated every night of the week. Dr Shakin' J. Feelgood had taken over, and there was nothing anybody could do about it. Pure force of numbers. In the old converted granaries, warehouses and livery stables that dated back to original settlement, and in what had been the gentlemen's clubs, bars and pubs of the '20s that had become home to the Melbourne blues and rock scene... To wail and scream unfettered and unnoticed in the company of mods, sharpies, skinheads, rockers, acid heads and maniacs ... Unfortunately, the rest of the country had no idea it was happening and just ambled along in their ignorant bliss." (Thorpe, *Most People I Know Think That I'm Crazy*, 1998, p.137)

Thorpe had found the spark he had wanted and instead of taking up an offer to go to England at the beckoning of ex-pat Aussie, **Robert Stigwood**, he stayed on in Melbourne and joined in the flow. He celebrated his new-found resurgence by letting his hair and beard grow, losing the old suit image and most importantly, strapping on a guitar and ceasing to be just an out-front vocalist. He was assisted in this by his new compatriot, **Lobby Loyde** who had taken a similar enlightened journey south, this time from Brisbane with **The Purple Hearts**. Thoroughly revitalised and enthused by what was happening in Melbourne, Thorpe put together yet another line-up of **The Aztecs** – **Dave**



King of the Sunbury Hill – Billy Thorpe (right) (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique.)

joined the band just in time to take up the drummers stool for the momentous gig held at The Melbourne Town Hall on 13 July, 1971 where, to a stunned audience, **Warren Morgan** appeared in the spotlight seated at the grand, antique Melbourne Town Hall organ. The performance that night was recorded and released on vinyl as, *Aztecs – Live*. Thorpe knew that this combination was destined for something big:



Billy Thorpe at the Narooma Blues Festival, 2004. (Courtesy of Tony Jagers)

BILLY THORPE: "Somehow another magic combination of personalities had been brought together. It was a real band again. No disrespect to the band when Jimmy, Lobby and Murphy were in it. ... But the group personality never quite gelled into that magic combination that makes a band a band. This was it. The same feeling I knew so well from the early Aztecs. Same inexplicable cosmic combination of personalities, lunacy and talent ... From that night on, the new Aztec line-up just rocketed." (Thorpe, *Most People I Know Think That I'm Crazy*, 1998, p.282).

Thorpe and his Aztecs continued to manipulate the volume switches on their amps to the point where one particular night at Opus, they managed to clear the hall when they started their set, as most of the crowd adjured to the street because of the ear-splitting volume emanating from the stage. Thorpe seems to remember the night at the Melbourne Town Hall in 1971 where their sheer volume resulted in broken windows from the adjoining buildings.

The new Aztecs celebrated their partnership by recording probably the one song for which they have become best known, *Most People I Know (Think That*

I'm Crazy) and it arrived on the charts as a huge hit, just in time for the very first Sunbury Rock Festival.

It was at Sunbury '72 that all that has been attributed to **Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs** reached its pinnacle as their resounding performance that weekend passed into folklore. No other band achieved the accolades and status that **The Aztecs** achieved for that performance. And this, in spite of the formidable Aussie line-up that weekend which boasted not just some – but *all* of the top bands in the country. Three more sunburys followed as did several live albums taken from these Australia Day weekends.

By 1975 however, some of the members of The Aztecs were venturing out in other musical directions but there was still one more album in the tank – *More Arse Than Class* which caused one of those now expected furores because it featured the band photographed naked. (Hey... hadn't Zoot done that before!!?)

From 1976, Thorpe resided in Los Angeles, where at various times he joined **Fleetwood Mac's**, **Mick Fleetwood** in his band, **The Zoo** and embarked on a solo career. One thing is certain – Thorpe still thrives on his live performances.



Probably noone in Australian music enjoys his time on stage as much as Thorpie.

HOADLEY'S BATTLE OF THE SOUNDS - Let the games begin....

The concept of having a national contest whereby the best rock and pop bands in the country would face off against each other in determined competition, was a direct result of the burgeoning progressive music scene in this country. **The Battle Of The Sounds** was established as early as 1964 when British beat music was at its height and the concept can probably be compared and contrasted to the current *World and Australian Idol* phenomenon with which it had something in common – to find the best. It too, hoped to unearth new and untried music but was clearly focussed on bands, rather than individuals. In the true beat music tradition, it was pitched at having three

guitars and drums on stage (a la **The Beatles**) and contestants were to emerge in droves from their community halls and garages where they had been furiously practicing and precede through a series of local, regional and national titles before the prizes could be theirs.

From its initiation by *Everybody's* magazine as **The Big Band Sound Of 1964**, and then through 1967 when *Go-Set* picked up the competition, it generated the type of hysteria from fans which was generally reserved for visiting stars like **The Beatles** or **The Rolling Stones**.

In 1966, it gained an acceptable sponsor, Hoadley's Chocolates, manufacturers of the iconic Violet Crumble Bar and this teaming lasted until the demise of the competition in 1972 when rock left the competition phase behind and took to the large outdoor stages of Sunbury and other festival.

In its first year, only the thirteen finalists from eighty of so entrants were to appear live on the **Jimmy Hannan**-compared Sydney TV program, *Saturday Date*. All other contestants had been asked to provide audio tapes of themselves for the judging panel. The prizes – cash, an appearance on a **Harry M. Miller Stadium** show, one radio interview and a single-record

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This is it! For any aspiring young rock band, the chance to take part was the ultimate experience. Here, Bendigo band, the Tol-puttle Martyrs perform in their regional final in 1968. (Courtesy of Peter Rechter)



The major prize – a trip to England on a Sitmar ship such as the *Fairstar*. (From a Sitmar Line postcard.)

deal – though no guarantees! Strangely enough, the winners for the inaugural competition were not rock 'n roll performers at all, but Melbourne folk group, **The Green Hill Singers** which shortly after their win, completely disappeared from sight!

The following year saw some impressive steps forward – all bands which entered, got onto the stage at either Sydney's or Melbourne's Festival Hall, live - a total saturation for all the thousands of hysterical fans who were there. They screamed for their heroes and booed those bands they didn't like.

By this time, unknown and established bands began to recognise the chance at real exposure and not just the prizes which by

1966,

included a Sitmar working-

cruise to England. Thereby it created an anomaly which was never fully addressed: was it a talent quest for totally untried talent or was it a parade of the nation's most popular and established hit-making bands?

Most fans recognised that every year, those bands which had existing record deals and sales, experience on the live stage and near-professional set-ups would certainly win. But, this didn't stop the many local suburban and country hopefuls from entering. In fact, just to get up there on the Festival Hall stage was enough of an incentive to see them try out at their local level.



"...and the winner is....!" The Tol-puttle Martyrs make it through to Festival Hall from their regional finals in 1968. (Courtesy of Peter Rechter)

indeed. The Battle Of The Sounds became a national contest and very few top pop and rock bands did *not* enter at one time or another in the late 'sixties. The list of winners and place-getters over this time included **The Twilights**, 125.

Zoot, Masters Apprentices, Flying Circus, The Groove, Doug Parkinson In Focus, The Vibrants, Jeff St John's Copperwine, The Valentines and The Mixtures. These high-flyers contrasted sharply with the hundreds of unknown foursomes who failed to even make it through their regional finals. Take for example the youngest ever band to enter, **The Magpies** with an average age of 12! (They also featured a five-year-old Go-Go girl!) Still, some rightly noticed the glaring shortfall between the elite and the rest and wrote to *Go-Set* about it:

FIFTH IN A LINE OF MANY: "I stand to be corrected if I am wrong, but I was always led to believe that the "Hoadley's Battle of the Sounds" was a competition for all of the up-and-coming young groups in Australia to be given a chance to have their talents discovered, thus giving them a start on a new career.



All national finalists in 1968 received medallions as mementos of their participation in Hoadley's Battle Of The Sounds. (Courtesy of Peter Rechter)

I was greatly disappointed when I heard that Adelaide's fabulous group, The Twilights were entered in this year's Battle. There is no doubt about the talent of this group, they are versatile and understandably popular. But they have recorded songs all of which have reached good positions in the charts. They have appeared on local TV shows and have won the praise of many. Surely it is unfair for them to compete against



The Tol-puddle Martyrs were a band with a great deal of talent and energy who managed to use their exposure in The Battle to their benefit. (Courtesy of Peter Rechter)

comparatively unknown groups, with little experience of public appearance, TV shows and recording studios.

I think it is a poor effort on the part of the organisers of the battle to allow such an experienced group to compete with the not-so well known ones for the prize of a recording contract amongst other things, when they have already recorded, released

and sold so many good records.

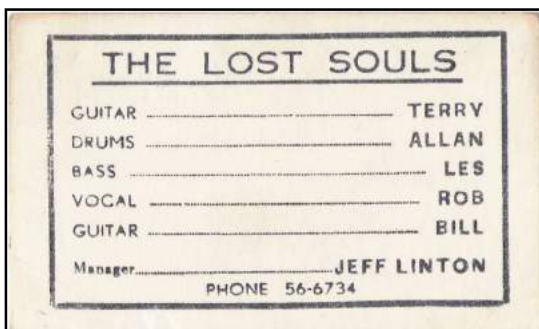
A really poor effort." (Go-Set, 17 August, 1966).

There were several other strange and quaint rules which came under criticism from some quarters. One regulation limited the number of players on stage to four. In 1965, when national winners **The Twilights** triumphed, they were forced to "drop" one of their duel lead vocalists to be able to compete. Either **Glenn Shorrock** or **Paddy McCartney** had to stand aside and it was the latter that got "the chop" temporarily, although he re-joined the band later on stage for the victory performance.

The residential qualification rule also seemed to be conveniently side-stepped particularly in Victoria when bands which failed to win their own heat in one region, re-entered in a different heat in a

different area on a different day. The laconic **Bill Putt** who rose to fame with both **Spectrum** and **Ariel**, was recruited for **Spectrum** from his previous band, **The Lost Souls** which competed in the Victorian section of The Battle and as he recalls, won in that year which he thinks was probably 1965.

His band drove to Yallourn in Victoria's power generating region of The Latrobe Valley at the insistence of their then-manager, to compete in that particular region's heat with nine other bands, much to the annoyance of the locals who resented the interlopers. They were the standout band and of course, won this competition. As if to underscore the level of competitiveness inherent in this event, Putt remembers the dressing room threats directed at



An original business card for Bill Putt's Lost Souls – courtesy of Graeme Eadie.

him by the lead singer of the band which was runner-up in the event. Dressed in matching mod-style suits, **The Lost Souls** drew the chants of “poofers” from their rivals. One member of Putt’s band replied with,

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“...yeah , but the better band won!”, which made the country boys even more irate!



Guitarist Rod Stone of The Groove now teaches guitar in Melbourne’s outer suburbs.

session. But Aulton, who was horrified by the lyrics, re-wrote them in about five minutes. The record did not kick-start anything for **The Lost Souls** as, on their return to Melbourne, the other band members were given the ultimatum by each of their girlfriends – us or the band! Thus, love triumphed over music on this occasion and **Bill Putt** became the sole survivor when the others became truly lost souls to rock music!

While many bands were just satisfied with the chance to show their wares, competition at the top continued to be ferocious and cut-throat at times. In 1968 to get there, **The Groop** had to beat off challenges from established bands like **The Vibrants**, **The Mixtures** and **The Loved Ones**, all at the height of their popularity. **Gerry Humphrys’ Loved Ones** were known to have been rather peeved at being beaten in the run-up to the Grand Final – and considering their significant presence on the charts and in the discos, perhaps they had a point. Such was the level of excellence around at that time.

Then there was the on-going feud between **The Masters Apprentices** and **The Zoot** which had transported itself from the discotheques of Adelaide to the stage at Festival Hall, Melbourne. It had all stemmed from **Zoot’s Rick Springfield’s** refusal to let **Doug Ford** from The ‘Masters plug into his amp when his (Ford’s) amp blew up one night.

To further aggravate the tension, ‘Masters lead singer, **Jim Keays** was intensely focused on winning and saw the Hoadley’s Battle Of The Sounds as their meal-ticket to England; something that they could not afford to pay for themselves:

JIM KEAYS: “Then years went by and we went to Melbourne and we thought, we might not win it, but what if we enter back in Adelaide? ... there were so many bloody Melbourne bands. So in theory and more than that, under the laws of the competition, we could enter in Adelaide. So we went back to Adelaide and entered there because there was more chance of winning, and that’s when the Zoot rivalry came up because The Zoot had a huge following at this stage. They thought, “this isn’t in the spirit of the whole thing. We don’t reckon that bands like The Masters’ should come over here and join the Adelaide one, because they’re not local anymore.” Anyway, we won it and Darryl spat the dummy and walked out.” (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)

In the subsequent Melbourne final, The ‘Masters lost to **The Groove** and it was their turn to feel shattered at the result when almost everyone believed they would win the Grand Final for ‘68. Even their flashy, choreographed stage performance and their flamboyant, white suits and ladies’ shoes couldn’t sway the judges. **The Groove** had

He recalls that the prize was a trip to Sydney to record with Festival Records under producer, **Pat Aulton** which was certainly the high point in the band’s life so far and probably the best music prize on offer at that time. **The Lost Souls** drove from Melbourne to Sydney in their Volkswagen and on entering the studio, they belatedly uncovered a glitch in their line up which for some reason hadn’t become apparent before – *the drummer couldn’t actually play!*

Once this charade was uncovered, in embarrassment he ran out of the building in tears and was found, two days later paralytically drunk in a Sydney pub, according to Putt.

However, the recording session proceeded and Putt had written an original song, *This Life Of Mine* which he presented to the producer on the day of the recording



“Tweed” Harris of The Groove. (Courtesy of Rod Stone)

similar ambitions. They had been formed in May, 1967 with the express purpose of entering and winning The Battle. The band was formed by **Winston "Tweed" Harris** who played the organ, and with prospective manager 127.

Gary Spry they recruited ex-New Zealander **Rod Stone** as guitarist, **Jamie Byrne** (bass), **Geoff Bridgford** (drums) and **Peter Williams** who gave **The Groove** that bluesy/soul vocal touch. Everything was planned and rehearsed carefully:

ROD STONE: "It was almost like it was part of the plan for The Groove. It was the brainchild of Tweed. He had this idea to put together this band with people from other bands. His description was... "like Max Merritt, but commercial"... a good soul, club band with a commercial edge. The Battle of The Sounds was the aim. The term "supergroup" has been used over time, but I don't like that. I just happened to run into Tweed just after I came back to Melbourne from England. I walked into Off Stage where we used to hang out after gigs and it just so happened that Gary Spry and Tweed came in... and he said, "Hey, yeah, you... you're the one!" I'd done gigs with him before. He'd picked out some slightly younger people and wanted a mix with some older guys. He knew Peter Williams was leaving Max Merritt's band... Tweed had done his homework. He wanted Gary as the manager.



The Groove only recorded one album and this is it! The shirt worn here by Rod Stone is now part of Melbourne's Performing Arts Museum collection.

We'd only been together a short time when we did The Battle in '67, but we didn't do well in that one. The Groop won of course. I don't think anyone told us where we were placed that year.

We planned very carefully to do the second one. The clothes we wore were specially designed as an outfit to wear on that day." (Stone, author's interview, 27 October, 2005.)

After winning through the '68 Melbourne final, **The Groove** completed their set at the National Final, also held at Festival Hall. They opened with *What is Soul?*, then launched into a medley of their single releases - *Going Back/Simon Says/Sooth Me*. They returned to front the mass of screaming fans to complete an encore after learning of their win. The band launched into *Cool Jerk*, one of **Rod Stone's** compositions which appeared on their only album release.

ROD STONE: "Then we did the song I wrote, which was a "B" side. It was getting some airplay, and we needed some originality. We featured playing the flute in *Sooth Me* and this



The Tol-puddle Martyrs at the regional final, 1967. (Courtesy of Peter Rechter)

section would previously have been done on the organ. So this was all rehearsed – there was nothing that we did which wasn't fully rehearsed. The only thing that went wrong was that I knocked the bridge off my guitar just before the last number ended. I did one of those Pete Townshend big windmill wind-ups, hit the bridge with my wrist... so I didn't play at all for the last fifteen seconds of the last song, but nobody noticed, not even the guys in the band. There was so much noise going on..."

When we actually won the thing, initially you feel elated but by the time we actually packed up and left Festival Hall, all I wanted to do is just go home and lie down! But there was the reception afterwards and I definitely didn't want to eat the food. It had been so much of an emotional thing that after it was over, it was such a relief. I remember that we didn't talk to any of the other bands backstage at all. I can just remember running into the dressing room and grabbing Peter and saying, "We've won. We've won!" (Stone, op cit 27 October, 2005).

Finishing a creditable fourth nationally that year was **The Tol-puddle Martyrs**, a young, energetic and talented band from Bendigo. Formed in 1964 as **Peter And The Silhouettes**, the band was built around **Peter Rechter** as lead vocalist/keyboard player with **Kevin Clancy** as lead guitar, **Keiran Keogh** on bass guitar, **Manuel Pappos**, rhythm

guitar and **Tony Truscott** on drums. The 'Martyrs had built up a solid following around central Victoria at their own dances doing mostly covers of **Beatles, 'Stones, Kinks** and **Yardbirds** songs with a little **Shadows** material

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thrown in for good measure. They entered their first regional final in 1967 with **Len (Loyn) Gaskell** replaced **Tony Truscott** on drums and **Russell (Rocky) Hogan** replacing **Manuel Pappos** on rhythm Guitar:

PETER RECHTER: "...we played the first one as Peter and The Silhouettes up at The Capital Theatre. I remember we were going to play *Adventures In Paradise* and I was so damned nervous, I said to the guys... 'I can't remember it, I can't remember it!' So I think we did the Chuck Berry song, *Around and Around*, instead." (Rechter, author's interview, 5 October, 2005).

When they were asked to provide a couple of original tracks for a proposed compilation album called, *The Scene*, they very quickly knocked out what became their signature tunes, *Claudette Jones* and *Natural Man* - written at Clancy's Bendigo barber's shop, one day. Although these two tracks failed to generate significant chart action, they are now considered bonafide underground "garage" classics.



Dennis Fiorini's Central Victorian band, The Elois made it through to the finals in 1966. He holds the shirt he wore for the stage performance that year.

By 1968, with more work under their belts, they entered again, this time winning the local heat and earning a trip to Melbourne to compete in the Grand Final at Festival Hall. For their local final, they rehearsed comprehensively for the night:

PETER RECHTER: "Oh yeah... we would plan for it. We would plan what we were going to play. I remember when we won this country final, we played *Girl*, by The Beatles, *It's A Beautiful Morning* by The Rascals and *Jumping Jack Flash* by The 'Stones. I remember that we had a gig that night, somewhere up the bush and they were going to replay it on 3UZ. We were trying to pick it up on the car radio and we could only hear bits and pieces." (Rechter, author's interview, 5 October, 2005).

Being country boys, the chance to take to the Festival Hall stage for the first time was a gigantic step forward and this placed them potentially in a situation where they could gain

exposure beyond the Bendigo region and open up the dances and venues of Melbourne to them. They knew the enormity and the uniqueness of this situation, yet still found the experience daunting. Far, Far larger than anything they had experienced before, they realised the highly competitive nature of the big one, where the pressure gripped everyone backstage and no one spoke to anyone else. The tension was high. After all, they were competing against proven hitmakers, **The Masters Apprentices** and **Doug Parkinson In Focus**, not to mention the eventual winners, **The Groove**. Prize money this year was increased to the princely sum of \$2000 plus the Sitmar cruise. The number of finalists was increased to twelve. So what was it like for five kids from the bush?:

KEVIN CLANCY: "Fantastic... it wasn't long enough... five minutes and it was all over. You think... all that work for that. Well, you couldn't hear a damned thing!" (Clancy, author's interview, 5 October, 2005).

PETER RECHTER: "I didn't expect us to actually win it. I came down for the experience, hoping we'd get a bit of work out of it, so we could play in the big city. I knew if we played in Melbourne that meant that we could ask for more money than we got in the country venues. I was pretty damned nervous at having to go out and shake hands with Stan (Rofe) and Stan congratulating me. It was a real honour and I'm really pleased that I was part of it." (Rechter, op cit, 5 October, 2005).



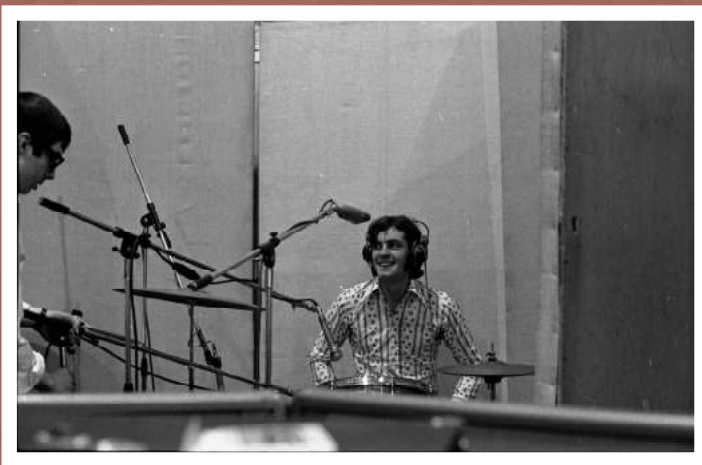
Still firm friends and musical colleagues - Peter Rechter and Kevin Clancy.

It was a real honour and I'm really pleased that I was part of it." (Rechter, op cit, 5 October, 2005).

Rechter, particularly remembers Rofe as compare and also Ian "Molly" Meldrum briefly taking the band aside
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The Spoils of the Battle - Recording at Abbey Road Studios ...

The Groove's "Tweed" Harris taking control of the recording session in the famed Abbey Road Studios in 1969, with Geoff Bridgeford on drums (top left). These sessions were the band's prize for winning the National Final of The Battle Of The Sounds the previous year. (Photos courtesy of Rod Stone.)



backstage and saying how much he enjoyed the music. Meldrum, in his role as judge added that they should not try to emulate **The Rolling Stones** too much! **The Tol-puddle Martyrs** accepted their fourth placing with gratitude and pride and were back at regional level in 1969:

KEVIN CLANCY: "We played another final up in Shepparton the following year. I'll never, ever forget that final, because we'd played in Melbourne on the Saturday night and the final was on the Sunday. I think that's why we played in Shepparton because we couldn't do our local one.

We arrived there late and all the other bands, including some Melbourne bands which were going to blitz everybody... We walked in after the other bands had finished their rehearsals and sound checks. They all went into this very large, side room for something to eat before the final started. So we set up and decided to play *Pearly Queen* by Traffic as a sound check... that was a great song and it had real guts. When we opened up it was full on – vocals, guitars, everything.

Our sound absolutely blasted everyone out of the hall. And we bolted that one in. That was when we were at our best – a really, tight group with a big sound." (Clancy, author's interview, 5 October, 2005).

They recorded *Love Your Life* and *Nellie Bligh* in Sydney when the band won another Hoadley's sponsored competition, The Big Break in 1968. This 'prize' however, like many put forward in this series of competitions wasn't all it was made out to be:

PETER RECHTER: "Even when we won that Hoadley's Big Break where we actually won a recording contract with Festival Records, they didn't do a damned thing for us. Even when they released these songs, they didn't let

me

know. The deal that they gave me as the writer was 0.8 of a cent every time the record sold. It was just pathetic! At the time you had to be twenty-one and I was only about nineteen, so any contract that I would have signed wouldn't have been valid." (Rechter, op cit, 5 October, 2005).

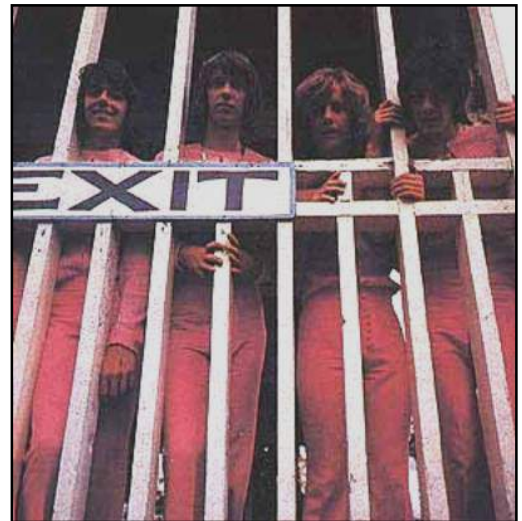
The single charted in regional Victoria but didn't make an impression on the Victorian or national charts.

This year, 1969 saw the Battle reaching its zenith and **The Tol-puddle Martyrs** were just one of over one thousand bands entering from local level all around the nation. The format reflected the changes too, with two lots of prizes being offered – one for the traditional rock/pop band category and, for the first and only time, the organisers added a vocal group section. The Grand Final at Festival Hall, Melbourne was a gala affair that even the most rock-hungry fans found difficult to digest – twelve finalists in the band category and six in the vocal group section. **Doug Parkinson In Focus** took the coveted main prize and Sydney's **The Affair**, with **Kerry Biddell**, the only female lead-singer to make a final, won the vocal section.

If the controversies of previous years were considered major hiccups, then 1970 provided probably the greatest hullabaloo. To commence with, **The Zoot**, which had turned itself pink in an attempt to establish their image, were beaten in the Melbourne final by **Nova Express** which was a virtually unknown outfit, causing **Darryl Cotton** to

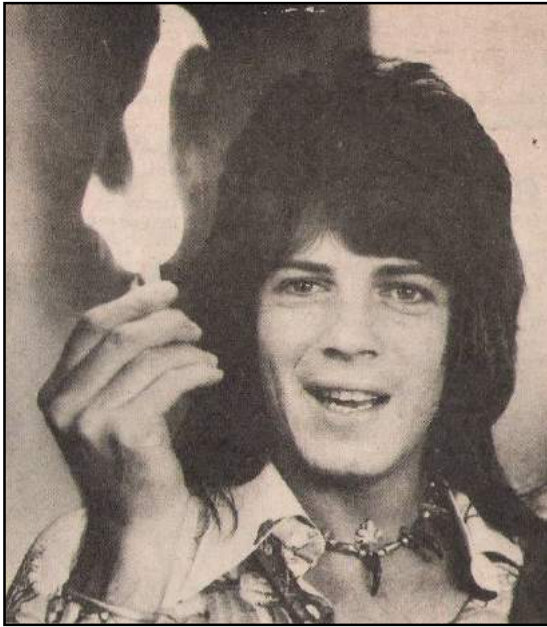


The Masters Apprentices in London, where they recorded at Abbey Road in 1970. They came, they saw but they didn't conquer Britain. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Jim Keays)



The Zoot – they turned pink for promotional purposes, but eventually went red with anger, then green with envy! Always the bridesmaids. (From the cover of their LP, *Zoot Locker*)

spit the dummy yet again! However, his band, which by virtue of being runners-up in Melbourne still earned the right to play at the Grand Final this year held in Sydney. If Cotton thought his problems were over, they re-emerged when in further controversy, Sydney's home final generated its share of angst. **The Flying Circus** beat the brilliant band, **Autumn** which brought on an eruption of crowd discontent and this carried over to the Grand Final when **The Flying Circus** relegated **Zoot** to second place yet again with **Autumn** coming in third. It was reported



The Zoot's Rick Springfield who had hoped to burn off the competition in The Battle Of The Sounds – or was it just burn them! (Go-Set, 9 June, 1973 – courtesy of Philip Morris)

that only about one-quarter of the Sydney-based fans stayed to see the presentation ceremony.

And what of that mythical “pot of gold” at the end of the Sitmar rainbow? The future for each and every winner of The Battle Of The Sounds was always very precarious, never assured and fame was never in the bag. Nothing was set in stone and although some nebulous guarantees were given, very few promises could actually be kept.

When they did get overseas, **The Groove's** guitarist, **Rod Stone** found out, as did all other members of the winning bands over the years that the scene in Britain was vastly different to the musical landscape that they had been used to in Melbourne:

ROD STONE: “Well, we hoped we would succeed but the type of music we were playing was really out of vogue in England. I've heard Brian Cadd say of The Groop, “...we should have gone to America”. The type of music we were playing would have got a better look in there. England had moved on to Led Zeppelin and others. Peter Williams has said that really we didn't have a snowflake's hope in Hell of succeeding in the London scene. Nobody wanted to hear our stuff. ...we were largely left to our own devices. We took our own manager from here with us, but he wasn't the sort of person who had the knack of going around spending long hours knocking on doors.

We were given as part of the prize, a “guaranteed overseas engagement”. Well, did we get the guaranteed overseas engagement and all the Violet Crumbles we could eat? Guess how much we got? Nothing! We did get a free return boat trip though. I stayed there so long that I had to pay for my own boat trip back home anyway. We did get to play in a reasonable London club though – we did get work, but the gigs were all for no money! The thing was there that if you were a nobody, they paid you nothing!” (Stone, op cit, 27 October, 2005.)

By 1972, the gloss had been taken from the competition and it was just not attracting the better bands from around Melbourne or nationally for that matter, as it had done in the past – a fact lamented by *Go-Set* which had its vested interest in the competition. The major prize of the Sitmar trip to England had also not provided the kick-start overseas for any of the previous winners. Possibly the highlight of this final year's competition was **Brian Cadd's** win in the Songwriter's Section for *Don't You Know It's Magic* – his brilliant and enduring ballad which he got to perform at the Tokyo World Music Festival. There, Cadd won the Most Outstanding Composition Award (beating some Swedish mob called **Abba**, by the way!). At home, the prominent bands had better things to do – Sunbury was on the horizon.



The Groove in Paris, 1969, missing 'Tweed' Harris who was probably taking the photo! Guitarist Rod Stone stayed on in Europe and managed to get some substantial paying work as a musician in Paris. But the experience wasn't all that the band had hoped for. Not an uncommon story. (Courtesy of Rod Stone)

THE GREAT OUTDOORS – THE ROCK FESTIVALS...

"Ladies and gentlemen, the person that's going to come up now has a limited amount of time ... His name is Bob Dylan." Peter Yarrow – MC at Newport Folk Festival, 1965.

The American music scene was still influencing us in many ways. The era of the great rock music festivals had begun. The idea of holding large, indoor or more particularly, outdoor music-fests can probably be traced back to the origins of **The Newport Folk Festival** which began from an idea by jazz pianist **George Wein** and first held on the weekend of 17-18 July, 1954. In over half a century to date of almost continuous annual Newport festivals, it has presented more than forty thousand individual musicians – not just folk but blues, jazz and pop as well – but mostly folk and jazz. Only riots in 1960, 1969 and 1971 prevented the event which was originally held at Newport Tennis Casino, Rhode Island from going ahead in those years. Its first line up in 1954 boasted **Dizzy Gillespie**, **Oscar Petersen**, and re-united **Billie Holliday** with band-leader **Lester Young**.

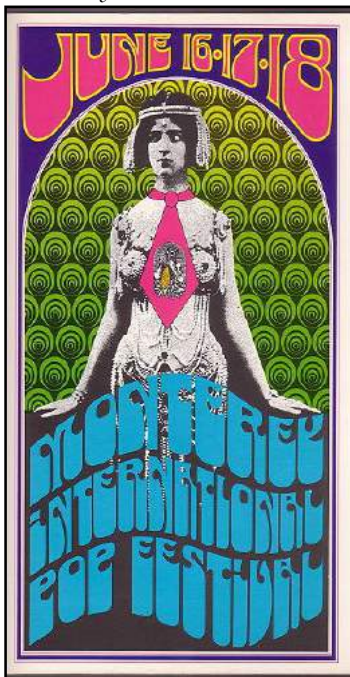
But it was Newport '65 which sent the world of music off on an entirely new track – the great **Bob Dylan**, who first took the stage as a folk artist from his early days, went *electric*! There

were only about 15,000 people present on that day to witness this event. After three songs done acoustically, Dylan faced the crowd with a backing band – almost everyone there that night booed him off stage – or so the legend goes! What had happened? Whether we can cut through the myths which surround this performance probably doesn't matter to us. But the myths still persist. Was it true that **Pete Seeger** tried to chop the electric cables with an axe? Did *everyone* boo? Some have said the adverse reaction was merely because Dylan had spent just fifteen minutes on



The day that music changed direction – sharply! Dylan goes electric –25 July, 1965. (Photographer – David Gahr)

stage as the band had only rehearsed three songs with guitars. It was to be however, a defining moment in rock music right across the world and one which helped to propel the festival concept further into the future while nudging rock 'n roll music to a new level.



The first gathering of the “love crowd”...

Meanwhile, down the track a little further, a new concept and a loose re-working of the Newport Folk Festival idea was placed in a rock and pop context for the first time with **The Monterey International Pop Festival** held over the weekend of 16-18 June, 1967 in California – a one-off event. This coincided perfectly with the famed “summer of love” in San Francisco and virtually gave the world its blueprint for the next few years for subsequent festivals across the planet – **The Isle Of Wight**, **Woodstock**, **Big Sur** and **Sunbury**, although none of these were as well organised as the original. For only just a few short years, the great pop festivals took rock music outdoors to mass audiences, large open-air stages and all sorts of weather conditions.

However, what went wrong and what *didn't* work for subsequent pop festivals since Monterey has as much to do with adding to the mystique of these events as any successes did. For example, what would a pop festival be without the rain and mud, ticketing fiascos, diabolical sanitation, mounds of trash, drugs, grog and musician fee rip-offs?

Monterey was an obvious success and the concept caught on. It had been twenty-five hours of music over that eventful weekend and it tapped into the enormous number of musicians in the San Francisco Bay region; residing there and at the promoters' disposal. Bands like: **The Grateful Dead** and **Jefferson Airplane** performed together at Monterey. There was the first major American appearance of **The Who**, which was quick to fill the void left when **The Rolling Stones** didn't commit to appear. There was not a question that the other major world act, **The Beatles** would appear, despite some rumours that they would play "incognito". For Woodstock later, it was important that **Jimi Hendrix**, and **Janis Joplin** - two of the major drawcards - were also at Monterey to lay the foundation for their future successes with mass audiences.

More than just a get together to enjoy the new rock music, Monterey set the tone for the next five years



The stage at Monterey in 1967 with Ravi Shankar playing sitar. (Photographer unknown)



Lily Brett and Colin Beard sitting in the front row at Monterey Festival with "Mama" Cass Elliott (Courtesy of Colin Beard).

(a little longer in Australia) as a sense of community for the new youth of the world to get together in peace, harmony and love; with progressive youth music being the cohesive force and spiritual bond.

With all this happening so far away from this country, it is interesting to speculate how many Australians were actually at Monterey. Certainly **Colin Beard** and **Lily Brett** who were both "on assignment" from our own *Go-Set* magazine had found themselves at the park on this momentous weekend. After a trip which had taken them to London to check out the "swinging scene", then on to New York, they arrived in San Francisco following the rumour that something significant was about to take place there.

A fortuitous cancellation at an ancient wooden motel which overlooked the park, found the pair with a room and on the spot for what was about to unfold. They sought out **Derek Taylor**, the former Beatles publicist who was fulfilling this same role for the festival. Through the wide eyes of two Aussies dropped into midst of one of the most significant cultural events of the era, the vista unfolded:

COLIN BEARD: "By the time I arrived at the gates, there were thousands of people spilling out over the roads. Policemen stood around in clusters some shaking their heads, others grinning condescendingly, and a few of them wore flowers threaded into their epaulets or shirt button-holes and none of them seemed concerned to do anything about the log-jam of people. And they were strange-looking people, like a convention of Gypsies, nomadic people wearing gaudily woven ponchos, hats of all shapes and colour, children and adults with intricate and colourful patterns woven on their faces, swarthy looking

men with dark beards and intense looking eyes, and young girls with long liberated hair that half concealed tiny lolling babies strapped to their backs in Indian papooses." (Beard, unpublished autobiography, Chapter 18, P.7)

The two Aussies who decided to mix work with fun, realised instantly the importance of the occasion. As Brett and **Lilian Roxon** chatted to "Mama" **Cass Elliott** of **The Mamas and the Papas**, a very "spaced out" **Brian Jones** of **The Rolling Stones** and "Country Joe" **McDonald**, Beard set about the task of trying to take a few photos with film bought on a very limited *Go-Set* budget. Still, both were totally overawed by the scene which was unfolding on that momentous Saturday in June, 1967:

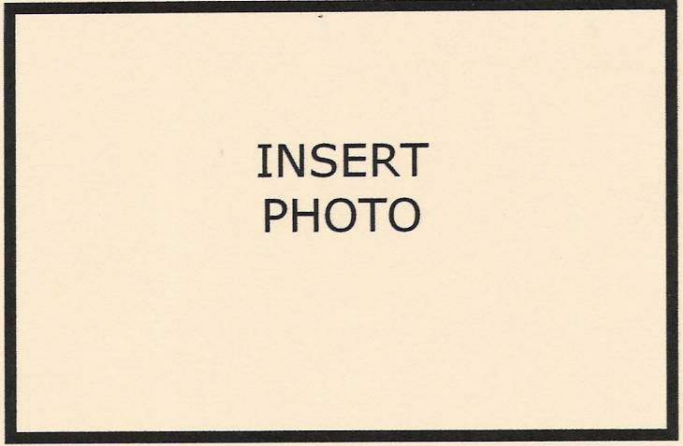
COLIN BEARD: "In the park it was like strolling across the stage of a live theatre – every kind of human identity packed together to form some strange single organism. It was a new kind of tribalism or rather a synthesis, ... stalls displayed handwoven fabrics intricately patterned with nature symbols, posters carrying political slogans or symbols of peace, multi-coloured strings of beads to fit every limb or cylindrical shape on the body... faces arms and naked breasts decorated with flowery paintings in primary colours and the word "love" was written on every available canvas.

"Haven't you ever been to a love-in – Gosh! – It's like Easter, Christmas, New Year and a birthday all rolled into one", gasped the girl with flowers painted on her cheeks in response to a naïve question from Lily. "I mean – Wow! I mean all these cool vibrations flowing, man – I mean, can't you dig it?"

There was a sense of a coming together here in Monterey, of people plugging into something real, something authentic." (Beard, op cit, Chapter 18, P.8)

It will be remembered for the trend it set – it was the first time that overt drug culture and substances like pot and L.S.D. could be openly flaunted with little concern about any intervention from the authorities because the site was an enclosed community. It was also the coming together of various types of music on the one stage – rock, pop, blues and jazz influences abounded. The fascination with eastern music styles among members of the rock elite was evident as witnessed in **Ravi Shankar's** afternoon-long session with his sitar; although for most, it was just a little too much!

Monterey set the scene for both the relative successes of Woodstock and Sunbury and the abject failures as well – primarily, **The Rolling Stones** debacle at Altamont Raceway in 1969!



Colin Beard



The original poster, before the festival was kicked out of Wallkill. (Woodstock Ventures, 1969.)

Woodstock – "it's breakfast in bed for five hundred thousand ..."

By far, the most prestigious and best known of all rock festivals was Woodstock – or to give it its correct title – **The Woodstock Music and Arts Fair** which took place on 15-17 August 1969, in upstate New York. There is no doubt that Woodstock has become the cultural icon and the pinnacle event of the hippie generation, but much of it has been caught up in myths and misconceptions.

There are those true believers who won't accept any criticism of what they see as the grand finale to the era of love and peace and there are those critics who say that it's overrated and just a farcical end to the great naiveté of the 'sixties generation. Most agree that the music, which was the centre point of the whole experience wasn't as good there when rated alongside the enormous success that was Monterey.

What went wrong that long weekend has been largely ignored and dismissed as part of the legend and mystique that has become Woodstock thanks to a degree of manipulation and self-interest particularly by the Warner Brothers organisation which bought the subsequent rights to the whole festival. They have continued to market the festival in the form of

movies, records, CD's and DVD's which have all homogenised the event for the public's consumption. But facing facts, a lot was shoddy – the organisation, the facilities, and the accounting. Forget all that though – it was a damned great party:

ELLIOT TIBER “Melanie Safka was supposed to sing, so she and her mother got in her 1968 burgundy Pontiac Bonneville and headed upstate. When they turned onto Route 17, they noticed lots of traffic. When Melanie called the festival's producers, they said, yes, the traffic was headed for Bethel, which was getting crowded, so she'd better get to a hotel where they would take her by helicopter to the festival site. At that hotel, the name and location of which Melanie doesn't remember, she saw a slew of TV cameras focusing on Janis Joplin and her bottle of Southern Comfort. “And me?” says Melanie. “I was just a fleckling.” (*The Times Herald-Record* quoted in www.woodstock69.com)

And there was tragedy when one unfortunate patron who was sleeping under a pile of garbage was run over by the tractor hauling away the waste from the site:

ELLIOT TIBER: “The mud smelled like hashish, two inches deep. Sodden sleeping bags were churned up with cellophane, cigarette butts and discarded clothes. Standing rainwater was steaming skyward, blanketing thousands of sleeping kids with an eerie fog. Gery Krewson saw the tractor rumbling over the hill, plowing through a pile of soaked garbage and sleeping bags. The tractor was towing a tank trailer to haul away sewage from the portable toilets. But under that mass slept a 17-year-old from South Jersey named Raymond Mizak.



Melanie Safka – from the cover of her album, *Candles In The Rain*. She was 16 years-old at Woodstock. (Photographer unknown)



An original Woodstock Friday-only ticket – never used when the festival became a free event. Signed by Richie Havens, the first act up on the Woodstock stage on that day. (Author's collection)

Unlike Monterey, there were serious errors of judgement by the inexperienced promoters, not to mention the deliberate fraudulent attempts to rip-off the general public and the artists themselves who had played at Monterey free of charge. Just as Monterey was the blueprint for all that was successful in pop festivals, Woodstock epitomised the shortfalls of this type of event, with repercussions for the future Ourimbah, Mulwala and Sunbury festivals in Australia. But, whichever way you look at this, Woodstock or Sunbury, Monterey or Ourimbah – most who attended any festival went there just for the fun and would agree they were memorable parties, never to be repeated again! Then there was the brown acid:

ELLIOT TIBER: “A Woodstock acid trip wasn't always voluntary. Outside (the tent), they were giving out electric Kool-Aid laced with whatever, Nurse Sanderson said. They said, ‘Don't take the brown acid.’ They put it in watermelon. Now, when kids take a tab of acid, they know what they're getting into. When you drink something

His sleeping bag was over his head to

ward off the rain. The tractor slowly ran over him. Krewson and five others raced up the hill and helped carry Mizak to an ambulance. By the time the helicopter arrived, Mizak was dead. ‘I don't think he ever felt anything. He was asleep,’ Krewson said. Richard Barley was walking up the hill seconds after the accident. ‘He had a blanket over him,’ Barley said. ‘A couple of girls were standing there crying.’

(Tiber, op cit, quoted in www.woodstock69.com)



The traffic jam on Route 17 on the way to Woodstock - Friday morning. (Courtesy of Debbie Stelnik – photo taken by George Stelnik)



Erecting the Woodstock stage with a few early arrivals looking on. (Courtesy of Bobbi Pabst)

Jimi had gotten impatient and decided to rent a helicopter. This turned out to be beautiful. Just as Jimi was due to go on stage and we were going berserk, this helicopter came hovering over the stage and Jimi comes down a ladder. He played an incredible set." (Lang, in Young and Lang, 1979, P8)

Ticket sales present the greatest fiasco of the festival with promoters increasing the entry price of the tickets by about 33% just before the first day. The major question is: did they realise that crowds were going to grossly exceed their expectations? The organisers explained their cash flow problems away:

MICHAEL LANG: "We didn't have any certified checks because we had expected to have cash on hand to pay the balance of the deposit to some of the acts before they went on. But there wasn't any gate:



Looking up the hill as the crowd eagerly awaits more music from the stage. The Woodstock Nation has gathered. (Photo - Bill van Houten)

enterprising, if inexperienced, promoters the opportunity to make their mark on the industry." (McFarlane, Encyclopedia of Australian Rock & Pop, 1999, P217)

that's cold because you're thirsty, that's different. A lot of the kids hurt with this stuff were just thirsty. They didn't have any choice. But while the kids were drinking and taking whatever was around, (Michael) Lang was being careful. Stationed in the headquarters trailer backstage, Lang couldn't afford to hallucinate. He says he didn't even smoke pot that weekend. 'I didn't drink anything that didn't come from a bottle I didn't wash or open myself,' he said. (Tiber, op cit, quoted in www.woodstock69.com)

On an artistic level at Woodstock, Joplin was far from her best thanks to a cocktail of booze and drugs, Dylan wasn't there, Hendrix was, and was brilliant. Englishman **Joe Cocker** created one of the most memorable performances of the weekend with his hit, *With A Little Help From My Friends* which was just super dynamic. However, Hendrix almost didn't get there:

MICHAEL LANG: "After the music began we realised that someone had forgotten to pick up Hendrix at the airport. I sent

cars out to get him, but



Setting up at the camping area before the real crowd arrived and minus the mess which existed at the end of the festival. (Courtesy of Bobbi Pabst)

get him, but
cars out to
get him, but
any gate:

There wasn't any cash." (Young and Lang, op cit, 1979, P28)

In any case, by declaring it a "free festival" when it was obvious that the fences were being trampled down, they appeared to rescue their credibility, but ended up millions of dollars in debt by the time it was completed. There were ramifications in all this for the Australian festivals which were to follow:

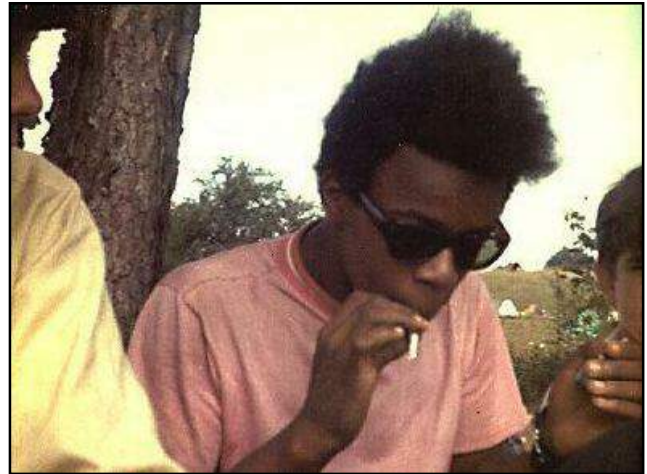
IAN McFARLANE: "In Australia, the effect of Woodstock was two-fold. Firstly the naivety of the 1960s was cast aside. As Clinton Walker put it, Australia's new progressive bands were engendered with a sense of where they could take their music, of stripping away old inhibitions, of exploring their roots in order to expand their horizons. Secondly, it allowed young and

. Americans **Susan** and **Gary Rogers** now live in suburban Melbourne but in 1969, both arrived from different places on the eastern United States seaboard to be at Woodstock, but were not destined to meet until later in their lives. Susan (nee Rosenberg) was a 21 year-old from Haddon Field in New Jersey and she arrived at Bethel on Friday, 15 August in a van with a close girlfriend and a few others they knew from university. "Bucky" was the driver and the whole weekend was crazy, wonderful and like nothing she had ever experienced:

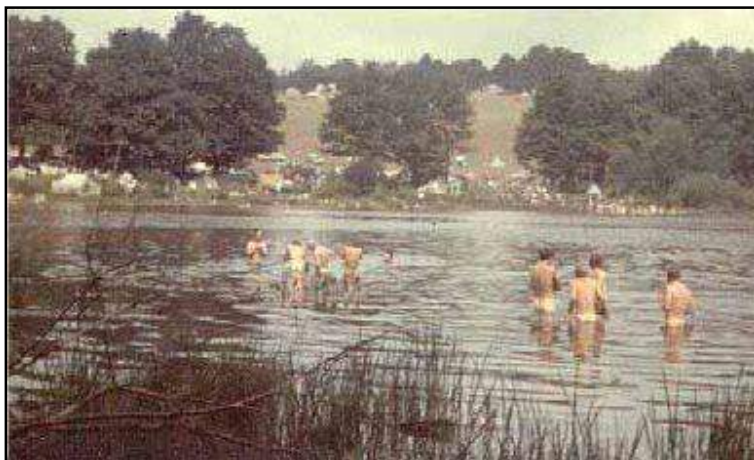
SUSAN ROGERS: "It was slow travelling; absolutely backed up traffic. We finally left the van and walked. Everyone was young at the time. I thought the crowd was gorgeous; all products of the 'sixties.

We all crammed into Bucky's tent quite far back (from the stage) – we were totally unprepared to camp. I don't know what I expected, I had never camped before. It was my first experience with drugs, they were quite prevalent. Lots of sharing of marijuana and other drugs. We didn't know Bucky very well and he turned out to be quite a druggie. It wasn't a great experience for me from that point of view.

Everyone felt a sense of freedom that had never been experienced before – the feeling of total safety among so many people." (S. Rogers, author's interview, 5 November, 2005.)



Passing around a joint – plenty of marijuana was available throughout the crowd signaling the new sense of freedom for young people. (Photo – Bill van Houten)



There were few inhibitions at Woodstock. Swimming in the lake. (Photo – Bill Van Houten)



The aftermath – the inevitable rubbish left behind. (Photo – Bill van Houten)

Memories of Woodstock....

Gary Rogers is now a resident Aussie, but in 1969, as an American teenager, he along with at least half a million of his fellow countrymen experienced Woodstock. Here are his memories of the great event:

Hi Jeff,

In 1969, my age was nineteen and I was living in my hometown of Waverley, New York and I was fluctuating between my folks' place and a six-man army tent set up at the local reservoir. The "summer of love" was in full swing and the following month would see me heading to college. We had seen the ad in The New York Times listing an unbelievable lineup for the festival at Woodstock and it was too much to resist.

I don't recall that there was much thought to the journey as Woodstock was only two hours east toward N.Y.C.. As it was with the spirit of things in the 'sixties, much energy was generated by the passion and love for a cultural revolution that was underway. We were swept up in the river of music and art that represented our young ideals and it was flowing to Bethel, N.Y.

None of my friends were organised enough to purchase a ticket beforehand, still we decided to grab a tent and hop in my friend, Dee Dee's '67 Chrysler to see what this was all about and grab a ticket there.

Riding along was my mate, "Big o" – star athlete, "Hook" – guitarist, "Chico" – my best friend and Dee Dee – gypsy queen, complete with beads and flowing dress. We had no idea of what we were about to experience. But when I saw the other freaks on the road and their car licenses reading Arizona, Michigan, Texas, we sensed that this was going to be big.

Forging on, we got as close as we could and just parked the car next to the road. It was still an hours walk to where the music was, so we took turns carrying the weighty tent.

Along the road, the counter-culture was well represented – many swimming nude in the lake along the way. I remember these bikers passing walkers, but there was no sense of danger; the element of cool was underpinning the event and the vibe was warm all around. It was the first time I had seen that collective movement of people in such numbers. A pilgrimage to the showpiece of our ideals.

The first night, we were a bit thrashed by all of the excitement and by the time we arrived at the amphitheatre, it had been declared a free concert. Before looking for a spot to set up our tent, we settled in for a rest on the lawn of this old house near the entrance. Others had the same idea, but were rudely awoken to an old lady thrashing our mate, "Hook" with a broom. No problem! We all laughed and moved on as nothing could ruin the mood. She was just brushing away the hippie tribes off her front lawn, I guess.

On the way in Creedence were doing their thing, so we took it in and headed to the back in the hopes of pitching our tent. We did manage to find a site near a cornfield which we thought would be a handy spot to privately relieve yourself. Later... a day later, this field was one of the best fertilised plots of land for miles, man. You had to trek in to find a clearing. Anyway, there sat the tent for three days and every night, there was something different – sharing a smoke. I wondered if some mistook our tent for a medical facility. All these trippers were showing up, which didn't matter as we were mostly getting amongst the music and characters.

While walking around, one incident stood out in my mind. There were a few State Police at the concert for any potential riots, but in a sense, they had to turn a blind eye to all the drugs they were in the middle of. At one point, I was passing by this lad who was openly selling Acid in close proximity to the cop. After a while, the officer couldn't help himself and started to approach the young fellow, where he shouted, "I'm being busted!!!" In that moment, about fifty or so people surrounded the two and this allowed the rebel to find an exit under several legs where the whole scene then dissolved. Because of the numbers of people, the police and army were there to manage rather than control the events going on. If you saw the film, you know that there was some inferior Acid going around and several had to be helped through that. Others were freely selling drugs on site. Near our tent were a series of smaller tents with little signs stating, "Hash", "Weed", "Mescaline".

On Saturday night, I made a visit to try out some of the hash as I knew The Who were slated for that evening. The feeling of wellbeing was all around me as I came over the crest of the music bowl and Daltry had the microphone swinging these huge circles while Townshend was attacking the guitar in his own way. It was a visual treat that I'll never forget. The sun had gone over the hill and The Who put on an outstanding show. It was unusual to see people jump up when the mood took hold and go into these frantic, expressive dances. I'll have to put in here that there were ample amounts of smoke going on in the audience.

In fact, it was a situation where people were passing joints up and down the aisles throughout the night. You might pass a joint to the left and another was coming at you from the right. This was a time when smoking was a

shared right and no one thought that saliva could affect you. This activity varied at times, but there were those who came to make this an incredibly high experience and one to culminate the 'sixties.

The event brought out a cross-section of the culture. Some from middle-America looking for the unusual, while others had committed to a more radical lifestyle, banding together as bikers or living collectively in a commune. Such was the case of The Hog Farm, a commune which came from far in the west and set up the free food stalls dishing out wholesome vegetarian food to all who came. In my mind, this was a selfless act that had an impact on my mind and exemplified the feeling of cooperation that ran throughout the weekend. Essentially it was about the music, yet many came seeking to validate their identity to a movement against the establishment in a peaceful way. Many others, like myself, were moving about on their own or stuck with those they came with.

My location to the music varied, but Saturday night, I was about twenty meters from the stage and saw Crosby, Stills and Nash. Neil Young was there to support and it was their first concert after the new album. The result was brilliant and the harmonies blended to perfection. Friday night was started off with some acoustics by Joan Baez, then Arlo Guthrie and Richie Havens got the ball rolling with an acoustic performance. In the later hour, Sly and the Family Stone came on with huge sound, horns and all, and just ripped it up! Everyone was up and dancing. A big surprise for me was the British group, Ten Years After with Alvin Lee and his brother in support on drums. I was unaware of their music, but the jaw-dropping riffs of Alvin Lee quickly made me an admirer. As with many British groups of this time, they had a deep understanding of the Blues and the Black contribution. More so than most American bands. Ten Years After were in great form that night.

But how much great music can you take? Saturday morning we were even woken up with Jefferson Airplane and then later, Janis Joplin gave her usual gutsy show. As long as we are talking legends, Jimi showed up on Sunday morning and it was a religious experience all right! I had all of his music and a strong feel for what Hendrix was all about, yet this was the first time I had seen the man live. It was a more subdued gig, as many had cleared out earlier, leaving many sleeping bags and garbage. We all got to move in close and listen to one of the great innovators of the guitar. Already he was trying to bring us to a newer form of music, almost jazz-like in some parts. Most people looked in recovery mode from last night, but those few who were there, had a treat. Santana put on a solid performance with Carlos taking us higher with their innovation on Latin-rock.

As far as individuals go, "Wavy Gravy" was a real sort of, jester decked out in his jumpsuit and huge Stetson hat. He travelled in with The Hog Farm and placed himself in the middle of it all where he could gag with the crowd for hours – twisted and humorous at the same time.

When the rains came in, Dee Dee and I went on our way into the small town center to get what we could from the general store. The place was completely overrun with thousands of hairy young folks, orderly getting what they could. The people in the store were flat out, but kept smiling and distributed the goods. On our way back, we stopped in to check out the Art Exhibition, then back to the hillside. There I saw that things had got muddy in parts and people were sliding around in it and making up percussion music and singing. The need to get muddy wasn't there for me; I only had a few bits of clothing and they were staying dry!

The general layout and amenities were good, considering how haphazard the show was thrown together. There was still that naïve element about planning a mass event as such. This was before the mass movements towards Washington for a more forceful presence. This was more like a romp in the woods where all the great bands converged. On the top side of the amphitheatre were commercial food stalls. The prices were up a bit and at one point; a fire broke out near dusk – an accident or revolutionaries at work? – who knows.

When it was all over we were bushed, but felt it was worth the hike in and out to see such a spectacle. Somehow, we found the car and headed home totally satisfied and wondering if it would possibly happen again.

Regards, Gary,
Boronia, Vic.

The rise and fall of the Aussie Age of Aquarius...

By the time the sounds and images of the great outdoor festivals wafted across the Pacific Ocean to Australia, our local music had left the Beat days and the "scream years" of the British Invasion and **The Beatles** well behind. Even the great discos of the city region were entering their final phase – indeed some of the early ones which had



Camping out – Mulwala-style. Roughing it was what it was all about. (Go-Set, 8 April, 1972, photographer unknown)

commenced about 1965, were already in decline and the "performance venues" such as Opus in Prahran and The T.F. Much Ballroom in Fitzroy which offered more than just music. They were the popular places of the day as the 'sixties decade came to a close. These venues, in particular had a degree of security for the 'teens that enjoyed "pot" smoking. Inside the doors, they could feel relatively (but not altogether) safe from a police "bust" perhaps in the same way that those in the fields at Monterey, California could in 1967.

It was a natural progression then to take this increasingly popular music from the venues to the outdoors, on a larger stage and to weekend-long festivals which could encapsulate all that a night at The T.F. Much could offer, but in an extended program in a haven-like setting, (in theory, anyway!). Furthermore, by the beginning of the new decade, the Melbourne suburban pubs or "beer barns" as they became fondly known had come into their own, offering the maturing

'teens the chance to both have a legal drink and listen to loud music. Given this shift away from the cramped and claustrophobic discotheques, it was a natural progression to adopt the idea of the multi-artist, outdoor music extravaganza in Australia, given the sunshine available and the warmer climate in summer, (again, in theory!).

Over time and in different parts of Australia, Woodstock-style festivals were held and each had varying success. Probably the inaugural Sunbury became the best known and most loved. There were others, particularly in New South Wales and South Australia as well as Victoria, [though not all are listed here](#):

The "Pilgrimage For Pop" – Ourimbah, N.S.W., Australia Day, 24-26 January 1970

"The Miracle", Launching Place, Victoria, 28 – 30 March 1970

The "Odyssey Festival", Wallachia, N.S.W., January 1971

The "Australian Festival of Progressive Music", Myponga, South Australia, 30 January - 1 February 1971

Rosebud – Boxing Day, 26 December, 1971

Sunbury Festival '72, Australia Day Weekend, 29 – 31 January 1972

The Meadows Technicolour Fair, Adelaide, Australia Day Weekend, 29 – 31 January, 1972.

The "Rock Isle Festival", Mulwala, N.S.W., 21 – 24 April 1972

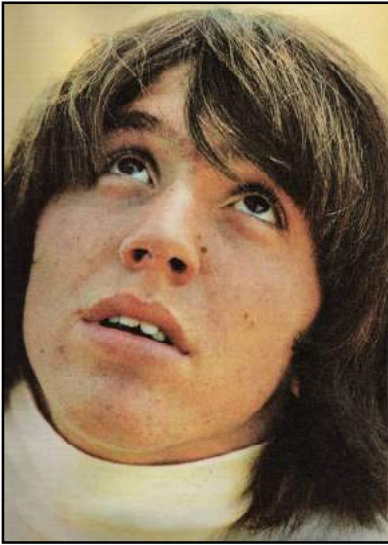
Sunbury Festival '73, Australia Day Weekend, 26 – 29 January 1973

Aquarius Festival, Nimbin, northern N.S.W., May 1973

Sunbury Festival '74, Australia Day Weekend, 25 – 28 January 1974

Sunbury Festival '75, Australia Day Weekend, 24 – 27 January 1975

“The Pilgrimage For Pop”, Ourimbah - 24 - 26 January 1970 - a long weekend of love, peace and endless music...



probably be considered “local” by 1970 as they had bought a farm between Matcham and Ourimbah. So by then, having been in the country for three years and having played the discos and dances around Sydney, they joined in the organising team for Ourimbah. Right at the beginning, there was a circulating rumour that **John and Yoko** (yes... the Lennons!) were going to appear as the headline act and, although it has since been revealed that they *were* actually contacted, the request arrived too late for them to even give scant consideration to appearing. Therefore – perhaps by default, it became an all-Australian event.

Life after The Easybeats – Stevie Wright attempted to get his career back on track at Ourimbah. (Everybody’s Magazine, 11 May, 1966)

Emle Stonewall Promotions (E.S.P.) was headed by a woman named Maureen, according to off-beat Melbourne poet and proformer, **Adrian Rawlins**. The EMLE was an acronym for a well-known advertising jingle at the time – “Electricity Makes Life Easier” and the “electricity” part also represented “psychic energy” or “prana” in the minds of some of the more enlightened folk around. Rawlins, who had some part in the organisation, seemed concerned at the beginning with the lack of expertise that he was seeing among the organisers:

ADRIAN RAWLINS: “There was a great deal of enthusiasm but very little real know-how; I was somewhat aghast at the lack of an advertising budget, at the lack of money generally. I immediately arranged for investments from Clifford Hocking (Australia’s most prestigious entrepreneur) and Charlie Vodicker. Clifford had been generally excited by the 450,000 people who had turned up at the Woodstock Festival ... and Charlie was positively entranced with the possibility of doing something similar here. They both agreed to lend money to E.S.P. for 2 months at an interest rate of 7 1/2% - very reasonable terms given the circumstances” (Rawlins, Festivals in Australia: An intimate History, 1982., Pp 3,4.)

Yet, being the first of the great Australian rock festivals, it equated more with Monterey than Woodstock in many ways; most particularly with the organisation of the event which was in retrospect, reasonably satisfactory after all. It was also the major showcase of Australian talent – both Sydney and Melbourne acts shared the stage throughout the weekend. The bands which headlined were: **Jeff St. John and Copperwine, Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs**, Sydney’s **Tamam Shud** (with Gaze and Bejerre together), **Tully, Wendy Saddington, Doug Parkinson In Focus, Max Merritt and The Meteors, Leo DeCastro and Friends, Levi Smith’s Clefs** and ex-Easybeat, **Stevie Wright’s band, Rchette**. A number of these acts which came to Ourimbah have since achieved legendary status and many have realised that the exposure they had on the outdoor stage and the publicity associated with their appearances, was responsible in part for their rise to prominence on the rock scene over the next decade.

Maureen, (second name unknown) of E.S.P., had little knowledge of the world of rock ‘n roll and came from an advertising background. Nevertheless, she hosted **Billy Thorpe** and **Doug Parkinson** when they came to check out the Ourimbah site, yet she seemed reluctant at that time to fix in place any contracts with the bands.

Rawlins has stated that most bands eventually received somewhere between \$150 and \$700 for each spot on the weekend and **Tully** (which he managed) attracted a fee of \$1000 per spot. This arrangement was not going to go smoothly though:



Doug and Wendy – both appeared on the Ourimbah stage. Parkinson with his In Focus and Saddington with Chain. (Go-Set, 19 May, 1973 – courtesy of Philip Morris)

ADRIAN RAWLINS: “There was great feeling, though the event was not without mishap: at the eleventh hour, the agents handling many of the leading bands wanted their money in advance – which we couldn’t do – so pulled their bands out of their Saturday billings. Most of those bands came of their own volition on the Sunday, giving rise to the most incredible public jam session in Australian Rock, in which Barrie McCaskill (sic) and Lobby Lloyd (sic) fronted a roaring rhythm section. The musicians were paid in cash on the spot in a carnival atmosphere of bonhomie” (Rawlins, 1928, Pp 6, 7.)

Rawlins was to also act as compare for the weekend and he first welcomed the assembled throng around midday on the Friday as the temperature rose to a tolerably warm 28°C. The music opened with **The Nutbush Rug Band** and lead singer **Margaret Goldie**, who was later criticised by the assembled

press, just waiting there for the slightest hint of a scandalous story. However, the critics’ best effort was to report on the language used by Goldie and how one fan took off her top and danced in front of the stage. In general, the reporters were in a positive frame of mind actually praising the “hippies” for abiding by their own peace and love mantra.

Lindsay Farr who played baritone sax had been “drafted” into the line-up for Sydney jazz/rock band, **Heart ‘n’ Soul** which was known for their soaring orchestral versions of *The 1812 Overture*, *MacArthur Park* and *The Brandenburg Concerto*. On the same day that Ourimbah commenced, they were also to play at a rival festival held at a race track in a rather dusty, industrial sector on the outskirts of Sydney. They were billed to open the show and bandleader, **Graeme Willington** duly collected the fee for the performance from the organisers. Farr remembers taking to the stage in front of an audience of about three people! The festival was cancelled within the hour! So, on to Ourimbah:

LINDSAY FARR: “We arrived at Ourimbah in the wee hours. The air was clean and surroundings green. Adrian Rawlins (compere) couldn't stop laughing. We were scheduled to play *Thus Spake Zarathrustra* (the 2001- *A Space Odyssey* theme) as the sun rose. Everyone in the band was excited by the possibilities of this. Alas, schedules fell behind and we didn't take the stage till a half-hour after sunrise. As spectacular as the festival was, I remember feeling that we had given an uninspired performance. Sitting on the hill with friends new and old was however, one of those rare times in a life when I felt truly blissful. It was sad to leave in the afternoon for night gigs in Sydney.” (Farr, email correspondence, 26 December, 2004)

Farr remembers one particular incident surrounding a musician who spent quality recreational time having sex inside his tent with a young lady he had met on site. When the band returned to Sydney, they all needed to use the



The “king” of the outdoor festivals – Billy Thorpe teamed with guitar “king” – Lobby Loyde for Ourimbah. He’s still gets “pumped” after all this time. Photo taken in 2002; and the volume is the same as it was in 1972!

toilets at the first venue they were to play at. The musician was astounded to see his penis glowing bright green under the psychedelic lighting. Feeling a little anxious about this phenomenon, he visited a doctor and was relieved when tests confirmed there was nothing to be concerned about. What caused the green glow – any suggestions?



The inimitable Adrian Rawlins photographed in 1993. He died in 2001. (Photographer unknown)

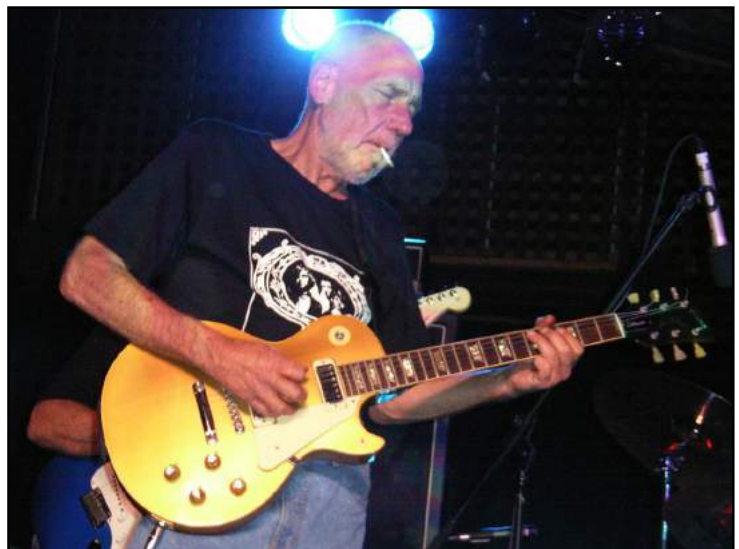
By 1970, **Billy Thorpe** had long since left his original **Aztecs** behind and, as he did for this event at Ourimbah, continued to re-invent himself over the decades. At this point, he managed to convince former **Wild Cherries** and **Purple Hearts** guitarist, **Lobby Loyde** to join the resurrected **Aztecs** even if it was only for a short few months. The coupling of these two legends of Aussie rock on the same stage when both were at the peak of their form, must have been just awesome! It also marked the appearance of the “new and improved” Billy Thorpe image – pig-tails, beard and singlet rather than the neat, brushed hair, dark suits and ties of the early days. From being just lead vocalist with the original Aztecs he was, thanks to some coaching from the guitar-genius Loyde, beginning to emerge as a stage-ready guitarist himself:

BARRY HARVEY: “Lobby Loyde,... man, he was the best guitarist in Australia. The solo he played with Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs at Ourimbah ... is a ball-tearer. Really something special. Lobby was... and still is, man, he is the most intelligent musician I have ever met in Australia and when he started the Coloured Balls with Trevor Young on drums they were a punk band and had the punk haircuts 10 years before punk music came out in England with The Sex Pistols. Lobby had already done that” (Harvey, op cit, 4 November, 2004)

Attempting to resurrect his career for this festival, if only for a short time, was **Easybeats’** frontman **Stevie Wright**, fresh from his break up with the seminal Aussie band which he had helped to propel to fame. With his friend, guitarist **Steve Housden** he formed **Rchette** just for this festival – typical of Stevie’s sense of humour, **Rchette** sounds a little like “ratshit” – all washed up and finished. It couldn’t be more indicative of his self-image at just one of the many difficult and potentially self-destructive times in his life and career.

Ex-kiwi, **Max Merritt** is another who had re-invented himself over time with successive line-ups of **The Meteors** since arriving from New Zealand in the early ‘sixties. At that time, he established himself in Sydney and then moved south to the Melbourne discos. The venture had enhanced and expanded his career, and he was one of many bands which held court in the discos, just as the pop festivals were emerging.

However, following the car accident in country Victoria in June, 1967 which had almost cost Merritt and band members, **Stewie Speers**, “**Yuk” Harrison** and **Bob Bertles** their lives, he managed to re-build **The Meteors** yet again. Ourimbah though, was not a happy experience for the band which had just managed to stabilise their line - up to a great degree. Because of a reportedly drunken sub - standard stage performance that weekend, the axe was swung and “**Yuk” Harrison** was removed from the band. Merritt took the opportunity to add **Dave Russell** as bass player to the ever-improving Meteors.



Lobby Loyde’s set at Ourimbah has been accepted by many as a major high point in Australian Rock. (Courtesy of Lori Lee Cash)

The festival itself drew only six thousand or so people who arrived on the Saturday and perhaps about ten thousand came for the Sunday line up – just a small number when placed against the possible three-quarters of a million who crammed into **Max Yasgur's** farm at Bethel for Woodstock about six months prior. Rawlins may have over-estimated the Saturday night crowd when he reported that about 10,000 were in attendance although only 6,333 tickets were reportedly sold. (Rawlins, 1982, P7.)

As for the police, they were certainly in attendance – both uniformed and plain clothes officers made probably only a couple of dozen arrests, all for minor incidents and there doesn't seem to be any evidence of mass drug "busts" on site. Any potential trouble was thwarted early when security turned away a bunch of leather-clad Hells Angels before they even reached the festival site. Rawlins downplayed the number of arrests and he remembered:

ADRIAN RAWLINS: "The local police had, by the way, anticipated a riot and set up fortifications, including tommy guns. They stood around eating ice creams, bemused. There were two (!) arrests for drunkenness, one for indecent language, and 114 charges of unroadworthy vehicles." (Rawlins, 1982, Pp 7, 8.)

In review, Ourimbah was considered a relative success on all levels - even the hosts, the Nicholls were happy with the result – Australia's first tentative steps into the outdoor festival arena brought with it a positive vibe. Yet the festival didn't necessarily make any money. Emle Stonewall Productions disappeared from site immediately afterwards and **The Nutwood Rug Band** continued to hold a few minor festivals on their own property. The musicians were, in the main, reasonably happy because they did get paid in cash although the backers, **Clifford Hocking** and **Charlie Vodicker** didn't see a cent coming their way!

"The Miracle Festival", Launching Place - 28 - 30 March 1970 - "... it's in a bloody swamp!..."

"I remember the gig clearly, we did get to play and it was The Chain with Warren (Pig) Morgan on piano and a guest appearance by Wendy Saddington. I remember it because I was tripping, the whole band was and I even remember the lay out of the stage we played on. It was about the size of a boxing ring. It is easy to remember those things when you were that stoned. Those Acid times remain in some little corner of your brain and you can recollect so many things." (Barry Harvey, email correspondence, 14 July, 2005)



The Launching Place Hotel. The stopping-off place for travelers to the 1970 festival. Later that weekend it became the spot to seek refuge from the rain.

Victorians were to have their first taste of the rock festival genre on home territory, at the tiny saw-milling and logging town of Launching Place, near Yarra Junction, approximately fifty-three kilometres from the city, to the east of Melbourne. Out in the bush, the hamlet is situated on the main highway linking Lilydale and Warburton in the peaceful, timbered hills surrounding the upper reaches of the Yarra River, with the Launching Place pub as its central feature. It's roughly at a point where the Don River, flowing from surrounding hills meets The Yarra.

Its remoteness in the quiet, rural Yarra Valley seemed perfect for such an event.

Organised for the Easter weekend, Saturday 28 to Monday 30 March, 1970, "The Miracle" was to be unfortunately marred by the rain which fell for most of Saturday and the following Sunday morning. Probably only about three thousand people turned up to celebrate the arrival of large-scale outdoor rock music in this state.

It can be summed up in two words - cold and wet!

RHONDA MARTINEZ: "...Launching Place. I remember that started out to be a great weekend until the rain set in, then I remember hitch hiking home very wet and upset that the concert had to be cancelled. I'm sure Billy Thorpe actually made it to the stage though, before it was cancelled. (Martinez, email correspondence, 26 December, 2004)

"King Billy" was certainly signed to appear but didn't make it on to the very damp stage because by the time he was scheduled to play with his Aztecs, the event had already been abandoned. Also signed to play was **Chain, Healing Force, Wendy Saddington, Spectrum, King Harvest, The Nutbush Rug Band, Tully, Doug Parkinson, Hans Poulsen, Margret RoadKnight, Quinn, Carson County Band, Genesis, Max Merritt and the Meteors, Nick Rodger Group, Leo DeCastro and Friends, Black Alan, Lotus, Luntch, Karl and Janie, Motya and Geoff Crozier** with his outrageous and unpredictable magic act. Compare was to be the one and only, **Gerry Humphrys**.

For the short time it lasted, only a select few of these acts managed to get to show what they could do, that is if they actually turned up at the site at all. **Chain** and **The Adderley Smith Blues Band** definitely completed extended sets in between the heavy showers which **Bill Putt** of **Spectrum** observed had already set in on the Saturday morning. He



Martial Arts expert Bob Jones, (with friend) was called in to work out the logistics of the security requirements for "The Miracle". (Courtesy of Julius Media Pty Ltd)


recalls arriving, sitting in his car watching the rain pouring down, then calling it quits and driving back to Melbourne after hearing rumours that the whole thing was to be called off.

Launching Place was obviously doomed from the start and this was made evident because of the unpredictable Melbourne autumn weather which was really the headlining act! Thus it was not possible for this event to be financially viable in any form and the artists certainly found that any money they were expecting to receive was flushed away with the downpours. No one got paid! **Mike Rudd** seems to think that the **Let It Be Agency** or perhaps its forerunner in the music business world may have been the organiser/promoter and he definitely recalls industry identities, **Michael Browning** and **Peter Andrew** being involved.

Later, controversy surrounded the whereabouts of all monies obtained from the festival. Browning was co-owner and operator of Berties and Sebastians discos with **Tony Knight**. All were interesting characters of the times and the ultimate trend - setters in an era of distinct change and

THE MIRACLE

**3 Day Festival of
PEACE,
LOVE,
MUSIC!**



**On 28th., 29th., and 30th. March,
at Launching Place, Victoria, off
the Warburton Hwy., featuring**

TULLY, NUTWOOD RUG, DOUG PARKINSON, CHAIN, JEFF ST. JOHN, WENDY SADDINGTON, HANS POULSON, MARGARET ROADKNIGHT, GERRY HUMPHRIES, QUINN, SPECTRUM, CARSON COUNTY BAND, GENESIS, MAX MERRITT AND THE METEORS, NICK RODGER GROUP, JEFF CROZIER'S MAGIC ACT, BLACK ALAN, LOTUS, LUNTCH, LEO DE CASTRO AND FRIENDS, KARL AND JANIE, COMPACT, BILLY THORPE AND THE AZTECS, ADDERLEY SMITH BLUES BAND, MOTYA, AND POSSIBLY A SURPRISE!

SUNDAY SERVICE WITH TULLY AT DAWN, LIGHT SHOW BY ELLIS D. FOGG. TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE GATE, OR AT "MR. STRIPES BAZZAR," 175 ELIZABETH ST., MELBOURNE, OPPOSITE THE G.P.O.

3 Days - \$6, 2 Days - \$4, & 1 Day - \$2.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR CAMPING CAN BE MADE BEFOREHAND, TO ALLOW EASY ACCESS AND PROPER GUIDANCE. RING 329.8904, OR WRITE TO "THE MIRACLE", FOR BOOKINGS, AT 93 THERY ST., MELBOURNE 3000. CAR PARKING FACILITIES HAVE BEEN ARRANGED APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES AWAY FROM THE PROPERTY. COUNTRY BUSES LEAVE FOR LAUNCHING PLACE AND IT IS ADVISABLE TO BOOK EARLY.

REMEMBER TO BRING THE COMFORTS OF LIFE - LIKE A LARGE BLANKET, AND RAIN-WEAR, JUST IN CASE! WITH RESPECT TO THOSE THAT WISH TO COME, BUT ARE UNAble, WE RETURN THAT WISH TO YOU, IN SPIRIT FROM THE SEEDS SOWN ON MOTHER EARTH.

Mr Stripes Bazaar, on the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets (175 Elizabeth Street) was a magnet for the fashionable mods about town. It was distinguishable from other shops around by its black and white striped awning facing Elizabeth Street. Andrews himself was a true trendsetter and not just in the clothing business as he was the first person to openly admit on television to smoking marijuana. **Bob Jones**, karate expert/promoter/crowd controller who met with Andrew, remembers his excitement and enthusiasm about the concept:


BOB JONES: "I knew Peter from around the usual traps: Birties (sic), Sebastions, (sic) The Catcher and The Thumpin Tum.

One Saturday night he'd asked, 'Hey, ahh Bob, any chance you could call by the shop during next week? I have a business proposition I'm pretty sure you'll be interested in.... Have you heard about these pop festivals recently in the US?'

'Yeah, especially that Woodstock! Five hundred thousand punters!'

'I heard that too man! But that Altamont, fuck man, that got spaced out. .. I'm actually doing the ground work for the first-ever outdoor festival of this type in Melbourne ... I plan to promote it as The Miracle. The way you got this town wired with security, man I figure I'd be mad to even be thinking about doing this without you and your boys looking after the gig.'" (Jones, op cit, 2001, P92).

MIRACLE IS WORKING



The Launching Place open air pop festival is well under way. To be held over Easter, the festival called Miracle will star all of Australia's top groups, including Tully, the Chain, Spectrum, the Meteors, Wendy Saddington, Genesis and lots of others.

With another of Ellis D. Foggs amazing light shows the festival will also include happenings (the Australian Performing Group from La Mama will do their thing) and all sorts of other weird events.

The whole thing will be compered by the one and only Gerry Humphries.

In the picture above Spectrum and Chain check out Launching Place which is a huge farm near Warburton about 50 miles from Melbourne.

A report of the preliminary inspection of the site by a group of musos including Bill Putt from Spectrum, (left). (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

provisions for any inclement weather. Toilets were without roofs and fairly useless anyway. Even the stage equipment and electrics – instruments, mikes and speakers - were open to the elements and could not be used until a makeshift covering for the stage was hurriedly rigged up.

"The Miracle" could in retrospect, be considered a "false start" to the festival era in Victoria. Yet, when a group of musicians which included **Bill Putt** arrived at the empty and barren site on a warm and sunny day the previous week for a publicity shoot, all seemed well. The group surveyed the site which at that point did not even have the stage erected. Putt recalls that **Matt Taylor, Phil Manning, Barry Harvey** and **Barry Sullivan** from **Chain** and **Wendy Saddington** and **Warren Morgan** went there with him for some publicity shots to be taken on this glorious, sunny day.

Andrew had asked **Bob Jones** to look after the essentials of car parking; discussed over lunch one day at Pelligrinis Restaurant. During that same sunny week, Andrew had taken Jones to the site to look over the security and parking arrangements after agreeing on the financial details to have Bob Jones' men on site – no cost spared.

Jones had become a very well known, even notorious figure in the security business at the time and was just in the process of building the karate and event security branches of his organisation. Andrew showed Jones the site layout but the martial arts expert was concerned about parking for the festival. Jones suggested that the farm on the other side of the road would make a great parking area. As it turned out, the owner was happy to have his property used in such a way (at an acceptable price) and it was just left to Jones to figure out a strategic plan for the paddock:

BOB JONES: "On the Friday morning, twenty-four hours before concert time, I had this bright idea for the car park. I bought a large hessian bag full of flour, a reel of string and a few buckets and funnels to match. By about lunchtime that Friday, my guys and I had that farmer's hill turned into a grand car park to rival Disneyland. We'd walked out fifty metres at a time with the string line for all the parallel lines and had walked out all of our access drive ways. Another team used car-length string lines and a bucket and funnel to pour the flour. (The farmer, as part of his deal, had cut the grass right back for us.) We had that acreage of beautiful short grass all white lined out with cooking flour. I also purchased yellow waterproof (just in case of rain) jackets and high-powered torches to show off our ingenious white lines..." (Jones, op cit, 2001, P93-94).

A day later, rock writer Ed Nimmervoll was there and commented on the site and the car park in *Go-Set*:

NIMMERVOLL: "On arrival in the pouring rain, we were required to pay a dollar to park our vehicles in grassy fields some hundred yards from the actual site.

At the end of these yards stood a caravan with a sign which read "Pay Here" or some other equally blunt message. Six dollars. No questions. Just six dollars or you don't make it.



The much earlier (1967) Adderley Smith Blues Band with, from left, Kerryn Tolhurst, Colin Graham, Mark Dindas, Broderick Smith and Ron Isaacs. (Photographer unknown - Courtesy of Broderick Smith)



The Three Amigos - Chain-style, 2006. Phil Manning, Matt Taylor and Barry Harvey. They did get to play at The Miracle, Launching Place, despite the rain.

guest, **Chain's** set was delivered against the backdrop of an impending electrical storm and Saddington was certainly striking (no intended pun) with that huge, frizzy mop of hair aglow against the distant lightning flashes:

NIMMERVOLL: "Lightning was beginning to lick the sky. The Chain came on to deliver an impressive set; Phil Manning looking like Johnny Winter with his blond locks. They really belted it out, joined by Wendy after they'd sung a song of theirs inspired by Ourimbah.

We made it but not before we'd braved the 45 degree slope at the gate, a slope which the rain had covered with a cloak of mud, making it a tricky operation that is, if you intended to stay upright, and more important, clean.

...Further up the slope... you could look down on the complete scene. People, pretty messy at the foot of a towering landscape, humbled by the rain." (Nimmervoll, *Go-Set*, date unknown)

When the weekend did get underway, the stop-start nature of the first part of the scheduled program meant that only a few bands did make it to the stage at one point or another before the

whole event was cancelled. **Tully** is said to have completed a short set and local band, **Luntch** got underway only to be rained out. Late on Saturday afternoon, with **Wendy Saddington** on stage as

Wendy seemed to have more hair than ever in that lightning. She gave a typical performance. It was good, but she was obviously not pleased with it or the vibes. At one point in her act, the canvas canopy billowed out, showering the audience with the water that it had collected, causing a delay.” (Nimmervoll, *Go-Set*, date unknown, 1970).

Broderick Smith, of **The Adderley Smith Blues Band**, **Carson and The Dingoes** was a National Serviceman on leave from the army with his mate, **Kerryn Tolhurst**. They arrived at Launching Place. Brod, wearing a suit, was asked by Tolhurst to “guest” with the Adderleys on stage and he played harp backup behind singer, **Paul Lever**. Obviously not thoroughly impressed with Smith’s “guest performance”, *Go-Set* reporter **Ed Nimmervoll** commented in his wrap-up in the next edition of the magazine:

NIMMERVOLL: “...the Adderley Smith Blues Band; a robust, cheery, lead singer who liked to shake his hair so that it did a dance; a guitarist in heavy overcoat; a couple of skinheads on guitar and drums; another guitarist and a second singer who was a bit of a luxury.” (Nimmervoll, *Go-Set*, date unknown, 1970).

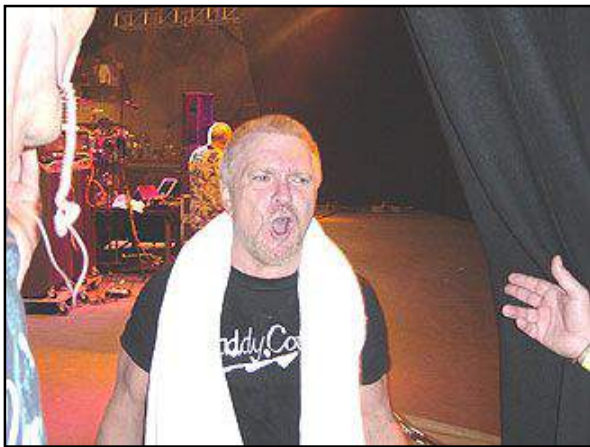


The Go-Set photographer managed to catch Chain’s Phil Manning swimming in the water – or was it wading through the mud. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

The Adderleys played a set which included *Feel So Bad*, *Rollin’ and Tumblin’* and a very apt *Rainy Monday Blues*.

Smith remembers Tolhurst sitting on the front of the stage with his legs dangling over the edge playing his lap steel guitar during the set. At one point, a hippie-looking guy moved up through the crowd and thought his pet python would dig sitting on Tolhurst’s guitar, so he draped it over the instrument and around the musician’s neck. This immediately sent Tolhurst into a flat panic because he was basically scared of snakes – not a really good idea! **Gerry Humphrys** was not so fearful of the python and actually wore it around his neck on stage as he announced

the groups which managed to get on and play. Humphrys introduced his young daughter up there, while wearing the coiling serpent until his wife deftly whisked her away and back into the audience to safety.



Billy Thorpe comes off stage from The Tsumani Concert at The Sidney Myer Music Bowl in 2005. The Aztecs were signed to play at Launching Place but did not get to step foot on the stage. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

prompting the vigilant Humphrys to call from the stage: “A fight. Stop the fight. That’s what *they* want. Don’t take any pictures, you with the camera. They have stopped the fight. They have stopped the fight. Give them a hand. They have stopped the fight.” (Nimmervoll, *Go-Set*, date unknown, 1970).

Drummer Barry Harvey has vivid memories of his set with Chain, thanks to a little good acid:

BARRY HARVEY: ‘It was raining like crazy .. I remember the stage because when the light show went on it lit up all the audience who were hanging on to the stage. I only

remember this because of how good the Acid was. But I will tell you something; when the lights lit up the faces of the people hanging on to the front of the stage it was like 'welcome to my nightmare', because the majority of faces were so pissed and stoned that they were drooling from the mouth...saliva, it was frightening." (Harvey, email interview, 14 July, 2005)

Adrian Rawlins spent most of the three days hanging out backstage with the crazy magician, **Geoff Crozier**:

ADRIAN RAWLINS: "... Geoff Crozier... had rigged out his tent like a suburban living room. Carpets covered the grass. There were lounge chairs, comfy arm-chairs, a chaise-longe. Even an aspidistra and a potted palm. Junk-shop pictures hung on the tent poles. And there was a boarding-house gas ring attached to a porta-gas cylinder. There were usually twenty people sitting about. Wendy Saddington and I made tea for everyone. It was bizarre and thoroughly wonderful. (Rawlins, 1982, P9.)

Rawlins reports that in typical **Geoff Crozier** fashion, when the sun actually burst through the clouds on the Saturday afternoon, Crozier:

ADRIAN RAWLINS: "... rose to the occasion. Donning his magician's robes, he led several hundred heavily stoned people in an impromptu pied piper's dance around the festival area. It looked like part of a medieval Mummer's play. Half an hour later, it was raining cats and dogs." (Rawlins, 1982, PP 9, 10.)

Brod Smith's lasting memory of Launching Place was a scene that could possibly be used to typify this first rock festival on Victorian soil:

BRODERICK SMITH: "It was pouring rain and I was walking by the front of the stage during the afternoon and I noticed a young man lying face down in a pool of water and mud, unconscious. I asked some other bloke nearby what's going on. He replied "Oh, he's cool; he's just sculled a bottle of Johnny Walker." So the guy's dead drunk and unconscious, face down in mud and water and his friends I guess were tripping, going by their idiot, flaming-eye grins. Needless to say I wasn't, so I put him in a fireman's hold and carried him to the St. John's ambulance tent where they pumped out his stomach.

He's probably a right-wing public accountant now somewhere, who doesn't realise he nearly died on a hillside in the bush, but occasionally has these weird flashbacks of being carried on someone's shoulders through a large crowd of mud-spattered natives." (Smith, email correspondence, 22 April, 2005).

The Miracle of Easter that year was that nobody *did* actually drown in the water and mud, given the sad and sorry conditions of both the "natives" and the site itself. **Bob Jones** and his band of crowd controllers found that their time too, was mainly taken up with rescuing the punters from the conditions and from themselves:



Broderick Smith and Kerryn Tolhurst on stage at a later point as The Dingoes. (Photographer unknown - Courtesy of Broderick Smith)

BOB JONES: "We spent most of our time at that festival pulling drunks and drug cases out of the mud because later it became a total quagmire. The first-aid tents were just flat-out ... but mainly it was people just falling over, face down in the mud and not being able or in any condition to get out of it ... the mud just sucked them in. We actually saved quite a few lives that day. What we did all Saturday night was carry people off to the St. John's First Aid tent." (Jones, op cit 15 August, 2005)

A lasting memory of Launching Place is the two part song which **Mike Rudd** of **Spectrum** had written just prior to the festival, but was destined not to perform it that weekend. It was released as the "B" side to their career-shaping hit, *I'll Be Gone*.

MIKE RUDD: "...the agency sent bands down to check out the place. So on the strength of what they said, I wrote the lyrics to *Launching Place Parts 1 and 2*. I thought this is a great way to get into the studio and do a single advertisement for the show. So we got into the studio and,...Howard Gable ended up in there with us and he'd just arrived from Sydney via Auckland. ... We did *Launching Place Parts 1 and 2*" (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

Was **Matt Taylor** heard to remark later, in contrast to the day that he inspected the site, 'It's in a bloody swamp!?'

BOB JONES: "Remember that car park idea of mine? Well, all that rain had flooded it out and all those long straight lines of hundreds and hundreds of vehicles had all slid down the hillsides to a valley of solid steel all jammed together at the bottom. Tow trucks and dozers were there for a week untangling the mess!" (Jones, op cit, 2001, P95-96).

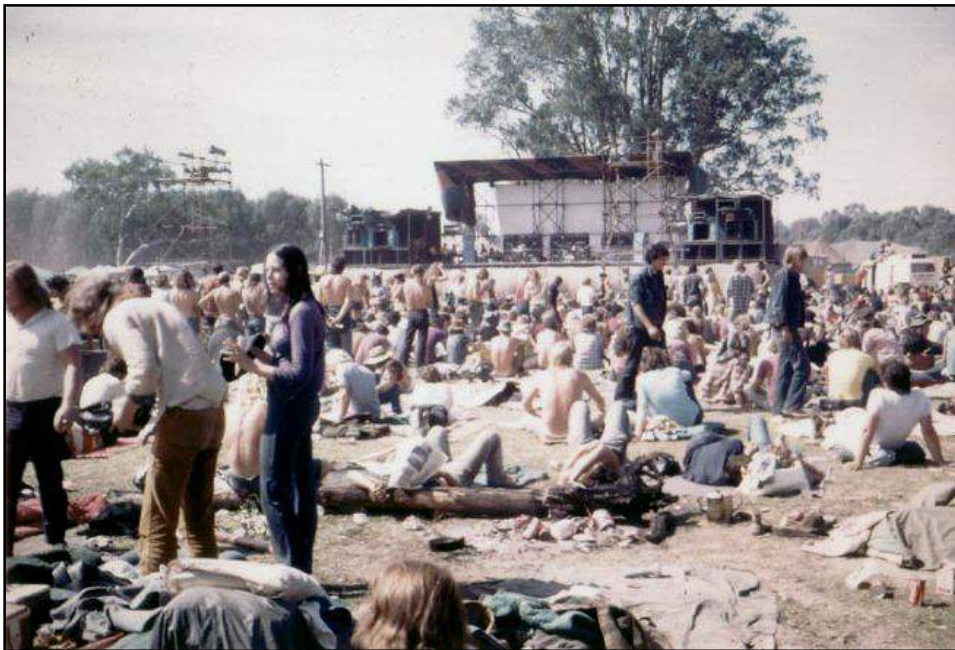
“The Rock Isle Festival”, Mulwala, 1 - 3 April 1972 - “take the money and run...”

“There was a guy selling roast chickens, he had them in gas ovens and he was yelling out. ‘Thorpie’s on tonight, you need some food, try the chooks, Thorpies on to-night.’ He opened the oven and there was a huge gas explosion; he was knocked off his feet, his hair was singed and he was lying on the ground surrounded by bits and pieces of roast chicken and again said, ‘Thorpie’s on tonight I might see him if I don’t kill myself, try the chooks.’” (Terry Hennessy, correspondence, 19 January, 2005)

Set on the banks of the mighty, Murray River on the New South Wales/Victoria border, Mulwala’s “Rock Isle Festival” from 1 to 3 April, 1972 drew travellers from both Sydney and Melbourne being reasonably accessible and roughly equi-distant to both cities. The site of the festival was on the river flats on the New South Wales (northern) side of The Murray but still within sight of the river.

**On the open flats and near the Murray River, was the stage at Mulwala.
(Courtesy of Wendy Grigg, nee Wild)**

sound generated from the stage was not as good when compared to other festivals and this may have been due to



There were plenty of problems to come. Firstly, and by many accounts, the sound generated from the stage was not as good when compared to other festivals and this may have been due to the openness of the site, as much as any lack of efficiency with the Jands sound system. Secondly, the timing of the festival for the Easter long weekend may in hindsight, not have been the best choice for the festival. **Gaye Patterson** from ABC radio, Goulburn Murray, recently spoke to a local who remembered the site:

VINCENT SLATERY: “It’s in the river flats below the golf club, and they (the concert organisers) got permission to get water out of the Lake through what’s

known as the North gates, which flooded all the lagoons and the creeks and that made it into sort of like an island and that’s what they tried to make it, the ‘Rock Isle’ pop festival.” (Slatery, www.abc.net.au/goulburnmurray, Wednesday 8 October, 2003).

The property, which reportedly has since been bought by the golf club belonged to local farmer, **Geoff Roberts**. He recounted that the event was staged and backed by locals **Rex “Tiger” Wright**, **Don Boag** with newsagent, **“Chick” Fawcett**, all of whom appear to have had little or no experience in promoting such a large-scale event and they may not have had any real understanding of what was required to organise a full-on rock festival. It was not looking like being any sort of great success from the start, despite the intense build up where the promoters made rash claims that Mulwala was to be “bigger than anything which had ever been seen before.”

Pre-publicity for the event abounded in the press and it appeared that no expense was being spared in getting a positive spin on the event. *Go-Set* reporter **Colin James** was with **Michael Browning**, **Billy Thorpe** and his manager, Channel 7’s **Danny Webb** with a photographer, another photographer from *TV Week* and, “a lovely lady

from Jenny Ham's Public relations firm" (*Go-Set*, Saturday, April 8, 1972, P.6), who all flew up in a ten-seat Cessna on Friday 24 March. The entourage was met by a fleet of taxis at Yarrowonga Airfield and taken to the site. Even though it was a week or more before the event, a hundred or so campers were in attendance, many hoping to get some of the limited number of jobs on offer. In his article published in *Go-Set*, James reported in a rather positive and upbeat fashion:

COLIN JAMES: "The promoters set out to spend 150,000 dollars setting the festival up, but say that now its cost closer to 200,000 dollars. ... The promoters feel that if they've fixed the site up properly, if all the facilities are there for people to enjoy themselves, no trouble will ensue. About booze, they seemed a little mixed on their reaction, with some saying they were stopping it completely and some saying, Well we'll only let cans in." (*Go-Set*, Saturday, April 8, 1972, P.6)

This indecision regarding the non-regulation of alcohol was to attract a degree of criticism later.

Throughout the following week after the festival had concluded, photos appeared in the newspapers showing young festival-goers swimming nude in the river, but site-owner **Geoff Roberts**

remembers that these were *not* taken at any time during the festival, but were organised for the preceding Saturday and set up as promotion for the event. Yet, when they were published, they were purported to be from the weekend of the festival. Again James noted in his *Go-Set* article:

COLIN JAMES: "The Murray River itself is magnificent and the swimming area for the festival site matches that description. There is a natural sand beach and the promoters have moved in 2 ½ acres of extra sand to make a reasonabl(y) shallow area in the river. The swimming area runs right alongside the camping area, which is also beautiful, because there is a lot of trees." (*Go-Set*, Saturday, April 8, 1972, P.6).

No one at that point in time was to know that this area would be the scene of tragedy later in the festival.

Mark De Carteret, his mates and their girlfriends were typical of the crowd which came along for the weekend:

MARK DE CARTERET: "We were young, the age range from 17 to probably only 20. I was 19, unemployed and broke. I had to borrow the entry fee (I think it was \$10.00) from a girl friend. That girl friend wasn't allowed to attend but luckily I had another girlfriend that was able to attend.

At Mulwala we were able to take the cars on-site so we could unload and camp beside the vehicles. While we were setting up, I remember seeing 3 guys on a motor bike, 2 facing forward and the one on the end was facing backwards and blowing a bugle. It looked like a promising start to the weekend. Someone in our group had brought along a large canvas tent, 12 foot x 18 foot. We somehow got the tent up and just dumped our gear on the ground inside the tent.

Other cars and bikes rolled up at different times. I recall seeing the next morning, a bloke had parked his bike near us and gone to sleep with his head against the wheel of one of our cars. Scary stuff to think what might have happened if the car had been moved.

Later on the first night I was in the back of my mate's panel van with my girlfriend doing the things you do. My mate came along later and without warning, retrieved his blanket from the back of the van. My girlfriend and I had been using the blanket for warmth and I suppose modesty. Very unsettling on a cold night." (De Carteret, author's correspondence, 1 August, 2005.

The two main acts were American imports – reasonably big names; **Stephen Stills**, (ex- **Buffalo Springfield**, ex-

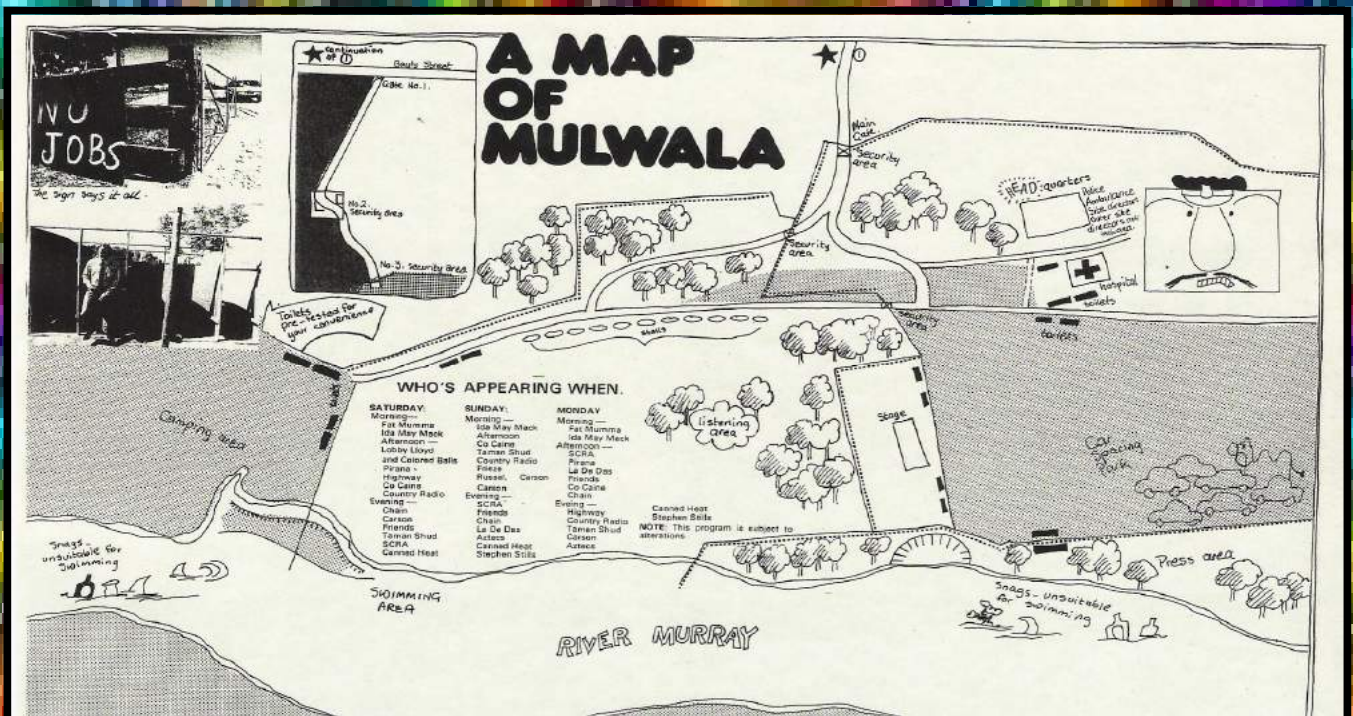


Stephen Stills (far right) with the Mulwala line-up of Manassas – they may not have been the most harmonious band of musicians around at the time. (*Go-Set*, 8 April, 1972)

"Rock Isle", Mulwala 1972 - The Location ...



Above - the aerial photo of Mulwala with the Murray River in the background and the stage area in the centre. The entrance to the festival site is at the bottom, right. **Below** - the map of the site showing the proposed layout including the camping areas, stalls, amenities and security checkpoints. (Go-Set, 8 April, 1972)



Crosby, Stills and Nash) with his band, **Manassas**, and **Big Bob Hite's Canned Heat**. Australian performers such as: **Chain**, **Company Caine**, **Doug Parkinson**, **Friends**, **Russell Morris & Cycle**, **Frieze**, **Ida May Mack**, **Carson**, **La De Das**, **Lobby Loyde & The Coloured Balls**, **Country Radio**, **Fat Mumma**, **Pirana**, **Tamam Shud** and of course, **Billy Thorpe & the Aztecs**, took to the stage and were far from being relegated to support status.



Everyone was at Mulwala for a great time – though not all remembered it! (Courtesy of Wendy Grigg)

absolutely no discussion between band members as to what their set list was to be and they flew by the seat of their pants when they began their performance. Farr reports however, that it was one of those times when everyone just simply rose to expectations. It all just came together and their set was brilliant, inspired and thoroughly well received by the legion of fans.

If **Carson's** act was unplanned, then the overall event planning and organisation (or lack of it!) certainly matched it, but without the positive results. As well, excess alcohol and noticeable violence seemed to be the most criticised elements of this festival. From a musicians' point of view, putting two bands with a similar sound together was not a clever piece of scheduling. **Canned Heat** had to follow **Carson** after the Melbourne band had totally conquered the audience which then proved difficult for **Bob Hite's** band and put them in jeopardy from the outset:

LINDSAY BJERRE: "There's some stupid things like putting Carson on before Canned Heat. Two boogie bands. Carson really ripped it and then they sat in the audience and then there was that can-throwing thing and then Canned Heat had to turn around and play boogie music to warm them all back up again, which wasn't fair to them." (Bjerre from, Dean Moriarty, *Daily Planet* 19 April 1972,).

Some of the audience in front of the stage were heard to urge and incite others around them to piss into empty beer cans and toss them at the stage just as **Canned Heat** started up. **Broderick Smith**, who had led **Carson** to their earlier triumph, recalls the difficulties **Canned Heat** faced after following his band:

BRODERICK SMITH: "It was one of those awkward situations because we were right on before them... I don't know why they scheduled it that way... and we played a 45-minute boogie and the crowd loved us and all that... then Canned Heat came on and they had to play for two hours. They eventually had the crowd really getting' off on

The weekend's hosts were the irrepressible **Gerry Humphrys**, 'Masters **Jim Keays**, and **Barry Strange**. Many remember Humphrys' ad libbing on stage and his on-the-spot ode to one of the food sellers,

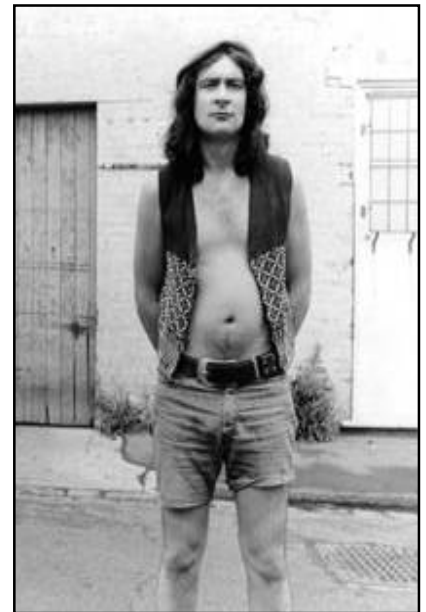
**'If you want some veggie food, go to Shakahari,
it's down the back just under a tree,
it'll make you fart and feel healthee.'**"

(Hennessy, op cit 19 January, 2005).

Humphrys reportedly performed *Ongo Bongo Man* for the first time, this weekend.

By all accounts, most Aussie acts gave superb performances almost upstaging their higher profile American compatriots. **Carson**, according to some reports, totally outshone **Canned Heat**, when they preceded them on stage.

Lindsay Farr, who had played sax with **Heart 'n' Soul** at Ourimbah, travelled to Mulwala in the same car with **Michael Chugg** and **Gulliver Smith**. Although not in any particular band at that time, he sat in with **Carson** to fill out the horn section alongside **Mal Capewell**. His recollections are clear. On the journey down from Sydney and before the set, there was



Gerry Humphrys, a unique talent was co-compare at Mulwala. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)

them, but the first hour was really tough going for them, mainly because the crowd, by the time Canned Heat went on, were *sick* of boogies... they didn't want to hear another *boogie!*" (Smith, interview, 17 April, 2005)

Adding to the confusion and mixed blessings was the time lost while announcements were made from the stage that **Canned Heat** would not perform until fans came down from the two light towers. Centrally placed, these temporary scaffolds were looking a little precarious under the weight of a few thrill-seekers who had scaled them for a better vantage point. Fans below, when incited by **Bob Hite** from the stage, took matters into their own hands and began to pelt those on the towers with beer cans until they finally came back down to ground level:

BRUCE HERITAGE: "The stage and atmosphere when Canned Heat came on was incredible. The singer, don't ask me where his head was, told the audience to piss in their beer cans and throw it at the people who were up on the lights. So we all did. It looked like a golden shower, with cans getting thrown at them, the poor bastards. (Heritage, correspondence, 14 January, 2005)

The towers were demolished the next day to prevent a potential disaster.

Mark De Carteret was there mainly for **Canned Heat** as he was a huge fan of the visiting band. He doesn't remember much of what the other acts presented as he was focused on just the American headliners:

MARK DE CARTERET: "My main reason for going was to see Canned Heat. A few of my mates were musicians and I had become a fan of

the band. I can't remember seeing any other act other than Canned Heat, probably more to do with the drugs and alcohol rather than the quality or otherwise of the acts. I vaguely remember making my way over to the stage from our campsite not long before the Heat came on. I do remember quite clearly Bob Hite sitting with his legs over the front of the stage saying "we've only been paid/booked to play for one hour but we'll play for as long as you want us to". The crowd went wild and the band played on. Maybe two hours." (De Carteret, op cit, 1 August, 2005).

Mulwala seemed jinxed in many ways, not the least being the weather:

VINCENT SLATERY: "The people that organised it and funded the show said they lost money on it, because what happened was the weather was fine until late Saturday night and then the heavens opened up and down came the rain ..on Monday it was more like mud racing day.. everybody packed up and left so it didn't really get to run out the full time, they were all like drowned rats. They packed up and left.." (Slatery, www.abc.net.au/goulburnmurray, op cit).

When interviewed at the time, **Lindsay Bjerre** from **Tamam Shud** also objected to the prison camp feel of the place and the hassles which the band members were experiencing:

LINDSAY BJERRE: "They're real piggy conditions. It looks like Stalag 17 or something. You look out there and that big tower with the lights on looks like a machine-gun turret and the big wire fence with the prisoners behind it. Barbed wire says 'Well, we really don't want you to come over.' Can you imagine if the crowd was running around near the stage with all that equipment?"

The music coming out sounded good but the guys couldn't feel it. I think you get up there expecting to hear everybody but all you hear is yourself and a bit of the guy next to you so you freak out and don't get the 'full on' thing like the people are getting and you get deflated and you can't put on your best. I felt alright but a couple of the guys got really uptight. They're pretty sensitive players. (Bjerre op cit, 19 April 1972).

The American "headliners" remained rather detached and distant from their local counterparts – some observers reported genuine hostilities between the opposing camps backstage. There had been an alleged unsettling incident at Melbourne Airport when Stills and his entourage had been given the mandatory search for drugs on arrival and this may have stirred him up. Further problems may have occurred on the light plane trip north:



Mulwala was set in a dust bowl – that is, until the rain came. (Courtesy of Wendy Grigg)

GREG QUILL: "I remember bits and pieces of the event,... Stills and Canned Heat were given star treatment, and didn't fraternize with the local talent. They came and went. I was impressed by Manassas -- very organized guitar



Canned Heat on the first of their two trips to Australia to do outdoor rock festivals. (Go-Set, 8 April, 1972)

Aussie guys and sent a deputation to him and we said, ... 'Okay, we agree... we'll all move out of the camping area.. The local acts will go back to their respective states; Canned Heat will go back to America and you can basically do the whole festival by yourself!' So an hour later we got another 'directive' from Stills saying that *he had decided to let us all stay...get that: HE had decided... fine!!*

Manassas was a very good Country Rock band, but when they went on it started raining and the keyboard player, Joe Lala was playing an organ which was on a generator and he had to constantly keep transposing. Beer cans and cigarettes started raining onto the stage then Stills decides that he was going to do this song... *Bluebird* ... I think it was called... beautiful ballad, using a grand piano. Now, the stage wasn't large enough for a grand piano to be there permanently... so he looks over at the crew to bring it on and mike it up for him. ALL the crews, including the American crews which had, by this time banded together as 'brothers in arms' in their mutual hatred of Steve Stills, all crossed their arms and sort of turned away or looked up at the sky... anywhere except at him, with that look on their faces as if to say, '*you* move it!' So Stills had to put his guitar down so he and Joe Lala had to move it into position and mike it. So he gets on the piano... it's raining beer cans and he's trying to sing this beautiful ballad, it's pelting the stage with cans and rain, the wind's blowing furiously and there's Stills with these tears rolling down his cheeks just from pure rage!! It was a huge example of Australian-American comradeship all directed at one guy! He didn't come back to Australia for decades." (Smith, op cit, 17 April, 2005).

Russell Morris who performed there with a band called **Cycle**, recalls something a bit more sinister. After riding all the way from Melbourne on his motor bike, he arrived backstage just in time to see Stills pull a gun on two other musicians who just knocked at his caravan door to say hello! (Morris, author's interview, 22 May, 2006)

Because Mulwala was not an entirely peaceful event down at crowd level, the conditions may have contributed to a less than blissful experience for many in the crowd as well:

GREG QUILL: "I vaguely remember an aggressive, pissed (pissed off?) crowd, and not a large one at all. I think everyone was down because it was clear from the start that Mulwala was a wash-out, that we probably wouldn't get paid, that no-one was going to enjoy it. It was a bad vibe. I don't know who the promoter was." (Quill, www.milesago.com).

Reports were rife about violence and witnesses reported a group of bikies laying into a young teenager for God-knows-what reason, except that he appeared, by his clothes and hair to be a "hippie". Most agree that it was an ugly sight which typified a rather drunken festival and thanks to the downpour, was destined not to last the full distance – it was cancelled early Monday morning! **Bruce Heritage** and his mates, Dave and Maurice along with Roxanne and Kayleen were camped near a group of bikies who had managed to get onto the site:

BRUCE HERITAGE: "We went to Mulwala, being by now totally addicted to music festivals. Maurice, who now designs houses, Dave (he's a bank manager) and Roxanne (still living a hippie life) and her friend and myself went that time. We went in my old work Ute, all five of us stuffed into the cabin. We camped next to some bikies; I'm talking real tough bikies, not your rich weekend tossers. These guys were rough. We somehow though felt safe near them. No one would come around and cause any trouble with us. They sure got pissed though and really caused lots of trouble. They took a spare tyre out on some poor bastard's car and set fire to it and then put it back in the car. They knocked over tank fulls of water and generally made a nuisance of themselves. The main leader was a bloke called Rabbit. He would get pissed, create havoc, flake out, get up again and do it all over again. I remember them having this chick with them that they all, I guess, had sex with. It was really gross." (Heritage, op cit, 14 January, 2005).

The **Bob Jones Organisation** was given the job of security and a number of well-known Melbourne bouncers were employed on the site, often engaged in placating the hostility of the local farm boys who objected to these "outsiders" telling them what they could or could not do in their own backyard. Crowd behaviour in general was probably not what the promoters or the locals were hoping for and some individual examples of spirited hi-jinx were to get a little out of hand in the alcohol-fuelled atmosphere:

TERRY HENNESSY: "Saturday night was huge, I can still see Bob Hite sitting on the stage in a pair of jeans with his huge guts hanging out. People climbed on the light towers and started shaking them around. There was lots and lots of booze. At one stage down the back some pissed person got onto a motor bike and started to drive towards the stage, knocking people over. He was quickly stopped, dragged off the bike and given a bit of a belting by a few of the people nearby." (Hennessy, op cit 19 January, 2005).

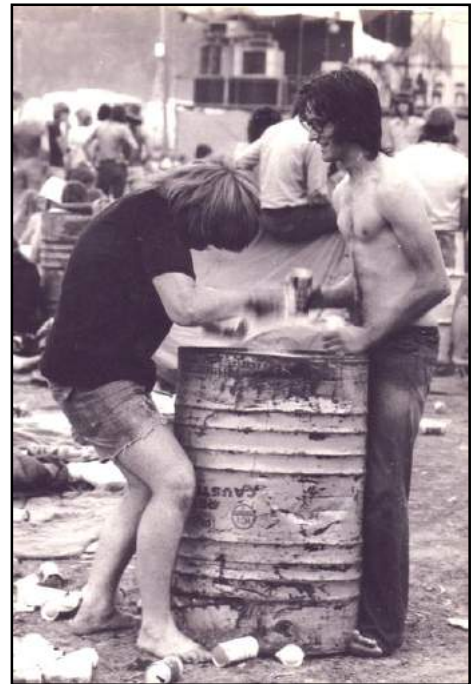
There is no doubt that the single element in the Australian festivals which was not there in overseas open air rock concerts, was the presence of alcohol and the enormous amounts consumed at each and every festival held in this country. It is probably fortunate that in such an atmosphere of heavy drinking, that a fiasco such as **The Rolling Stones** fateful concert at Altamont, California in 1969, wasn't repeated on Australian soil. Then again, the crucial element which created the tragedy that was Altamont - that is The Hell's Angels or other bokie gangs, was not present here.

Mulwala was no exception to the trend for high levels of alcohol consumption at festivals and here, organisers were not really prepared with any sort of contingency plan to cope with it:

TERRY HENNESSY: "The trip to Mulwala, I was part of a group of friends from around Dandenong, we left on the Good Friday and got stuck in a traffic jam just outside Melbourne where the highway went into one lane either way. We were beer drinkers, none of that group did any other drugs, so we had a panel van full of piss and it was cold so we started into it on the highway just outside Kilmore. On arriving at the festival site we were told to hide the grog as they were getting worried about the amount of alcohol arriving at the site and by Saturday morning, they were stopping the general public from bringing in their own and they set up a refrigerated van to sell cans from. One of the group took the panel van into Yarrowonga and when he came back, they asked him if he had purchased alcohol in town. He said 'no'. They let him back in and then he realised that there was about 15 dozen cans in the back of the van." (Hennessy, op cit 19 January, 2005).

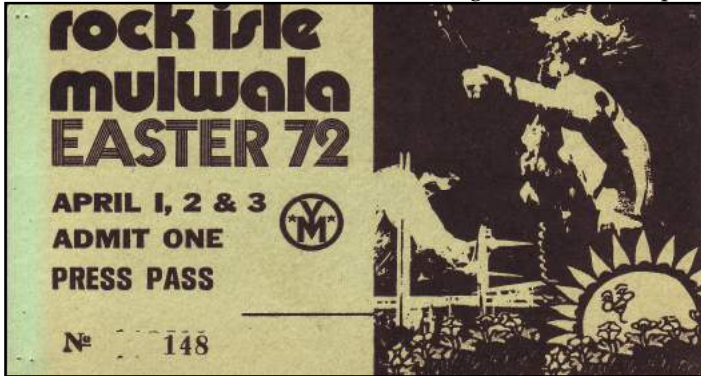
Others also noted that little had been done to regulate the amount of booze being taken onto the site:

MARK DE CARTERET: "I can't quite remember what restrictions there were on alcohol but I do remember seeing a small tray truck loaded to the gills with beer, slipping and sliding along the dirt entry road, with a couple of blokes on the back trying to hold it together. I think the name of a local pub was on the door of the truck. From that I assume you could buy beer on-site. Even if there were restrictions on alcohol I'm sure that we would have taken some in buried in sleeping bags or similar hiding spots." (De Carteret, op cit, 1 August, 2005).



Improvised percussion - Mulwala style. (Photographer unknown)

Throughout the long-weekend there were certainly plenty of impromptu frolics in the Murray River because on Saturday, it was still very warm. A lot of pre-festival work had gone into constructing a man-made, shallow beach on the banks of the river however, many of the festival-goers were well under the influence of alcohol by that stage and were jumping or diving into the river from the branches of the stately Red Gums which lined the Murray's bank. They didn't necessarily stay clear of the shallow waters on the bank of the river. Due to the condition which some were in and the number of cuts, grazes and bumps which were being sustained, the local police began to



Courtesy of Jands Production Services.

prohibit diving from the trees, but they were finding it increasingly difficult to enforce this decree:

MARK DE CARTERET: "During a sunnier period, we went over to the river. Some blokes were climbing a tall tree, climbing out on a limb and jumping into the river. One of my mates did the same thing but he jumped from beside the trunk instead of going further out on the limb. He landed in about a foot of water and three feet of mud. I think he had to be assisted from the mud but luckily there was no physical damage (lots of laughs from the crowd though).

I also remember seeing a naked female water-skier

who went past (in both directions). Novel!" (De Carteret, op cit, 1 August, 2005).

Property owner, Roberts also recalls the drowning which took place in the Murray River as one man possibly attempted to swim the river from the southern bank to get into the site free of charge. This fatality only added to the tarnished reputation of this one and only Mulwala festival.

When Sunday morning rolled around, most were nursing huge hangovers and it was time to take stock of the events of the previous day and night. The day promised more warm, to hot weather although the cool change was on its way, just over the horizon. The day's proceedings started with the non-denominational church service, introduced by **Gerry Humphrys** as only he could do:

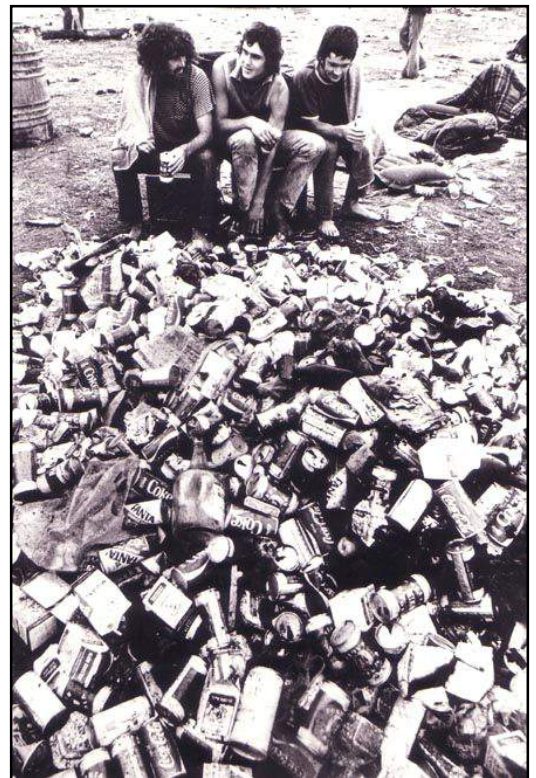
TERRY HENNESSY: "Sunday morning and Gerry Humphrys came on stage with a large woman in, I think a Salvation Army uniform. Gerry started into the crowd, 'Last night you acted like a bunch of arseholes climbing on the towers, throwing beer cans, fighting and acting like a pack of mad c---s. Now here is the reverend so and so to conduct a Sunday service.' Sunday was again hot. Sunday night late, it rained. Come Monday morning and there were plenty of cold drinkers." (Hennessy, op cit 19 January, 2005).

With the rain, came the frolics in the mud, obviously fuelled by alcohol and some drugs which were apparently on site:

MARK DE CARTERET: "Before we left Melbourne, we had scored a couple of matchboxes of grass. It was certainly the early days of grass for us and I don't think "ounces" were a part of our vocabulary at that point – just "matchboxes".

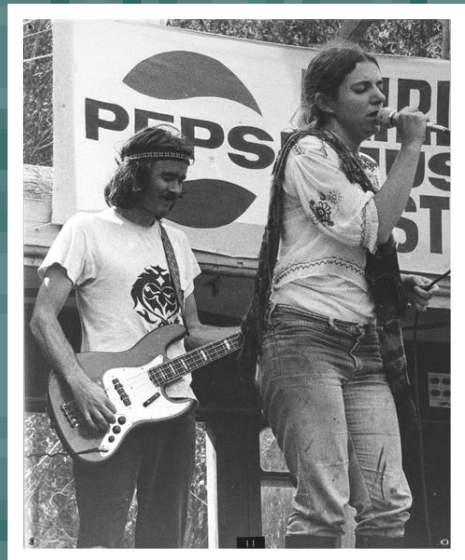
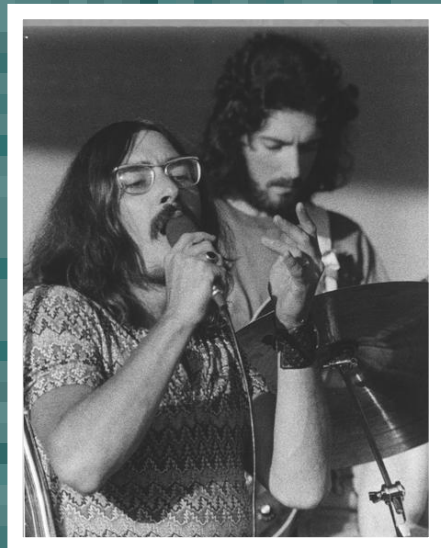
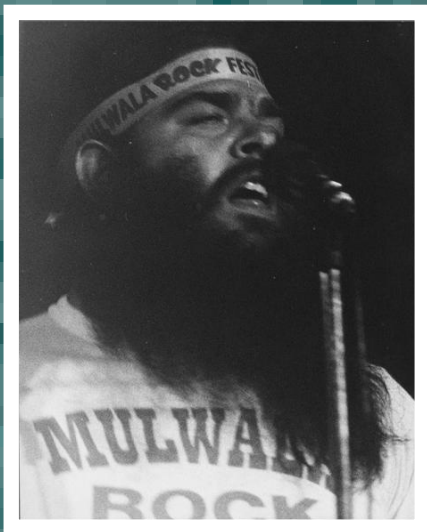
It did start to rain and it was pretty heavy. The memory isn't that good but I distinctly remember a shower block that was nearby was covered by Hessian. Some guys (not from our group) started ripping the Hessian away until the whole site was exposed.

The next day the site was a real mud bath. Blokes were trying to outdo each other in running and sliding into the quagmire. (When we left, it was difficult to manoeuvre the cars through the mud to the road in and even then traction was hard to find). (De Carteret, op cit, 1 August, 2005).



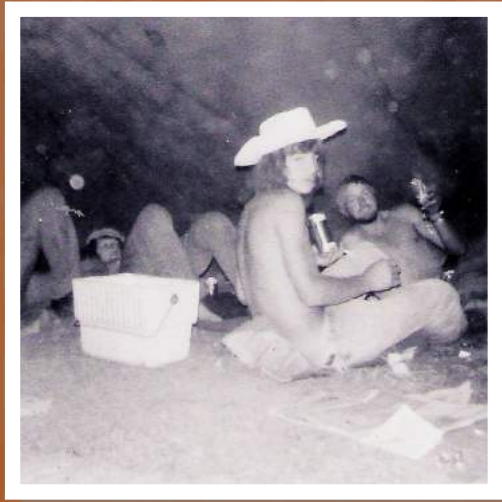
You could tell that it was a great weekend. (Photographer unknown)

Rockin' at "The Rock Isle" ...



Images from the stage at Mulwala.....
Top left – Bob Hite of Canned Heat.
Top right – Carson, with Broderick Smith, Ian "Willie" Winter and Mal Capewell.
Centre left – Carson with Mal Logan on keyboards.
Centre right- Jeff St. John with Copperwine
Left - Jeannie Lewis.
All photos by Joseph Oros – permission to reproduce granted by The National Library of Australia - Photographic Collection

The Mulwala Tribe...



All photos courtesy of Wendy Grigg.



Following the cancellation of the festival, the revellers - cold, wet and muddy - returned to their respective homes. Many had come from Melbourne and the high jinks continued on the road back home as spirited teenagers remained on a high – in more ways than one:



Swimmers take to the Murray River on the Saturday of the festival – before the rain came. Photographer – Joseph Oros – permission to reproduce granted by The National Library Of Australia – Photographic Collection.

Thorpe decided to brave the unknown territory beyond the Band Compound to replenish supplies. They were away for over an hour and their roadies were getting worried. When they returned they had no illicit bounty. They did however have tagging behind a battered, pretty, young girl. She was only around 13 years old and was spaced out and bewildered.

They gave her food and wash amenities before instructing their senior roadie to take her to her home in northern Melbourne (they were returning to Sydney), and gave the roadie a stern warning that they had her home phone number and were going to phone her parents to ensure that she arrived without harm. I've discussed this with both Lobby and Billy in recent years. Neither of them remembers the occasion." (Farr, op cit, 26 December, 2004).

Sunbury – the legend begins...

"Mighty Mouse did Sunbury 73' and it was a disaster musically, because we were all pissed and stoned and we played like shit, man. I gave up drinking alcohol after that gig and haven't touched it since." (Barry Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

"...one of the most disappointing and humiliating moments in my then sheltered life, was that my dad, God rest his soul, would not let me go with the boys in the purple panel van to Sunbury. Would you believe that dad actually took me?! Can you imagine the shame of going to a music festival with your dad?! To add insult to injury, after getting to Sunbury with dad, I found my friends, but they were too stoned to recognize me, and dad sat on a rock chewing the fat with a bloke who he later realized was Billy Thorpe! (Kayleen Deppeler, email correspondence, 14 January 2005).

"Sunbury. Say no more. It has all the flavour of Woodstock, Oz style, with less rain, more heat, flies, beer cans and our own bands." (Stu Hawk, *The Living Daylights*, 22-27 January, 1974, P28)

Rockbank, the "Practice-Sunbury Festival" - 1971 - "anyone got a sausage in bread for Stewie?"

It's not a well-known fact that in early 1971, a small "test-run" for the future Sunbury festival was held near Rockbank just off the Western Highway on the outskirts of Melbourne. Reports say that this trial went ahead with no public notification or fanfare, and was for evaluation and possibly publicity purposes only. It took place in an open paddock with a number of top bands playing to a very small crowd which some have estimated at about 800 people, but there were reports of far fewer people in attendance. The bands invited for the event played from the back of a flat-bed semi-trailer. No tickets were sold and news of the weekend event was spread simply by word of mouth throughout the district. This episode has for decades, been assigned to folklore and linked to Sunbury. **John Fowler** of **Odessa Promotions** which would have been formed around the same time, has no recollection of this event and has stated uncatagorically that it had nothing to do with the company which was formed to organise the real Sunbury festival. So who organised it? The musicians? Was there another group unknown to **Odessa Promotions** also secretly planning a mass outdoor rock festival?



The Aztecs' Paul Wheeler was one of a contingent of musicians who played at the Rockbank "trial run". (Go-Set, 5 May, 1973, photographer unknown)

The event was no figment of the imagination and did indeed happen! It appears to have been either early in the year or perhaps towards Christmas of 1971. Most details are sketchy; however **Kim Porter** now of Geelong has a vague memory of receiving a prior phone call from **Paul Wheeler** of **The Aztecs**. A member of the Clarke family which owned the BP Service Station at



Sydney's Pirana were one of the bands which played at Rockbank and went on to Sunbury, '72. A fine live act, they drifted into free-flowing jams which seemingly went forever. (Courtesy of Philip Morris)

Rockbank, remembers many artists and organisers frequently dropping in at the servo around this time for petrol and supplies. They were saying that there was to be a 'trial run' for a big music festival coming up and that entry was absolutely *free*.

The site is not difficult to place accurately. It is down Clarkes Road, which is just on the Melbourne side of Rockbank, probably about 1.5 to 2 kilometres north of the Western Highway. It was set on a big bend of the road, where the lazy, meandering Kororoit Creek looped around the property in a big arc. It was in a dead flat paddock with a couple of huge, old gum trees in the middle of the circle:

KIM PORTER: "Between the track and the creek was a space of about 250 metres, lightly covered in that short wiry plant with the small pink flowers that we used to call *onion grass*. Back close to the creek, the organisers had set up a couple of semi-trailer beds – I can only definitely recall one being used as a stage, but perhaps they were rotated. A couple of caravans and site-offices were scattered around behind and to the side of the stage/s. There were no fences, or any sort of artist/punter division." (Porter, author's email, 4 October, 2005).

The bands which played on this trial run included most of the acts which were to play at Sunbury 1972, including **Billy Thorpe And The Aztecs**, **Barry 'Lil Goose' Harvey's Mighty Mouse**, **Max Merritt and the Meteors**, **Pirana**,

SCRA, Leo Decastro and Friends and Carson. There may have been a few acts appearing as well this weekend, which didn't get a run at Sunbury the following year. **Kim Porter** seems to recall that **Wendy Saddington** sang, and that may have been with **Leo Decastro's Friends**.

It seems that the arrangement the organisers had with most of the acts was that they would play their sets at Berties, Sebastians or perhaps other in-town clubs at night and then drive out to Rockbank and play again. Many of the artists stayed on-site overnight, although some may have had to head back to town for a late show or two.

It all began on Friday night, continued through Saturday and Saturday night, and perhaps some of Sunday. The music went on until probably about 2am Saturday morning, then resumed about midday.

KIM PORTER: "Punters simply parked their cars where they came to a stop, anywhere left of the road, as far back as the fence, maybe another 80 - 100 metres back. People would lay back on the bonnet of their FJs and EKs, soaking up the music. A couple of Kombi vans were parked side-on, allowing a more comfortable viewing setup. There



Friends, with the energetic Kiwi, Leo De Castro were at the "try-out" at Rockbank just prior to the first Sunbury festival. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber – Australian Rock Folio.)

were lots of campfires, with the odd beach chair scattered around, but most people sat or leant on cars, sat on the ground, or simply kept wandering around – just like at a *real* festival.

The sound system that blasted out from the semi-trailer was very good. I can remember thinking how clean and clear it was, compared with the usual sound that was the norm in those days. It was loud enough for the exercise, but certainly not deafening. Although the event was held as a trial run, there didn't seem to be too many problems – at least in the sound department." (Porter, op cit, 4 October, 2005).

The facilities were obviously minimal and the food available may have just been sausages cooked on a barbeque and wrapped in bread. The crowd probably consisted only of locals from Rockbank, Melton, Bacchus Marsh, Sunshine, and Sunbury. However, once these fortunate punters realised the extent of this practice run, many scampered home to pick up some sleeping bags, food and plenty of beer and Bundy Rum. They were certainly a privileged few to have been present at this event and all for free!

By all reports it was just a pleasant, relaxing weekend where the music flowed from Friday night onwards. Band members shared the campfires and supplies with the local fans on site and **Kim Porter** recalls that without local help and sustenance

from the many barbeques, **Stewie Spears** of **The Meteors** would have possibly faded away!

Sunbury 1972 - 29 - 31 January - "Do not piss in the river....!"

Sunbury '72 was the first serious and successful attempt to create a Woodstock-like three-day festival in Victoria that is, discounting the aborted attempt at Launching Place at Easter, 1970. This time, a festival was to be held on the western perimeter of the city in an equally remote, but far more open location. Sunbury/Diggers Rest was close enough to Melbourne, just thirty-five kilometres from the city, but still "out in the bush". It was essentially a satellite township on the less-heavily populated north-western outskirts of the city.

The inaugural Sunbury festival was set amongst the undulating, dry grassy plains, near the original Diggers Rest township which had sprung up in the early 1850's as a stop-over for the miners on the route to the central Victorian goldfields. Not much had changed in the district since then. However, the open western plains surrounding the present-day Calder Highway as it snakes its way on to Bendigo can be much hotter in high summer than the leafy, shaded eucalypt forests and valleys of Launching Place.

The nearest point of disembarkment for rail travellers from Melbourne was at Diggers Rest Station and buses were used to carry the fans to the site about three kilometres away - just a little further to the east along the old Calder Highway, onto the Bulla-Diggers Rest Road and down Duncans Lane to the site. Many who didn't drive to

the site walked the distance from the station.

Odessa Promotions' John Fowler who was there for all four Sunburys, had **Michael Gudinski** organise and arrange the talent from his rapidly expanding roster of current stars. Fowler was joined in the organisation by officers and senior members of 4/19 Prince of Wales's Light Horse Regiment. Their Commanding Officer, **Lt. Col. John Dixon** was prominent in the organisational stages of the festival(s). Dixon had been to Japan at the end of World War II and on his return to Australia began to carve out a career in film and eventually, in television. He won a prestigious award for his documentary of the 1967 6-day Israeli War which was among a number of



The Sunbury Festival site – absolutely nothing has changed. The photo was taken from The Duncan farm house on 26 January, 2005 exactly 30 years after the last chords rang from the stage. On a loop of Jackson's Creek, the natural amphitheatre which made up the actual site can be seen in the mid- background of this photo.

contemporary documentaries that he produced for Channel 7, Melbourne. Dixon came on board the Sunbury organisational team and ran Odessa's communications group for the whole four years of the festival, and produced the Sunbury film which has found itself released in a number of formats, including DVD. **Odessa Promotions** which included **Peter Evans** in its ranks, was not a large company and **John Fowler** ran the whole organisational show from home:

JOHN FOWLER: "It was all done out of our kitchen at home in Mt Eliza. Would you believe with one home phone line? And my wife was excellent at taking all the phone calls at home 24 hours a day. It was all done out of our kitchen or on a public telephone at Channel 9. I used to do

my programs and the public phone was outside the control room and any phone calls I wanted to make were done on that phone! And people would ring me back on it so it was a constant interplay of people trying to contact me during working hours." (Fowler, author's interview, 2 February, 2006)

So what influences were at work in the planning stages for a major rock festival?:

JOHN FOWLER: "You might as well say that Woodstock had a lot to do with that. I got talking to a guy called Peter Evans who worked for me at Channel 9 and he used to go to festivals. He had been to Nimbin and he came back to work and said what a ratshit sort of weekend he'd had, because they didn't have any sort of facilities there. He was the first and only one who knew that I was even thinking about a festival and we got talking about how we could get a festival off the ground in particular for Australia Day weekend because I was, and still am, a great believer in the Australia Day weekend. I thought what better way to promote Australia Day than to bring the youth into it and youth, as you know, follow music.

I suppose the idea was generated overseas but we didn't model it on Woodstock. I thought what better way to create a huge response to Australia Day than to have a rock festival that would gain maximum press coverage and that's exactly what it did." (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

Odessa Promotions managed to secure a 300 acre farm, *Glencoe*, in the Sunbury/Diggers Rest district. Belonging to **George and Beryl Duncan**, the festival site was in fact closer to Diggers Rest than to Sunbury. (Should it have been known as The Diggers Rest Rock Festival?) But only after major hassles, did they finally secure a suitable site:

JOHN FOWLER: "Oh.. that was very difficult. We spent months trying to find the right site. Anyone we spoke to didn't want to know about it. It was ... "a pop festival?... get lost!" We looked at heaps of sites – down on the Mornington Peninsula - there were ideal sites there, but there was no way anyone was going to let a pop festival happen on their site. Then, a friend of mine who worked for the Agriculture Department said that he might know someone who would be interested. That's how I got on to George Duncan, a wonderful man who I can't speak

highly enough of... and his wife." (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

Band bookings were done by **Michael Gudinski's Australian Entertainment Exchange** and the cost of entry for the whole weekend for the fans was a mere \$6. Fowler needed to deal with the promoters constantly and Gudinski, a young and ambitious promoter at that stage was eager to have his bands, which represented the cream of Australia's rock 'n roll talent, on the Sunbury stage.

So the initial concept was developed by Fowler, who was a lighting technician in the television industry. He was very keen to give Aussie bands a real go in an outdoorfest format. Fowler's employer, Channel 9 was offered the option of televising parts of this first festival; however management declined on the grounds that it was not within the image they wanted to create, so rival Channel Seven snapped up the offer. (Nine made sure they got the rights when another festival was proposed for the following year!)

The land was open, in the shape of a natural amphitheatre and from the escarpment, the ground sloped towards Jackson's Creek which had been reportedly widened in one spot to create a waterhole, according to *The Daily Planet* which commented on early plans for the festival:

PETER WALSH: "The river, twenty feet deep in certain places will be available for bathing and other personalised amusements." (*The Daily Planet*, 29 December, 1971).



The ticket for Sunbury, 1972. Not everyone bought one however, with a number of enterprising punters avoiding the security perimeter sweeps, particularly at night and getting in for free.



The original Sunbury stage as it was in 1972 on the Saturday of the long weekend. It was enlarged for future festivals (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke) (Note the people on the light tower.)

I can't quite work out what these "personalised amusements" might be however, *The Daily Planet* reporter also gave full details of planning for the event in his rather flamboyant, archaic language, maybe written tongue-in-cheek:

PETER WALSH: "The site for the festival is a private farm; twenty-three acres have been allocated. Three or four of these acres will be reserved for parking of automotive machines. A reputable catering firm has taken out the appropriate contract and food and drink will be purveyed at conventional prices. A cleaning contractor has been hired to sanitise the site daily. Bob Jones, formidable exponent of karate is to handle the security arrangements; he will not be alone. It is hoped that the police will restrict their presence to brief peripheral visits. ... An ample sufficiency of concrete show(er) blocks and something like two hundred portable toilets (with wash basins) should negate the possibility of any unsavoury pollution of the land and water." (*The Daily Planet*, 29 December, 1971).

Indeed, by 1972, **Bob Jones** and his organisation had built up that formidable reputation for crowd control through the presence of his often lethal and sometimes downright vicious associates and compatriots at the discotheques in city and suburban Melbourne.

Jones recalls meeting with **John Fowler** who intimated to him that he would not like Sunbury to end up like **The Rolling Stones** debacle at Altamont Speedway, California in 1969. An inspection tour of the Duncan farm was organised for Jones in the same way that **Peter Andrew** did for him at "The Miracle", Launching Place a short time earlier. Fowler outlined his plans and needs to Jones:

BOB JONES: “ ‘Bob, this is what we know – entertainment, production, marketing . . . What we don’t know and the main reason we’re hiring your organisation, is that we have 300 acres in between two major highways surrounded by nothing else but open farmland properties. How do we get a possible 50,000 people to pay to get in, to return the investment and hopefully have some profit left over for the exercise? You just tell me what you want. You’re expenses are not a problem, whatever it takes to protect Odessa’s investment.” (Jones, op cit, 2001, P102).

It all sounds as if everything had been figured out down to the finest detail even if it didn’t quite turn out that way. Planning though had been adequate and detailed. In December, 1971, Fowler, **Bob Jones** and the festival controller, **John Dixon** had met at Russell Street Police Headquarters with senior police - Acting Commissioner Mick Miller, Superintendents Hickey and Warne and other representatives of police departments. Police voiced their concerns on a number of fronts, but agreement and strategies to thwart any potential problems seemed to be the keywords from the meeting and compromises were achieved on a number of points. Really, the only major concern was from the Diggers Rest CFA which had reservations on the scale of the festival and its potential to create a damaging grass fire in the summer heat. Fowler initially, found that their stalling was a little perplexing but realised their concerns were:

JOHN FOWLER: “...I’d say, in hindsight, rightly so because you look at the fires that happen now. But, we were well protected on site – we had the CFA and St John’s Ambulance – they had almost a full field hospital set-up on the flats. Also the local council in particular were not very in favour of it. We thought the government might be against it but (Sir Rupert) Hamer finally signed the permit.” (Fowler, author’s interview, 2 February, 2006)

Water was another major concern which the Odessa team had to overcome:

JOHN FOWLER: “One of the biggest problems at Nimbin was they didn’t have toilets. We did what we thought was best for a festival at that time; we had toilets constructed out of metal. We had sewerage tankers coming to clean the system out. Cartage of water was the biggest problem. We had piped water because we knew it was going to be hot. We had water tankers come in and couple up to the piping system which we put in. We had to make a road down to the stage... had water taps everywhere.” (Fowler, author’s interview, 2 February, 2006)

Ian Meldrum, as reporter for Go-Set and co-host on stage for that year, made his entrance late on Friday:

IAN MELDRUM: “Friday evening I arrived in a landrover pulling our caravan not knowing what to expect ... the drive from the city had been long and tedious because of the traffic and scattered along the road like lost ants were hundreds of hitch-hikers with knapsacks, sleeping bags, kitchen utensils and what-have-you on their backs ... we only had room for two ... a boy and a girl ... who were obviously excited about the forthcoming three days ... we finally arrived at the main entrance point and were met by BOB JONES KARATE guys who were acting as security checks ... you could hardly miss them because of their white “SMILE” T-Shirts, muscles bulging underneath and all-in-all a comforting smile on their faces.” (Meldrum, *Go-Set*, 12 February, 1972.)

The weather for this weekend by all reports was mainly fine and warm, tendint towards HOT, although there may have been a brief summer shower or two. **George Duncan Jnr.**, the son of the property’s owners was employed as site manager for the occasion and he recalls that his mother had her own personal tent set up at a prime vantage point for the festivals. (Herald-Sun Weekend Magazine, 25 January, 1997, P11). The stage, set in front of the creek was not spectacularly large or particularly decorative and it was open to the elements apart from a rather basic,unspectacular metal deck roofing and some canvas sidings which would do little to shelter those on stage from the elements. Several metal scaffolds which were light towers dominated the downhill



These two lovely ladies just happened to be strolling through the crowd and stopped to pose for festival-goer Graeme Eadie’s camera. (Courtesy of Graeme Eadie)

sloping landscape and were set either side of the stage and back up the hill. These towers, sturdier than those at Mulwala, also became high-rise vantage platforms later that weekend – and the scene of one acid-related drama!



Robyn Clarke and her friend wait in the car park for things to happen. (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke)

those arriving by car or on foot the illusion of secure fencing around the site. What most fans didn't realise was that where these fences disappeared over the edge of the escarpment on each end, they literally just finished out of eye sight because it was too difficult to fence the entire farm. But it seemed to work. Amenities, trail bikes and the "Goannamobile", an all-terrain vehicle supplied by John Fowler:

BOB JONES: " One of the highlights for me with John Fowler was the "Goannamobile" which could go on land or water... it only held about four people maximum. That ended up in the press but we didn't use the thing much because it was too bloody slow! But it was great for publicity. But everyone was laughing at us; another reason we stopped using it! Motor bikes and horses were much better. A lot of my friends had horses and we took a lot of them. Not too many people followed the fence to see if they could get in for free.

The food vendors were assigned a spot on the river flats away from the stage and some were near the entrance to the property. Jones had his own compound which was an area fenced off and covered with black plastic sheeting. It was large enough to accommodate his caravan, staff horses for the festival and we brought the trail bikes in. So they were a lot of fun to us. I got a lot of my Black Belts together from all over Australia." (Jones, op cit, 15 August, 2005)

Outside the site, at the peak of the influx of campers, it took about one and a half hours to get from the Calder Highway to the parking lot despite traffic coming in four lanes wide to pass through the ticket boxes.

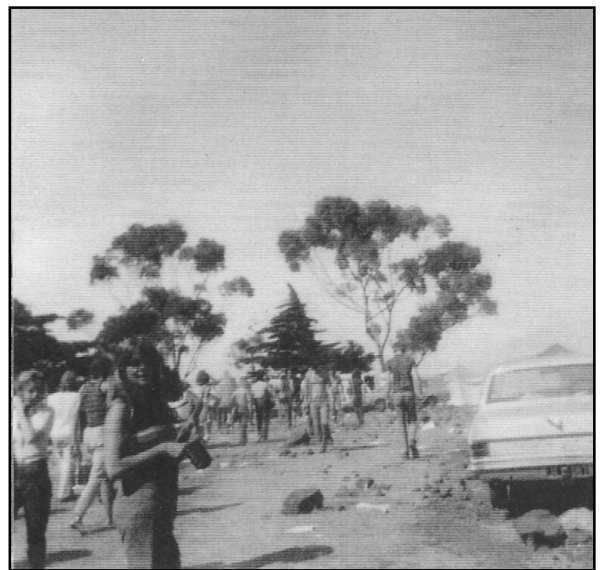
Writing for his student newspaper on his return to Bendigo, Hans Tracksdorf was taken with the carnival-like atmosphere of the site – the tent village and the "free-floating" market:

HANS TRACKSDORF: "A whole tent village had sprung up early in the piece on the riverside. The village was always crowded as was the whole site, this however was to be expected as the Sunbury village with a population in excess of 35,000 was now one of the biggest temporary settlements in Australia.

Acting as both lighting and security towers, they had been strategically located by Bob Jones after a visit to the Sunbury Council Chambers:

BOB JONES: "With binoculars by day and high-powered torches by night, my guys could watch and communicate any grave circumstances on walkie-talkie (on our own security frequency) to all our team leaders. As we secured the festival area perimeters using horses and trail bikes by day and our dogs overnight, we guided everyone to the ticket boxes – and that's what the promoters paid us for. The helicopter had a number of tasks, but the main thing for us was that we kept checking the area. It was fantastic because every two hours, I'd go for a run in the helicopter and we'd fly right around and see the sectors for anyone trying to get in illegally and radio back to the guys to go out with the dogs or go out with the horses and send them back to their cars to pay, or if they got close to the fence, we'd bring them in and make them pay." (Jones, op cit, 2001, P103).

Bordering the access road and running parallel to it, a fence covered with black plastic sheeting was erected. This gave all



Heading down the slope from the car park – Friday afternoon. (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke)

Upon crossing the river and climbing the steep valley wall the whole amphitheatre became unveiled and the just boggled. The helicopter made another pass – tents to the right, tents to the left, tents on the other side of the valley and in the midst, the colourful ant heap.” (Tracksdorf, *Jamaga*, April 1972, Bendigo Institute of Technology Student newspaper).

Proceedings for the festival got underway prematurely on Friday night amid an atmosphere of high excitement and great anticipation from all there – organisers, workers, punters and musicians. The music was not scheduled to commence until Saturday morning, but with an empty stage and anxious musicians:

JOHN FOWLER: “Well.. the first night of the festival was unreal. We hadn’t scheduled any music for the Friday night but it was an incredible scene. There was a full moon, everything was happening, everyone was expecting something to happen. We had planned to start up on the Saturday morning... to allow people to arrive. But I think it was Thorpie who started jumping up and down, “...I’ve got to get on the stage, I’ve got to get on the stage!!!! I can’t remember who played, but Christ, they kept playing ‘til about three or four o’ clock in the morning! And the crowd were absolutely knocked out by it all. Thorpie kept jamming and we had three compares: Ed Nimmervoll, “Molly” Meldrum and I think, Adrian Rawlins, maybe.” (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

Meldrum emerged from his back-stage caravan on Saturday morning to find that everything was already underway as the stage area fired up and the toilets received the early arrivals wanting showering facilities:



Camping at the top of the Sunbury escarpment and overlooking the whole site. (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke).

IAN MELDRUM: “It was obvious that the weather over the next three days was going to be HOT ... really HOT ... Saturday morning was also my first experience of using the showers and the toilets ... the showers were unique because in the mens we had a tin, hession and concrete décor and rows and rows of taps which had pieces of rubber hose attached to them ... (I believe that the females had actual showers) ... but overall they sufficed and after a twenty minute stint I came out feeling clean By this time everything was in full swing ... the booze was flowing on the audience hill and the BOOZE-FREAKS were getting well and truly drunk ...” (Meldrum, op cit, 12 February, 1972.)



A group of Monash University students were early arrivals and entertained themselves for a while. Reproduced with permission: Monash University Archives – IN75.

Was it fun? You bet it was! Seventeen year-old **Ian Bailey’s** excitement and enthusiasm was typical of most youngsters travelling to the first Sunbury:

IAN BAILEY: “On the Friday morning before the Australia Day weekend in ’72, we headed off from Frankston – Roy Ward, Mick Faulkiner and his girlfriend, Moira, Phil Sell, Gordon Clark, Laurie Spriggs and myself all crammed into Roy’s old Vauxhall with

"Bloody nice
buncha kids" ...



**Saturday at
Sunbury as the
crowd gets
ready for the
music to
commence from
the stage. All
photos courtesy
of Graeme
Eadie.**



various guitars, bongos, harmonicas and anything else we could fit in. We were playing and singing all the way with arms and legs hanging out of the windows, giving peace signs and saying g'day to everyone. The vast majority of people laughed and waved at a carload of long-haired would-be hippies on the road to Sunbury." (Bailey, correspondence, 6 January, 2005)

Tony Dew and his mate Bernie were both nineteen year-olds at the time and he remembers Sunbury as one of the great experiences of his life when he attended, also driving from the eastern suburbs on the Friday afternoon. There was not much trouble in parking near the site on the adjacent paddock which was used as the huge parking lot – quite orderly and organised. Some fans recognised a number of the Festival Hall bouncers and *TV Ringside* boxers patrolling the carpark – all very friendly and obliging this time around in keeping with the occasion. Tony recalls that his shiny Vauxhall Victor was covered with red dust when he wandered back to return home late on the Monday afternoon, however he was on such a high afterwards that he didn't want to wash it for three weeks. His memories of Sunbury '72 are still vivid:

TONY DEW: "We had a 2-man tent which we set up down near the creek. We had no difficulty there although some older guys around us partied all night - which was less common then. I think we bought food there. Back in those days people really were peaceful and cool with each other. I don't remember any agro. ... any violence or problems.



Looking down the hill towards the crowd in front of the food stalls. (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke)

Like many others we swam in the creek. The concert site was terrific for sound. It was like an amphitheatre with the stage down the bottom of the hill. We sat or stood on the hill to listen to the bands, some slept there as well." (Dew, email correspondence, 26 December, 2004)



Madder Lake on stage on a warm afternoon. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

Ian Meldrum, intrepid *Go-Set* reporter, wandered down to the creek and swimming hole area early on Saturday:

MELDRUM: " ... down behind the stage and around the general area of the camp site the creek was chock-a-block full of swimmers ... swimming attire consisted of bare bums, jockettes, bathing togs to jeans and bras ... the only hassle about swimming was that some swimmers leapt before they looked thus resulting in split heads and giving the ST. JOHNS AMBULANCE MEN the chance to do their thing ..." (Meldrum, op cit, 12 February, 1972.)

Bruce Heritage came from the Murray region travelling to Sunbury and the experiences he and his mates had that weekend, were typical of those who got caught up in the atmosphere of the festival:

BRUCE HERITAGE: "The very first Sunbury we went to was very memorable. We were small town country boys from Lockington where not a lot happened other than the juke box down at the local take away. It was the 1970's and we were 17 years olds. Dave, Maurice and I drove down in Dave's old blue HR Holden.

We left home and after lots of stops for VB, hamburgers and the toilet, we found the turn off at Diggers Rest, the Sunbury site and finally – inched our way through the gates. We were amazed at the amount of people flocking to the festival; everywhere there were people in faded jeans (not the ones you buy now for \$180!), T shirts, and long hair. We set up camp in the car park. Dave, being a country boy and not often allowed out, quickly drank a large bottle of Bundy in record time and was fucked for the rest of the weekend, silly bugger!

I couldn't believe how friendly everybody was and just how amazing and great the whole atmosphere was. The bands were awesome. Madder Lake was unreal. Maurice and I walked around getting our bearings and checking out all the girls in their bikinis and jeans." (Heritage, op cit, 14 January, 2005)

The organisation could have been easily criticised as inadequate had the festival not been a resounding success – financially and musically. The facilities which at best, could have been described as “primitive” were a potential



Max Merritt and The Meteors do their set on the Sunbury stage. (Photo by Soc. Hedditch. Permission to reproduce granted by The National Library of Australia - Photographic Collection)

recipe for a health disaster and the crowd which consumed a huge amount of alcohol could easily have gotten out of hand. But Hell... that's what a rock festival was like – it was accepted that some things might be sub-standard, *but not the music!* Instead, a legend was created and no one really seemed to care about what, if anything went wrong at Sunbury, '72.

Appearing there that year were: **Billy Thorpe & The Aztecs, Max Merritt and the Meteors, Spectrum, Chain, The Wild Cherries, Madder Lake**, Sydney bands; **Pirana, Tamam Shud, Company Caine, Friends, Carson, The La De Das**, and others. **Gerry Humphrys** acted as compare for the festival in its inaugural year.

The iconoclastic nature of Sunbury has been well and truly entrenched in music folklore and there is no doubt it added significantly to the whole progressive rock movement in Australia. It deserves its place up there on whatever pedestal we want to place it on and this is probably due to the music – Thorpie definitely, and great sets by **Max Merritt and the Meteors** and **The La De Das**

which have been preserved for all time on record and film. This is important for the Sunbury legend, for unlike other festivals, we can still see and hear what went on thanks to the sound and vision recording.

Colin James, reporting for *Go-Set*, summed up his thoughts on the bands:

COLIN JAMES: “Max Merritt had to be the highlight of Monday, and virtually the whole festival. People stopped swimming and wandering around, and the hill in front of the stage was packed with more people than any other day, even though a lot of people had left.

The Meteors were brilliant; they started off with two new songs, which showed us how they had progressed in London, and then started doing requests, all their oldies.

The crowd really dug Max but it took two numbers for them to get going, from then it was mass hand-clapping, dancing and screaming. Max dug it all, couldn't help saying so, Stewie in his hot pants grinned, Bob Birtles showed what a good brass player he is ...” (James, *Go-Set*, 12 February, 1972)

Madder Lake was one band which benefited over the next few years by their appearance on the Sunbury stage. They had already gained a steady following in Victoria and were certainly a solid drawcard for this first and the subsequent Sunbury festivals. It was also a nerve-racking experience for the band members like no other they had faced. But the significance was not lost on them:

BRENDEN MASON: “It was astronomically important! It wasn't just the exposure; it was the enormity of the occasion. We'd played at a fair few festivals before that, but nothing of that size or importance. Every Sunbury I drove to, I've always been very excited about playing at a gig... I can remember at least two occasions of driving to Sunbury thinking, “I can't wait 'til I'm driving the other way... I was so nervous... so worked up about giving a poor performance in front of so many people. (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

MICK FETTES: “Well, we'd been awake all night. I think we played on the Saturday morning, like 10 o'clock in the morning or something ridiculous like that. We'd finished work at 2 o'clock in the morning, gone out to Sunbury, and I remember Lobby Loyde was there. Everybody was, like, “Ha ha, what's going to happen here?” and then we got up and did our thing, and played for an hour or so. People were still arriving, and for people who arrived the night before it was still breakfast time, y'know? (Fettes, op cit, www.milesago.com, February, April, 2000)

There is no doubt the omnipresent **Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs** were the absolute kings of the Sunbury hill - and

other festivals as well – but Sunbury is where they had their greatest triumphs. They built themselves into the loudest and toughest boogie rock/blues band of all time.



During lulls in the proceedings, people just wandered around the sloping site or merely soaked up the atmosphere. (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke)

those who stood there in the front rows and shook the flimsy wire fence at Sunbury are now *terminally deaf* from the absolutely relentless two-hour assault by the band on that weekend! The set was also recorded, (although how the engineers coped with the volume, I'll never know!) and was released as *Aztecs Live! At Sunbury*. The double album complete with a pop-up inside and photos which showed Thorpie et al in a tent smoking hookas, subsequently became Top 10 material for the band and further entrenched the legend that was fast becoming - *Sunbury*. In fact, it's almost impossible to discuss Sunbury without mentioning Thorpie and vice versa. A further song, *Mamma* also appeared on the various artists compilation live album, *Sunbury*. **The "Sunbury" Aztecs** at this time were: **Lobby Loyde**, on lead guitar and **Paul Wheeler** – bass, **Gil Matthews**, (drums) and keyboardist, **Warren "Pig" Morgan**:

JEFF STOCO: "Whilst many people would argue that Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs was the quintessential "Sunbury band", this was earned by being the only band to appear at each of the four Festivals. In '72, they were at their peak, but in 1973, music was changing and Billy merely repeated his '72 performance, albeit replacing Warren Morgan with ex La De Da, Bruce Howard. Other bands were changing, but Billy stayed the same, faithful to the fans but also to milk the cash cow. Paul Wheeler on bass and Gil Matthews on drums, with Bruce, enabled Billy to cement his sound in Australian rock, ...Billy also encouraged a slightly tough or even violent element to prosper with a catchphrase of "suck more piss" being heard from the stage. (Stocco, email interview, 31 December, 2004)

Thorpie had achieved a monster hit with his, *Most People I know Think That I'm Crazy* and along with his rendition of *Ooh Poop Pah Do* made for an acoustically, searing set:

BILLY THORPE: "I never had any idea that the band had become this popular, but something like this really gives you an indication. It's been really worth it, coming from the beginning, it seems to have built up; coming from a hundred people to 40,000 - it's unbelievable! The point is, we don't need overseas names, this must be obvious here! The only way to promote Australian music, is to make it purely Australian music, and, I mean, it's good to bring in a group that is a good [overseas] group, but most of these festivals...I don't see why we shouldn't use our bands here.

It was loud. Everything was loud. There was so much energy it was frightening in a way. I want to get much louder but the problem is that in this country the equipment can't handle it, and it just distorts so much of the sound. Hendrix was loud but he was loud and clear". (Thorpe, *Go-Set*, March 1972.).

Drugs were certainly there in an atmosphere where the police were really only interested in interfering if there was an incident which required their attendance – and in the prevailing mood of peace and sharing, there was little

of that. John Fowler, engrossed for most of the time with the logistics of the festival, took a walk through the crowd and down towards the creek on the Saturday night:

JOHN FOWLER: " (I was) ... walking down "Pot Alley" with the Health Commission representatives who'd come to inspect the site - the food stalls and the toilets - and make sure everything was the way it should be. We walked down by the river bank which we'd nick-named "Pot Alley" because all you could smell was pot smoke. It was quite hysterical walking down there because it was a beautiful night, everybody was enjoying themselves and all you could smell was bloody fumes from this stuff!!" (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

However, back at the Diggers Rest Hotel, on the main road, the police were a little more active as **Ian Meldrum** found while interviewing a few kids outside the pub:

IAN MELDRUM: " ... over to the local pub and a few of the old juice freaks said, BLOODY GOOD. BLOODY FANTASTIC. BLOODY NICE BUNCHA KIDS. ... here I was interviewing a few of the juice freaks who'd come down for a breather from the festival when I came upon this guy who was dressed in sunglasses, short-hair and rather a bright shirt and I must admit that I thought, FUNNEEEEEEE ... he doesn't fit into one of the NORM ... and FUNNEEEEEEE it was because he turned out to be a PLAIN CLOTHES DETECTIVE ... well, there we were, and there were the juice freaks, and suddenly ROARING down the road from the direction of the pop festival was the BIG BLUE DIVVY WAGON ... it screeched to a halt outside the front entrance and for a moment I thought it was a flashback from the CHARLIE CHAPLIN days and THE KEYSTONE COPS.

Well it was on for young and old ... the plain clothes guys started shouting and the juice freaks were being hustled here and there into the DIVVY WAGON ... I was valiantly trying to follow my film-crew when one poor uniformed policeman got the impression that I was making a run for it and IN I WENT ... my God, I've never talked so fast in my life." (Meldrum, op cit, 12 February, 1972.)

Back at the Duncan's farm site, **Ian Bailey** and his mates had lit a huge bonfire in the camping area towards evening, as the campers settled down from the hot afternoon shenanigans and over a period of hours as the sun set and an evening calmness and coolness set in, they were joined by probably a hundred of so fellow campers all singing every **Beatles**, **Credence Clearwater Revival** and **Cat Stevens** song they knew. Bailey remembers that sometime during the Saturday night, he and his mate Gordon were slipped some LSD by a girl they had met and that added to the dimension of the night as they worked themselves to the front of the crowd for **Billy Thorpe's** milestone performance. Bailey recalls that when the LSD eventually took hold, the surrounding Sunbury hills became undulating waves and he went running through the gathering warning them of werewolves hiding in the trees! Understandably, the rest of the night is a bit of a blur:

IAN BAILEY: "There was a large group of older guys camped near the creek who had a Viet Cong flag flying on the top of their tent. Gordon, who was always up for any sort of challenge decided early that he wanted to get their flag. I was reluctant, to say the least. These guys looked scary! We'll never know what happened that night (blame it on the LSD) but in the morning, Gordon's sleeping bag was burnt to shreds, the shirt I was wearing was the same and I was lying in the warm remains of our campfire with the Viet Cong flag wrapped around me." (Bailey, op cit, 6 January, 2005).

There was certainly a highly spontaneous and chaotic side to Sunbury '72; something which gave contrast and colour to the festival and which was found interdispersed between the music blasting from the stage. No two greater exponents of the absurd and the bizarre could be given the roles of crowd entertainers at the festival than



The Diggers Rest Hotel – known to locals now as "The Pink Palace". In a different colour scheme in a different era, it was the place to buy grog before commencing the last leg of the journey to the Sunbury festival site, or to replenish supplies throughout the weekend.

the truly eccentric, **Adrian Rawlins** and "The Wizard", a New Zealander whose real name was **Ian Channell**. Rawlins was Melbourne's appointee to the beat poet movement; he was truly unique and a well-recognised figure throughout the 'sixties. He involved himself in many aspects of the poetry/music scene but he was also a performer, organiser, promoter and raconteur. Rawlins was also recognised in jazz circles, being well-known at the Fat Black Pussycat in Toorak. His antics with his fellow oddball, 'The Wizard' at Sunbury '73 have become legend.

'The Wizard' was an academic who had come to the University of New South Wales in 1967 as a lecturer in Sociology, but was reportedly dismissed from his post there. Ian Channell gives his version of the times:

IAN CHANNELL: "I came to Melbourne as a part of a tour of the universities with a travelling show. It was sponsored by the World University Service (WUS) A vaguely Christian based international organisation of academics, administrators and students.. I had travelled to Geneva in 1970 to get the backing of their HQ.

This was done to spread some of the new ideas circulating at that time in the fields of psychotherapy, philosophy, and sociology. Also to raise money for WUS. The show, a comic history, was in two parts: The Immortality Show from Adam to Moses and the Immorality Show, Nietzsche and the Fun Revolution.

Whilst I was on the road, WUS (in Australia at least) was taken over by the Communists! They moved their HQ away from Melbourne and simply acted as if I didn't exist, and later rewrote their constitution without informing all the branches. I think it died shortly afterwards. This was the time when political skullduggery was rife in Oz. Remember the NUS travel scheme?

I ended up marooned in Melbourne with no money and no support as I had given up everything to work for WUS.

Luckily Anna Carmody (her husband was John Pinder's T. F. Much Ballroom partner) was executive officer of the Melbourne University Union Activities section and she helped me start again by becoming the Union's official, but unpaid Cosmologer, Shaman and Living Work of Art. I was still marginalised by the puritanical Marxist student radicals as a bohemian counter-revolutionary distraction from "the real issues".

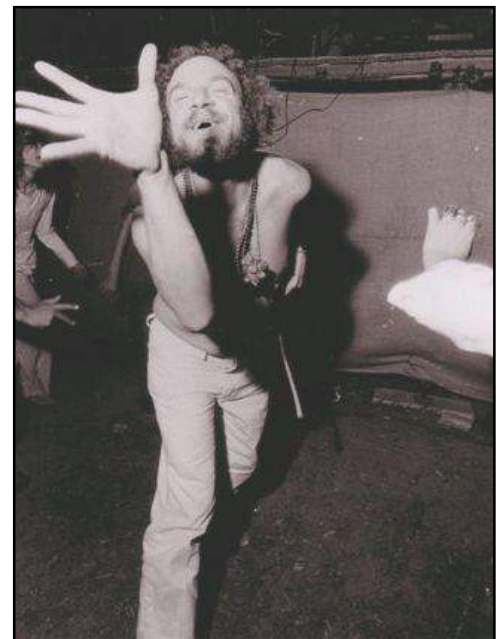
This was when I became involved with the TF Much Ballroom scene and allied entertainments whilst having a running battle with the student leaders on campus. As an ex-sociology lecturer I was horrified at their half-baked "radical chic" and their bully boy tactics with those who wouldn't roll over for them. They couldn't stand the idea of a fun revolution. It was rather like a bull fight. They had the money, the numbers and the muscle but I had the brains and the flexibility." (Channell, email correspondence, 7 September, 2005)

Now in his 'seventies and semi-retired in Oamaru, the London-born scholar had at one time, graduated from Leeds University with a Bachelor of Arts, (Double Honours in Psychology and Sociology). In the period, 1969 to 1973, he was at Melbourne University where he continued his solo crusade against everything that could be considered "normal behaviour". Today, back in his homeland, he is his country's only 'Official Wizard'.

His interest in the occult led him over time to develop an entirely new persona for himself as 'The Wizard'. He looked to the day that a new world order would come into being. His life from then on, comprised a complex mixture of magic, sociology, esoteric philosophy, and absurd performance art. He was tall, sported a full beard (as all reputable wizards do!) and in tune with the spirit of the 'sixties, had long flowing hair. He dressed in a variety of peculiar costumes which made him stand out in most situations.

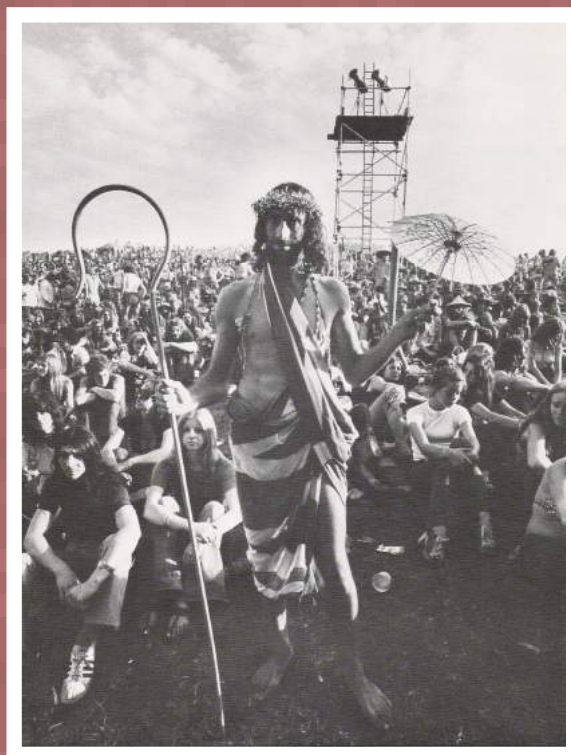
There could be nobody present that swelteringly, hot weekend who was not amazed, amused, enthralled, captivated and spellbound (and probably bewildered) by the strange, often crazy antics of these two, whether on or off stage. Commencing from about 10 am on the Saturday morning and in between each band break, Rawlins would embark on his five-minute rave about how The Wizard was going to fly. He kept this up all day until many began to wonder if The Wizard *could actually fly!!* Security supervisor **Bob Jones** in his role just offstage saw it all:

BOB JONES: "All day Saturday, during the breaks between acts, both Adrian and The Wizard bantered about the

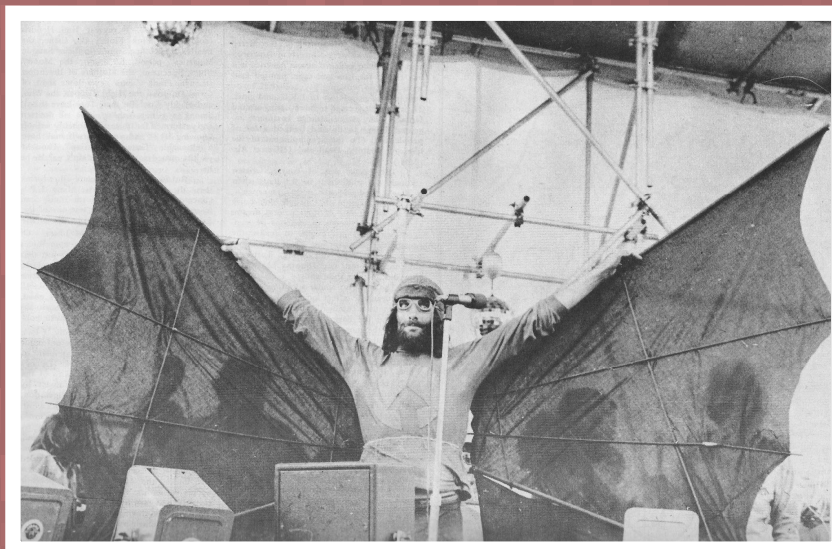


The Wizard's partner in fun, Adrian Rawlins - as caught by David Porter's camera.

The Wizard - Crowd Diversion ...



What was he really on about??? "The Wizard", aka Ian Channell. He believed that his role was to attract the crowd's attention in between band breaks on stage. Photos: above - arriving in style. (Courtesy of David Porter, aka Jacques L'Affrique). Above right - The pseudo Christ-like figure of The Wizard amongst the crowd at Sunbury. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio)- right - from Planet magazine, 9 February, 1972 - photographer unknown.



stage, telling bardic tales and reciting obscure poetry, every hour on the hour, and sometimes in between, Adrian would tell the Sunbury audience about the power of universal thought through transcendental meditation.

'You know if we all believe in something together during one cosmic fibre of time, anything we would imagine together would be possible'

"Why, I believe I could even fly across the sky!", The Wizard retaliated.

They'd keep this up for the following six hours... .

All we kept hearing was, 'If you believe ... I'll fly across the sky ...'

Then it would be everybody's turn to chant: 'Yes we do believe.' (Jones, op cit, 2001, P111).

This was late Saturday afternoon as the blistering heat ensured that most resorted to their preferred liquid refreshment. Six o'clock in the evening was the appointed time for The Wizard to defy gravity and fly across the packed Sunbury site. With his entourage in tow and dressed suitably in bat clothing, The Wizard climbed high into an ancient River Gum and out onto one of its sturdy branches. Much to the amusement of the rapt crowd:

BOB JONES: "Finally, there stood The Wizard, in all his bat glory, at the pinnacle of the biggest backstage gum tree. Adrian got us all to chant our final affirmation as The Wizard flapped his wings and he took off. We all believed and gasped in dismay: The Wizard flapped his bat wings all the way down, belly-whacking the surface of Jacksons Creek. He must have dislocated both shoulders." (Jones, op cit, 2001, P112).

The following silence was broken only by the outrageous laughter of Adrian Rawlins who no doubt had cosmic reasons why The Wizard failed to take flight on this particular occasion. The Wizard remembers it this way:

IAN CHANNELL: "This was the climax of several different attempts to get airborne which I and my friends staged as part of our pre-planned crowd distracting tactics. This was worked out with the festival organisers to avoid trouble from drunks during any boring breaks in the entertainment which had happened at other festivals elsewhere." (Channell, op cit, 7 September, 2005).

The following year, he tried something different.

On with the music - time for Max Merritt and his Meteors.

For many, Sunday dawned anew and developed into "the day of the acute hangover." Many wandered around the site in a persistent self-induced daze while others retreated again to the creek which, by this stage was far from its pre-Sunbury pristine condition but became popular all over again. Many fans would alternate between the cool, brown creek water, the stage and their tents as the music continued to be the central cohesive force on the masses. By the time the Monday public holiday rolled around, many had had more than enough of the heat, the flies and the hangovers and wanted nothing more than a decent meal, a real wash in clean water and a soft bed! **Bob Jones** saw it all in his role which often required him and his Black Belt karate exponents to go well beyond their original brief for the festival:

BOB JONES: "You had 35,000 people at Sunbury the first year... they all broke bottles... they went barefooted, naked. They stood on this glass and gashed their feet and collapsed on the ground screaming. Nobody thought of that happening, so Bob Jones and his merry band of security guys had to rush in and pick up naked ladies with their feet cut open and carry them across the site. During the day, they got dehydrated and collapsed with heat exhaustion. People with medical problems who maybe, didn't bring enough stuff for their asthma or got drunk and didn't know what they were taking or not taking! So we found ourselves working flat out, not on crowd control, but on crowd *protection*... saving them from themselves!" (Jones, op cit, 15 August, 2005).

There was one incident, possibly brought on by a bad acid trip which had authorities concerned:



By the time Sunday morning came, there were quite a few tired and hung-over faces in the crowd. But still, the music pumped from the stage. (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke)

IAN MELDRUM: "Down with the film crew to the stage to cover LANGFORD LEVER ... but no sooner had we got there than we got a radio message to get post-haste to the top of the hill because some freak was threatening to jump off one of the towers ... apparently had got a little carried away with a trip and decided to climb a tower to ask the helicopter pilot if he could have a ride ... when it came time for him to get down he just couldn't manage it, so he threatened to jump ... with good advice from BOB JONES, the karate guy, and the ST. JOHNS AMBULANCE men, plus some sound advice from the POLICE .. they managed to lower the guy down with a rope harness ... and a ladder ... he could give no reason for his conduct ... what a FREAK!" (Meldrum, op cit, 12 February, 1972.)

By far the most potentially dangerous time of the festival was **Billy Thorpe's** magnificent set which was eagerly anticipated by all 35,000 people there. The compound in front of the stage which separated the crowd from the stage area by about ten metres was cordoned off with just a two-metre high fence of light fencing wire and star-iron pickets, hammered into the ground. It could have led to a disaster of huge proportions which the waiting media would have feasted on like sharks at a feeding frenzy, had it been trampled down:

BOB JONES: "I remember the Saturday night with Billy Thorpe. The kids had been waiting all day for him. It would have been very nice in the front five of six rows behind the fence ... it was only a flimsy wire fence. We were on the inside between the stage and the crowd and looking at a sea of people and they were surging forward... 'Thorpie, Thorpie, Thorpie'. I remember that being quite a scary moment for me because I thought if that fence breaks, we're going to have thousands of kids getting caught in the wire... So we had a bit of a panic." (Jones, op cit, 15 August 2005)

Colin James managed to sum up the part in history that Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs created with this one set:

COLIN JAMES: "In all, the festival was a great one, Australia's best so far, ... I'm not sure if there will be another one like it, but it will go down in people's memories like the first Ourimbah festival, as something that was unique.

I think Thorpie proved he is one of Australia's top bands (I'm very hesitant to say **the** top band) by playing all old hard rock numbers. Things like **Bee bop a loo la**, **Rock me babe**, and his new single **Most people I know**, which should be a huge hit for him.

Thorpie didn't play fiddly rock and roll like we get from **Daddy Cool**, but hard driving gut rock and roll which had the crowd screaming for more, and literally threw people onto the ground in what can be called orgasmic spasms.

If there is a festival success band it has to be Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs" (James, op cit, 12 February, 1972)

So from the point of view of the organisers, **John Fowler** and **Odessa Promotions**, how successful had the festival been?:

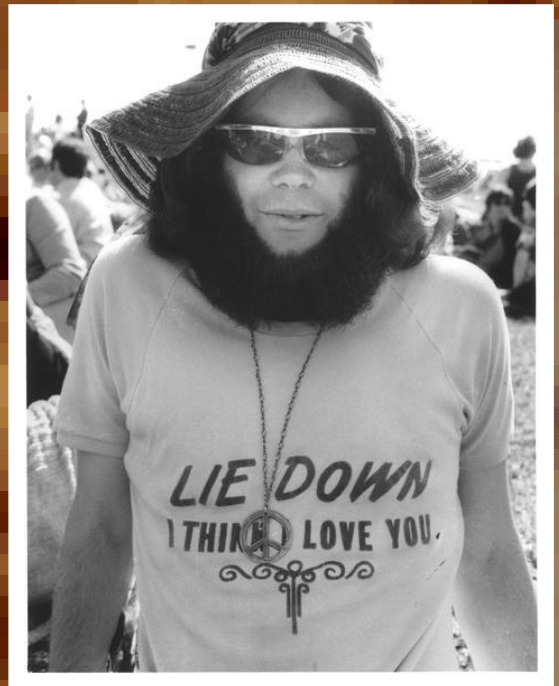
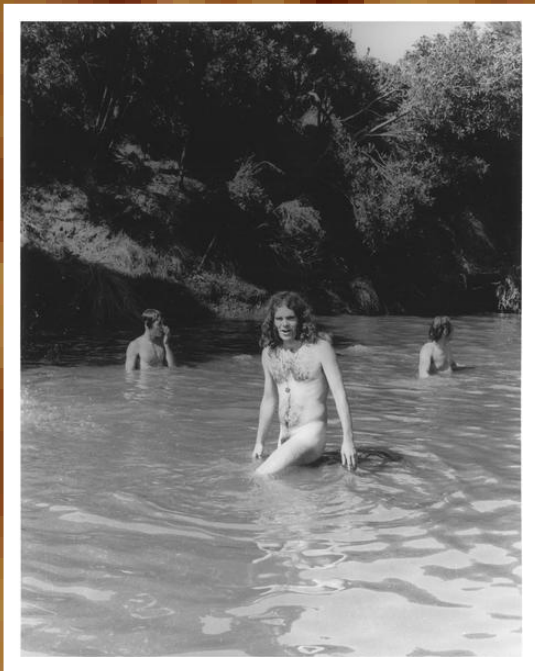
JOHN FOWLER: "Well, apart from the rubbish, it was all right. We even went out there as a family - weekend, after weekend, after weekend picking up rubbish to try to clean it up for George (Duncan). People were not environmentally conscious - they couldn't give a hoot. They just dropped stuff everywhere and anywhere.

(But) that was enough for Odessa to go into '73. We felt though, that we should produce a movie which John Dixon who owned a film company, thought we could do. We felt that he'd produced some pretty good commercials for TV, so we said, 'yes' and went into the costing of it. Stupidly, I invested some of the festival profits into it and we never got that back. We ploughed any money that had been made back into the festival with a bigger stage, better toilets. I might add that one of the investors, was Michael Edgeley and he got repaid. Then of course, the promoter wanted to jack up the prices. He said, "Well, you got 30,000 people, now we want a slice of the



...and what was left after the music finished? Just mountains of rubbish which kept festival organisers busy for a number of weekends trying to get it all carted off to the tip. (Courtesy of Robyn Clarke)

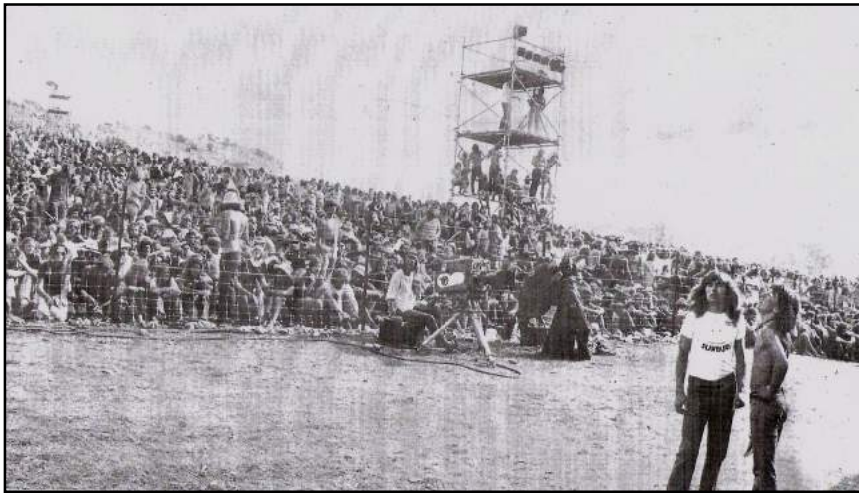
Sunbury hill's moment in time...



Sunbury 1972. All photos by Soc. Hedditch. Permission to reproduce granted by The National Library of Australia - Photographic Collection.

action, so all the prices went up. We should have had the prices higher the first year but we had the philosophy of providing entertainment at a certain cost to create something special. Had we charged \$12, it would have been better... but mind you, we were having a little recession at that stage." (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

Don Muir, now of Echuca was a young Channel Seven cameraman assigned to cover the festival that first year



It is indeed cameraman Don Muir, in a precarious position, working for Channel 7 just inside the compound fence. (A photo from Planet magazine, photographer unknown. Courtesy of Don Muir)

and he set up his equipment late on Saturday, sitting on the ground just in front of the stage and inside the wire enclosure to wait to cover **Billy Thorpe's** thundering set which was to go live on the air from 5pm that afternoon. He began to feel really insecure when he glanced over his shoulder and could see nothing but a sea of legs on the other side of the chicken-wire fence. His first thoughts were for self-preservation if, for some reason, the fired-up crowd decided to charge the stage. However, the threat to the camera operator came from another source altogether – the sheer volume of Thorpe's set which ran overtime! Muir also had to turn up his headphones just to hear his director's

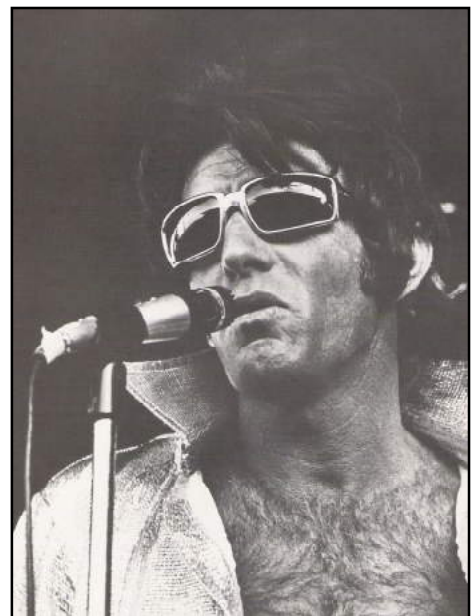
instructions. The whole experience left his ears ringing for at least a week and he now has permanent hearing loss in one ear as a result of that day! (Muir, correspondence, 26 December, 2004)

Sunbury 1973 - 26 - 29 January - "...you all look like a beautiful garden of roses."

By the time the organisers had decided to repeat the dose of rock, booze and sunshine exactly one year later and capitalise on the success of the first festival, Sunbury had gone a long way in the intervening period to achieving legendary status – the fact that **Odessa Promotions' John Fowler, John Dixon** and friends were willing to repeat the experience demonstrates this. Odessa had even moved out of John Fowler's kitchen in Mt. Eliza into a vacant office in St. Kilda Road.

Fowler, in contemporary reports admitted that the budget for this year's festival had been set at \$150,000; that was up on the inaugural Sunbury mainly because the artists and promoters were demanding a greater share of the Sunbury cake through higher booking fees. This year, it was Thorpie up there again and **Lobby Loyde and The Coloured Balls**; the band which was making headway into the pubs back in Melbourne, building up a following to almost rival that of **The Aztecs**. The success which **Madder Lake** achieved at the first Sunbury ensured that they were a very welcome act again. Appearing in 1973 as well were: **Carson, Healing Force, Matt Taylor, Bakery, MacKenzie Theory, Country Radio, Band Of Light, Friends** and **Sid Rumpo** – in fact all the favourites from the Melbourne scene in what were the fading years of the city and suburban discotheques. Compare duties went to comedian, **Paul Hogan** who shared them with career-compare, **Gerry Humphrys** who had returned from London for the occasion.

Travel to the festival was again by car or diesel train/bus. For those



No, Elvis wasn't at Sunbury, '73 - it's Paul Hogan, Sydney Harbour Bridge painter and A Current Affair comedian. He was given the MC's job and subsequently, the task of introducing Johnny O'Keefe. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio)

who took public transport, Diggers Rest Station served as the nearest point to disembark and the last few kilometres could easily be covered on foot or by shuttle bus. Many, in true Woodstock-style carried tents, mattresses, even couches and armchairs to set up for the weekend. The Diggers Rest pub, for the second year in a



Former Perth band, Sid Rumpo had relocated to Melbourne in 1972, setting themselves up as a must-see band at the city clubs. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber – Australian Rock Folio)

row, became the nearest and most convenient place to replenish stocks.

The site was basically orderly and tidy at the beginning of the event and the organisational successes of the previous year looked like being repeated. Food was also available from the many stalls and caravan vendors on site. Only the security had been a major concern in '72, despite the best efforts of the **Bob Jones Organisation**.

This year, attention would be paid to the perimeter fence adjacent to the river and bordering surrounding properties. Still there were concerns for John Fowler and the organisers, keen to repeat the financial successes of the previous year:

JOHN FOWLER: "We had to step up on a few things, like people getting in under the fence. Bob Jones and his crew with their motorized vehicle used to patrol the fences. Then that bastard farmer over the back was

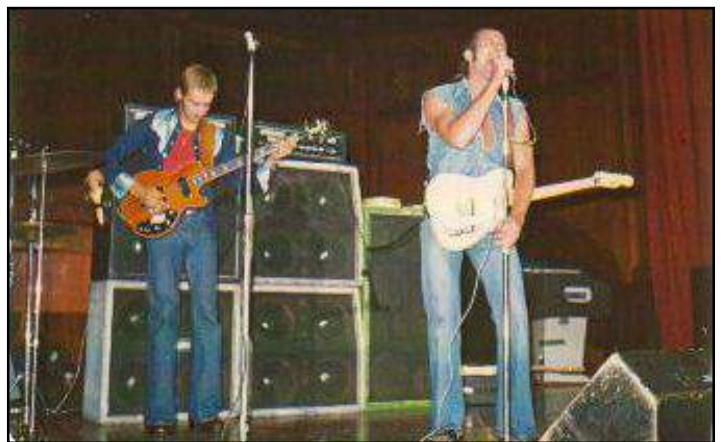
letting the kids in through his property for \$5!!!! He was openly advertising that they could get in his way for... I think 5 or 6 bucks. So we had the search light mounted on the cliff to pick 'em up." (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

Police presence was not as visible at this time and some have even reported noticing 'undercover' police trying to stay incognito while walking around the site wearing very bad wigs! But it was the St. John's Ambulance volunteers who were always present and on duty at each Sunbury, who deserved the highest commendation for their efforts.

They set up their tent at this and all other festivals, which became "emergency wards" on many occasions. **Rob Bethune** is one who required their attention on the Saturday of this festival:

ROB BETHUNE: "...A little bit later I took quite ill, my mate took me to the St John's Ambulance hospital/first aid tent where I spent the rest of the day lying on a stretcher. They (St John's) thought I had some sort of overdose, but I hadn't – I think it was just plain heat exhaustion! ...the centre was like being in a war zone. The St John's workers were run off their feet, every five minutes a serious case was stretchered in, ranging from drug overdoses/freak outs to near drownings in the creek. I think there was a child birth as well... (Bethune, op cit, 13 January, 2005).

"The Wizard" whose real name was **Ian Channell** was back to provide another organised fiasco; all in the name of entertainment. By now, a very familiar and eccentric "entertainer" he was becoming well recognised around town at many Bohemian hangouts and protests. However, many were a little sceptical about "The Wizard" and it was a common-held belief amongst radical student groups that he was something of a "spy" for the CIA and/or ASIO, "planted" to report back to them on just what the counter-culture was getting up to. Maybe in the era of huge conspiracy theories, Cold War rhetoric, anti-war, anti-government protests and espionage action then he could be viewed with suspicion. I'm sure he would consider it all just a big joke, but there were many who believe that entertainment and crazy antics aside, he was not to be trusted. However, setting aside the politics of this situation, he once again brought his own brand of



Lobby Loyde with The Coloured Balls from a later concert at The Melbourne Town Hall, 6 January, 1974. In 1973, he was busting a gut to get onto the Sunbury stage. (Courtesy of Terry Foenander)

outrageous fun to Sunbury. The previous year, he drew a huge crowd on the banks of Jackson's Creek late on the Saturday afternoon as he stood on the highest branch of the largest backstage Red River Gum and prepared to "fly" at the urging of compare, **Adrian Rawlings**. Not to the amazement of many, he failed to "fly" and flapped frantically towards a massive "belly-whack" into the water. This year, he tried something a little different, if somewhat safer and less life-threatening:

IAN CHANNELL: "I appeared dressed as a capitalist who had seen the light and gave away his money (fake) and my friends followed along as dim-witted salesman who, not realising that the money was fake, sold them cheap toys which we had bought beforehand. This had the desired effect and the organisers were pleased that we kept the large, rather boozy crowd in good spirits." (Channell, op cit, 7 September, 2005.

Michael Chugg who was the head of Frontier Touring says that in his memory, **Country Radio** was one of the great performances over this weekend:

MICHAEL CHUGG: "Country Radio had just released a song called *Gypsy Queen* and they were playing country rock in that environment. They went on Saturday afternoon just as the sun was going down and did one of the most magnificent sets. Someone threw a can and hit Greg (Quill) and Greg lost his cool and started swearing at the audience. Then they started playing very aggressively for a country rock band and got a standing ovation." (Chugg, quoted in Herald-Sun Weekend Magazine, 25 January, 1997, P 11).

By far the most talked about event at this year's festival, was the appearance of faded rock hero, **Johnny O'Keefe**. From another era entirely, J O'K was not part of the Sunbury or disco club set and this gamble to put him up there with the current crop of stars, could have easily proved fatal for the festival organisers **Odessa Productions**, and O'Keefe alike. However, Johnny was used to taking calculated risks throughout his entire career, but this was "the mother of all risks" for him.

There were definitely early concerns. **John Hansen**, working with O'Keefe

remembers when the booking came through, J O'K insisted on wearing his, by now trademark white suit:

JOHN HANSEN: "... we were all talking about what John was going to do. Was he gonna go casual and wear an open neck shirt and jeans or was he gonna say, "Nah, dinner suit, bow tie, the full works?" (Hansen, quoted in Johnstone, 2001, P 253).

By the time of his performance however, the dinner suit had given way to immaculately pressed, white slacks, jacket with wide lapels and a roll-neck sweater underneath. Johnny's small, gold chain and cross were worn over this.

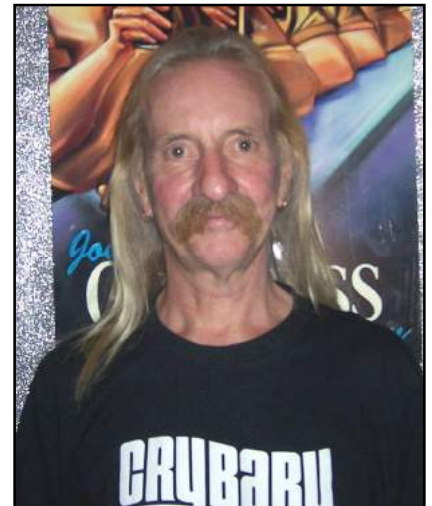
When the time of his appearance on stage arrived - which was the Sunday of the long-weekend - O'Keefe was extremely nervous, something that he had not been able to get used to over the decades and he was vomiting in a sink inside his caravan. The crowd response to the early announcements that the legend was about to appear, had not given him a great deal of confidence. As co-compare for 1973, **Paul Hogan**, dressed in his trademark shorts and shirt with the arms cut off made the on-stage introduction, a ripple of "boos" wafted across the assembled crowd. **George Duncan jnr**, son of the owners of the site, recalls that Hogan himself was extremely nervous backstage and it took a while for **Denise Drysdale** to calm him with a couple of beers before he went on. (Herald-Sun, Weekend Magazine, op cit, 25 January, 1997, P 11).

Hogan, to his credit, probably did a lot to place the crowd in a more receptive mood when he approached the microphone and announced in his laidback ocker drawl: "Listen up: I've got a new kid for ya tonight. I've dug up this bloke around me suburb. He's only new, matter of fact he ran third in

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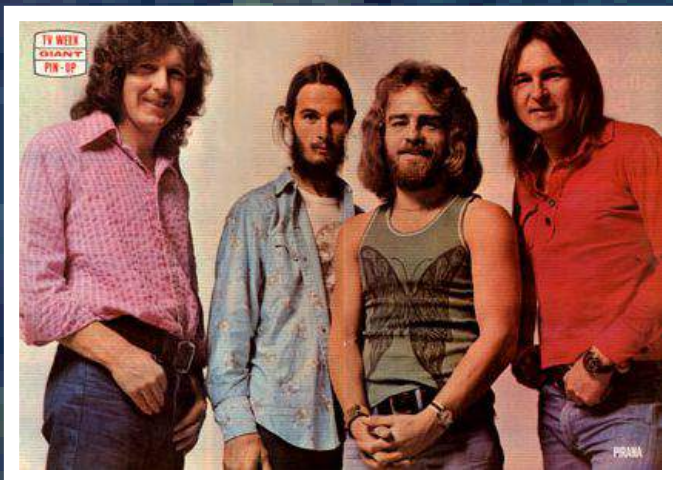


Mick Elliott joined Sid Rumpo in 1973. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio)



Mick Elliott doesn't strap on his left-handed Gibson often enough these days, but was onstage at The Dan O'Connell, Carlton for a blues jam in 2006.

Pirana's Soul Sacrifice
at Sunbury '73 ...



Sydney band, Pirana became one of the surprise hits of the first Sunbury festival. In 1973, they returned to build on this astounding triumph. The core of the Sunbury band comprised: Tony Hamilton, Stan White, (replaced in February, 1972 by Keith Greig), Graeme Thompson, Jim Duke-Yonge. Photos courtesy of Keith Greig. Pin-up from TV Week.

Beyond Jacques L'Affrique's lens ...



Go-Set photographer David Porter (aka Jacques L'Affrique) caught some of the happenings at Sunbury '73. Above – Spectrum on stage. Right – fans beyond the fence waiting for Thorpie. Below right – Carson swing into their set. Below – What's there to be worried about? Or is she meditating?



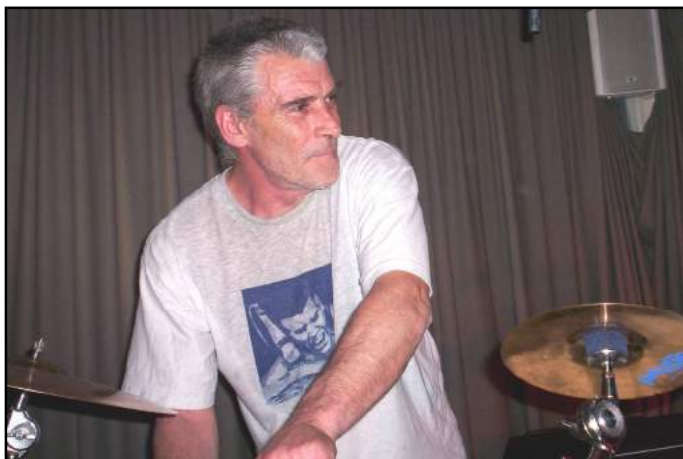
the talent quest out Dandenong the other week, but I want him to make his debut here tonight, so like shut up and give him a go. I mean he's nervous and he's raw and he hasn't got much talent but he's in there trying and working all the time. So give him a big warm welcome. Ah, and make him feel at home. His name's Jimmy O'Keefe and he's only new as I said, so give him all your best. Jimmy O'Keefe. Give him a big welcome." (Hogan, quoted in Johnstone op cit, 2001, P254).

Sure enough, the beer cans had already begun to reach the stage as the boos got a little louder, smothering any slight applause. It looked to be developing into a disaster of epic proportions. **John Fowler**, organiser of the festival was attending to regular duties away from the stage. These tasks consistently required his consideration during the weekend. But his attention was diverted when Johnny took to the stage:

JOHN FOWLER: "Oh, he just killed them! I only saw some of his performance. I was sitting in the Police tent and we were analyzing the progress of the festival and all of a sudden we heard, "... here's Johnny O'Keefe!" "Booooo... get OFF! We don't want Johnny O'Keefe. BOOOOO!" I thought, Christ, there will be a riot down there. I really mean that because everybody thought ... we've got trouble! Well.. within two or three minutes, he had them boppin' their heads off! We all know the story now – he killed them!" (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

O'Keefe first launched into **Chuck Berry's Johnny B. Goode** – polite applause. Then came *Ooh Poo Pa Do* which O'Keefe had been doing years before Thorpie got hold of it, but most in the crowd would not have known this and clearly identified the song with Billy – big risk, Johnny!

But, Johnny had caught the crowd's imagination if nothing else at this point, and it was when he launched into *So Tough* that the crowd took JO'K on, as one of their own.



Trevor Young packs his drum kit away after a gig in 2005.

Johnny sensed the mood of the audience and before hitting *She's My Baby*, he signalled to the band to drop the sound level of the introduction a little. He approached the microphone and with genuine sincerity said; "You know, just looking out on you people from the stage, I want you to know that you all look like a beautiful garden of roses."

The showman in him knew what the next move was to be – a newly recorded **Neil Diamond** song, *High Rollin' Man*. The crowd was ecstatic! Total success – creating one of the great talking points and most emphatic victories in Australian music history:

MATT TAYLOR: "He just came on and blew 'em away in an evening suit! He didn't even have long hair. ... Lucky I was smart enough, probably because I was listening to all the old guys, to realise right there and then that this guy had really just shown me something." (Taylor, quoted in Johnstone, op cit, 2001, P257)

BILLY THORPE: "He knew instinctively when to drop the crowd down and when to bring them up for the most effective response. ... I thought he was fantastic!" (Thorpe, quoted in Johnstone op cit, 2001, P257)

JEFF STOCCO, one of the crowd who felt a lot of trepidation at the imminent arrival on stage of O'Keefe, was incredibly surprised at the conclusion of his set. He and others had laughed at the possibility of seeing J. O.K in a light - coloured suit at a blue - jeans rock festival and felt that he had time - warped himself from another



Lobby's Coloured Balls with Trevor Young on drums, (centre) and Lobby Loyde on the left. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber – Australian Rock Folio)

musical generation, long past. After two or three songs, Stocco and his mates were applauding, yelling and cheering like to rest of the crowd for this man and his gutsy performance in front of a potentially hostile crowd.

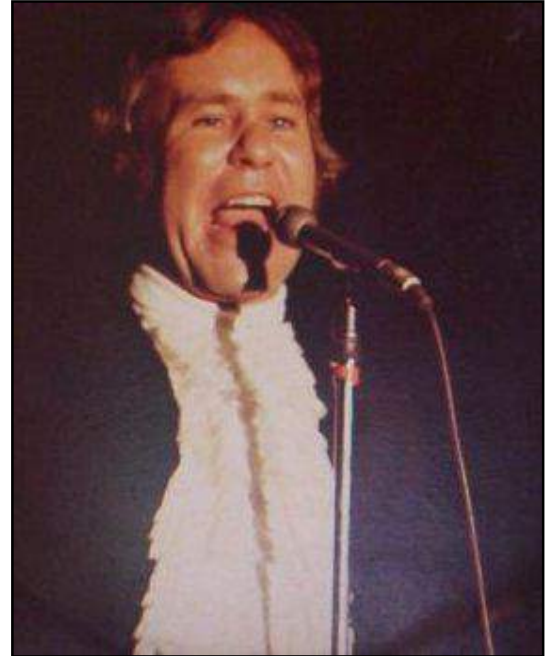
Johnny later told of his determination to gain the respect of the younger generation:
JOHNNY O'KEEFE: "I was standing there behind the stage when I heard the buggers booing. I thought "----" 'em. I'm going to give these jokers the best performance they've seen or are ever going to see. I worked my arse off that night and it worked." (O'Keefe, quoted in Johnstone, 2001, P258).

At the end of the set which saw O'Keefe gain the total respect of a new rock generation, all knew that along with Thorpie's mind-blowing set from the previous year, they had witnessed something quite magical – certainly never to be repeated again – something also to add to the Sunbury legend down the years.

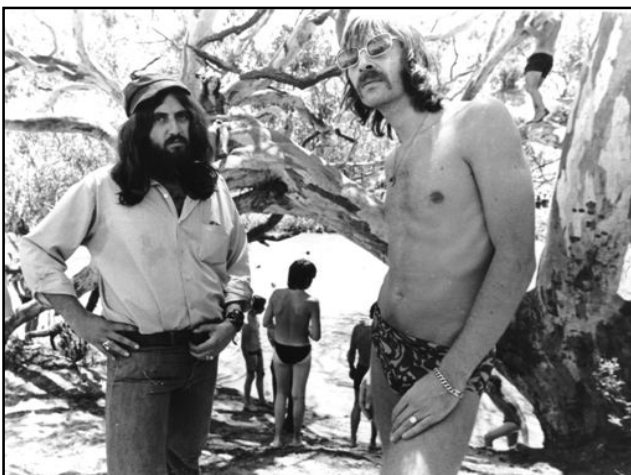
When it was Thorpie's turn, **Peter Evans** and his company ESP Lighting turned the stage into a vibrating extravaganza of lighting effects with strobe lighting and a disco ball above the heads of the band casting little specks of revolving glitter on the rear wall of the stage. Out there in the crowd, the feeling was electric with anticipation of another sensational set from the master of Sunbury.

By the middle of the festival, the site in true festival tradition, began to resemble a cross between a rubbish tip, a refugee camp and a medical evacuation centre: the toilets had ceased to function very early on the first day and were terminally blocked. The whole site, due to the heat had become a dry-grass, dustbowl with little willi-willi's of airborne dust sweeping the hill and the river flats. Watermelon sales however were booming in the heat:

MICHAEL GUDINSKI: "There were all these stores and stands which had to be set up and I remember my (then) partner Ray Evans was going to all the meetings and he used to have all these hair-brained schemes. As well as doing the staging, as a bonus, he negotiated, at a very low fee, a watermelon concession. After the first day I was busting my arse working on the stage and he came running up to me with a fistful of cash going, "I told you! The



Johnny was to make one of the great comebacks of all time at Sunbury, 1973 at a point in his career when he was all but a washed up has-been. From the cover of his, *Johnny O'Keefe, Live In Concert LP*.



Greg Quill, taking time out from Country Radio down by Jackson's Creek. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)

watermelons! The year it rained, of course, we got stuck with watermelon for days, but I'll never forget the glee on Ray's face when it was really stinking hot and he absolutely sold out of every watermelon we had." (Herald-Sun Weekend Magazine, 25 January, 1997, P 11).

The huge searchlight which had been positioned at all Sunburys was again in action attempting to catch interlopers who were trying to crawl through the long grass across the other side of Jackson's Creek in an endeavour to get under the fence and gain a free entry to the festival. By doing this, they ran the gauntlet of **Bob Jones'** security staff by day, and the patrolling dogs by night. When the searchlight was played across the crowd, it panned the masses for any sign of major trouble. As usual, the powerful beam, when trained on the hills, managed to uncover other recreational activities in the grass, creating more amusement for those gathered on the

hill in front of the stage. **Barry Davidson** was on "searchlight duties" for this weekend and found some spare time when off-duty to soak up the sights and sounds inside the VIP area near the stage:

BARRY DAVIDSON: "... on the Saturday evening being off duty, (we did 12 hours on and 12 hours off,) and 185.

wearing my Security T-shirt, I wandered around the back stage and the main stage area (as the T-shirts allowed us to go anywhere) to see how things were organised. I also gave the Jones boys (Bob Jones Organisation) on the gate at the front of stage fenced off area for VIP's a hand manning the gate. There were obviously undercover police in



The rather irreverent Francis Butler's 69er's. (Go-Set, 18 August 1973, courtesy of Philip Morris)

the crowd as a couple of times cops in plain clothes "flashed freddy" at me to let them in to the VIP area.

I next went up on stage and sat with the Jones boys at the edge of the stage. A short time went by and all but one of the Jones boys raced off stage - jumped into the back of a ute belonging to their group and were off to get involved in a ruckus some distance away from the stage. They were gone quite a while and whilst they were gone, a small fight started in the main crowd area just behind the VIP area. Well, the remaining Jones boy in a flash was up and over the cyclone fence and into the crowd yelling for me to come with him. Reluctantly, I followed but by the time I reached the top of the fence, he called back that all was okay. I must admit I was quite relieved at this. I presume also that he didn't want the stage left unattended. "(Davidson, correspondence, 9 April, 2005).

Whilst behind the scenes, Davidson came across an unusual sight involving a well-known female performer who had her hands down inside her T-shirt furiously rubbing her breasts just

immediately prior to going on for her set. He realised that this action was to ensure that her nipples stood out as she took to the stage! Almost at the same instant he came across something that really shocked him in a sign of changing times – two male homosexuals locked in a tender embrace and a passionate kiss behind the stage!

The daily press – *The Herald*, *The Sun* and *The Age* were there to focus on the activities of the crowd, particularly the nude swimming in Jackson's Creek, the arrests for drug usage and the drunkenness from a small minority (some might say, majority!) of the crowd. **Bruce Heritage** and his mates, Maurice and Dave came back to Sunbury to repeat the glories of the first year and were not the least concerned about how the press reported the event:

BRUCE HERITAGE: "The second year, (I think Dave was still hung over!) Maurice and I went down in my HR panel van. I remember we hid 12 dozen cans in the car. I guess it was the booze that we drank but all the festivals seemed to run into each other as I look back on it now. I can remember walking up the hill at night and just thinking that it looked like a cemetery, with all the wasted bodies lying around with flagons at their heads. I remember the music not the electric machine-made stuff, but live, raw and loud. It went on all-day and late into the night. The lighting around the stage was just awesome. There was a huge search light on the people. The light went on to the people on the other side of the creek who were literally falling down into the muddy water, much to the amusement of the crowd.

I remember all the sliding and swimming in the creek - lots of naked people diving, slipping and falling into the mud. I remember I got this rotten gravel rash on my guts, but man was it fun! Maurice threw a piece of watermelon at this chick. He ended up spending the night with her - talk about pick up lines! The Australian bands were fantastic. Billy Thorpe was, in my eyes - The Best. You should have seen him do *Ooh Pooah Pa Do!* Johnny O'Keefe was another highlight. Seeing him live was awesome. I didn't like him much prior to this but he was *fantastic.*" (Heritage, op cit, 14 January, 2005)

Jeff Stocco was present at Sunbury '73 and has recorded his memories:



In an era before laminated backstage passes, these 52mm steel discs were used by artists, officials and technicians in the backstage area as passouts. They were hung around necks with ribbon. (Author's collection)

Dear Jeff,

In 1972 I was in the Army Reserve (then known as the CMF), this being the alternative to National Service training. I remember being asked by a few army personnel to sign on as a security guard for the festival.

One of them had been engaged in a non army capacity to organise security arrangements, mainly patrolling boundaries and car park, checking tickets and watching out for violence. Most army persons signing on were not particularly musical and saw this as an opportunity to get a free ride into a phenomenon that was then new in Australia, the rock festival. I was told that I should sign on, as I would get in free, get free meals and accommodation, and the booze would be free. I declined and did not attend 1972, however the ALP gained office in late 1972 and moved to cut National Service and its sidelines and withdraw troops from Vietnam.

By this time all my friends had long hair and lived a more casual lifestyle and I hated the short back and sides of the army and had no long-term desire to stay. I was "balled out" one night in the drill hall for my long hair (fractionally over the collar), so that was my prompt. I therefore resigned from the CMF in late 1972, not before being asked again to sign on for security. I said "no" as I would be attending 1973 with my friends, but it would be great to catch up with some of my army friends as, and when I bumped into them. After my friends and I trudged the 3km or so from the Diggers Rest Hotel with our booze for the Festival and other assorted foods and tents, we got to the main security gate, and there they were, my former Sergeant and a few privates to welcome me. I got in for free (no pre-booking in those days). We had a great talk and laugh about the Festival, but I felt they had no real interest in the music. By the way they were dressed, I think in orange T shirts and bore no reference to the army, except that they had short back and sides, while I by then, had over the collar hair. I saw a few of them during the Festival, but lost touch thereafter.

Five or six of my friends were dropped off by a parent at the Diggers Rest Hotel where we purchased what we thought was sufficient alcohol. As it turned out we replenished 2 days into the Festival. We walked like packhorses along the Diggers Rest to Bulla Road for around 3km and along the access road (really only a long farm paddock). After entering the main site we looked down the escarpment to the Jacksons Creek and the stage area. Crowds were gathering and music was blaring over the main speakers. We looked for a relatively flat area to pitch our tents with a view down to the stage, but far enough away, not to be overrun by other tents or crowds. We quickly found some food stalls, which I think were mainly small M.A.S.H.-type tents selling mainly cold foods, soft drinks and juices. Jacksons Creek had been dammed up some weeks earlier to provide a swimming pool, and this was already in use, with people already swimming and it looked great. Dangers did lurk, due to crowding as some were jumping into the water from swing ropes and there was always the danger of someone landing on top of you from these ropes.

As indicated, food and soft drinks were located mainly on the river flats to the right of the stage, however at the top of the escarpment, hot food and beer could be purchased. Whilst these were not cheap, the costs were not as inflated as one might imagine. Although we had our own beer, "top ups" were always desirable. A good friend of my family owned a hamburger caravan and got a position in the Festival grounds. I knew he was there and my uncle was one of his employees in the caravan. For some reason I did not make use of this opportunity for good hamburgers, preferring to remain with my friends and our suspect cooking abilities. We had canned fruit, canned stew etc etc, but really our staple diet was beer and little else.

Toilets were located on the river flat and at the top of the escarpment, and were a mixture of portables and some

corrugated iron cubicles. They and the attached showers were always clean. Telephones were available in an enclosure at the top of the escarpment and came in handy to contact friends and family. There were police walking around the Festival site, but they did not get too involved and allowed security to function in a relaxed manner.

Many people attending came by diesel train to Diggers Rest Station and the shuttle buses to the site or simply walked from the station. I remember buses also ran from Sunbury Station as every second train ran express to Sunbury from Melbourne. We purchased VB and other alcohol at the Diggers Rest Hotel or purchased additional from the "on site" sales counter. Whilst members of our party certainly got drunk whilst watching bands, none were imposing upon others or were violent. There was little violence seen by me. One of our party was drunk and fell asleep in the hot sun (each day was approx 25-30 degrees) wearing no shirt. He was seen asleep for some hours with his left arm draped across his chest. Next day he had a lily white stripe across his chest, which was other wise burnt as was his arm.

I had little or no knowledge of drugs, however on one occasion I noticed the smoke coming from a nearby tent had a pleasant odour. (As for sex,) nothing happened in our tent, 5 or 6 males only, although girlfriends visited on a one-day ticket on the Sunday. Some other girls were noticed topless near the Creek, but that was about it.

I think when we arrived Led Zeppelin 2 was playing through the loudspeakers, followed by the Yes Album. These and other progressive LP's played between bands and prior to the commencement of each day. My general perception of the live music was one of different styles from the heavy blues and boogie bands to country, surfing and a sizeable quantity of acoustic acts or bands using acoustic elements.

I can no longer remember the sequence of band appearances, but clearly remember 1973 was a year of band splits and fragmentation. Numerous bands were moving on and were splitting, had split or had re-emerged into new structures in an era when bands and fan loyalties remained tight.

Chain with Matt Taylor had dissolved and evolved into a large line-up known as Mighty Mouse including brass and keyboards Phil Manning on guitar and vocals ran the band through a less blues, more jazz-orientated set. On both Saturday and Sunday mornings Matt played largely acoustic sets joined later by Greg Lawrie, Phil Manning, Barry Sullivan and Barry Harvey to run through his recent hit LP, "Straight as A Die". Matt, Phil and Tony Naylor also played an acoustic set on Sunday morning after being introduced by Gerry Humphrys, the former Loved One, who was MC with Ian Meldrum for most of the Festival. Gerry incidentally did a set on Saturday including his hit "Ongo Bongo Man" with his new band the Joy Boys including Billy Green of In Focus fame on guitar.

The La De Da's had fragmented, so Phil Key turned up in his new band, the Band of Light including the great Norm Roue on slide guitar and Ian Rilen on bass prior to his Rose Tattoo days. Taman Shud had split about a year earlier, so Lindsay Bjerre and Peter Barron put together a semi acoustic band known as Albatross, which had just released a great LP. Blackfeather, which recently has the huge piano boogie hit with "Boppin the Blues" likewise had split drastically to the point where Neil Johns put together a fresh lineup including Lindsay Wells of Healing Force - "Golden Miles" fame on guitar. This went down well, but fans were confused when "Boppin The Blues" appeared as a guitar song (which it always was per- Carl Perkins), the piano having disappeared entirely. Interestingly, Healing Force appeared without Lindsay Wells and played well, but seemed to now be on borrowed time.

The band Friends was an interesting band led by Leo De Castro, the wonderful Maori singer with a band including Duncan McGuire on bass, Mark Kennedy on drums, Jim Doyle on guitar, and Mal Logan "sitting in" from Carson on piano. This band had recently evolved from King Harvest of "Wichita Lineman" hit fame and were only a year or so from evolving into Ayers Rock. Friends had no hits of their own and relied on covers, but surprised all with a spirited

performance, particularly with Leo's vocals.

Perth boogie band, Sid Rumpo played early Saturday afternoon, fresh from a tour of east coast Australia to support their new LP, "First Offence". Duelling lead and slide guitar not unlike early Allman Brothers blues, played by Rob Searls and Mick Elliott kept our attention away from the Creek.

Totally out of left field appeared Madder Lake with its Yes-style leanings and a Joe Cocker-ish singer in Mick Fettes. The bearded SG-playing Brenden Mason presented a new sound to guitar, away from boogie leanings of other bands, with songs such as Down the River, Goodbye Lollipop, and 12 Pound Toothbrush from the recently released first LP. Bakery from Perth had no hits to date, and no album, but provided a ringing performance of material which should have been released to support its tours.

Carson and Country Radio were also in the throes of changing, the former playing on Sunday morning, the latter on Saturday afternoon. Carson with a bearded, Broderick Smith howling out blues standards and originals with help from Greg Lawrie and Ian Winter on guitars, with help from Mal Logan on piano. Their recent hit "Boogie" and LP "Blown" provided plenty of material, however it had been announced that this was to be their last performance. The reasons at that stage were not clear, but with Brod being the best rock voice in Australia, it could only be good.

Country Radio fronted by Greg Quill with notables John Bird on Piano, Kerryn Tolhust on guitars, lap slide and mandolin, and John Du Bois on bass soon provided the answer. John Du Bois had come from the bubblegum band, New Dream, but with Kerryn had agreed to form a band with Broderick Smith and others, which became Australia's best, but least recognised and most unfortunate band, the Dingoes. We were not to be told of this at the time. Greg appeared stunned by the crowd reaction to his countryish songs like "Gypsy Queen", "Wintersong" "Silver Spurs" and the Lovin Spoonful classic, "Never Goin' Back to Nashville". He asked, "so you like country music?, it's been a long time coming, and it will be around a long time more". The crowd cheered. The performance was spirited and precise and was the most successful country rock heard in Australia.

McKenzie Theory played their jazz rock fusion mixed with King Crimson music to an enthusiastic audience that was unaccustomed to the sound of Cleis Pearce's electric violin in a rock band. At the opposite extreme, good time, almost jug band styled 69'ers, went through a set including their recent cover hit of Ray Davies' "Harry Rag". There was no pretence about this band, playing merely a set of singalong songs not unlike the music that Captain Matchbox was to explore later.

Glen Cardier, acoustic troubadour appeared playing songs from his first solo LP. Probably the artist that took most by surprise after us laughing at the probability of him going over well at a rock festival was Johnny O'Keefe. When he came on stage in his light coloured suit and white shoes, most thought he has no hope with the jeans and T Shirt inhabitants of the Festival. 2 or 3 songs into his Saturday evening set and he had everyone in his hand. Rocking through his formidable hit repertoire with his tight "Sydney Club" band, I don't think many were disappointed.

Cheers, Jeff Stocco

Sunbury 1974 - 25 - 28 January - "the flavour of Woodstock, Oz-style"

With the outstanding successes of the previous Sunburys, a similar, some would say, "carbon copy" of the first two festivals, was held in 1974 - same time, same place. Changes around the area included the closure of The Diggers Rest Hotel, and the up-grading of on-site security which the organisers felt was necessary taking the experiences into calculation.

Things were intended to be bigger and better this year. For the first time, **Odessa Productions** decided to spend a little promotional money for the festival and invite interested journalists to the site to witness the preparations and



Same stage as for '73 but with a new banner. (Courtesy of Jeff Ross)

set-up for 1974. This, for the lucky journalists included a catered train ride from Spencer Street Station (in the Railway Commissioner's carriage, no less!) and a police motor cycle escort for the chauffeured Holden station wagons transporting the stunned journos the last few kilometres to the Duncan farm's escarpment. **Stu Hawk** was reporting for the **Richard Neville** published, *The Living Daylights* and was happy, if somewhat perplexed to find:

STU HAWK: "The weather-stained stage even started to look part of the place, like a slightly disused barn. It could have been "the Emergency Services Picnic", what with fire engines and bushfiremen, ambulance, paratroopers and police. But it wasn't. The brown-yellow Sunbury stream, managed to pick its way through garbage at the rate of a

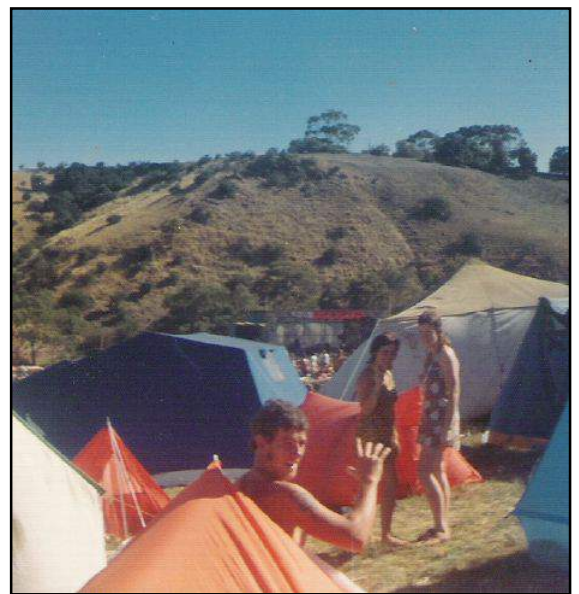
glacier flow. The biggest water movement was the courageous young lady in the festival t-shirt who splished and splashed her way through innumerable camera lenses. ... We were shown the amenities and facilities including the can of Aerogard." (Hawk, in *The Living End*, op cit, P28.)

Hawk and his fellow journalists were escorted to the corporate marquee by the band, **Plant** which played a rendition of *Macarthur Park* as they all moved, Moomba procession-like towards a sumptuous luncheon of ham, turkey, roast beef and salads. There, they were informed of the changes for 1974 - Comalco would be providing containers to "re-cycle" the aluminium beer cans and cash-in spots where for every 60 cans collected, a free can of beer was available. A second, and smaller stage would be set up this year, but the cost of entry would be double that charged in 1972! That's progress!!

The Woodstock hype was now seven years in the past and some participants have indicated that much of the "peace and love" from the previous years had begun to evaporate in the hot sun:

JEFF STOCCO: "There was an increased element of violence at this Festival however. Two mates of mine were attacked by a few thugs on the Saturday, one receiving a broken nose. They went home late Saturday, hence I could not find them on the Sunday. They later told me that they did nothing to provoke the thugs, and believed that they were a group picking fights at random. (Stocco, op cit, 29 December 2004).

Police this year were called on to manage the traffic along the roads surrounding the Duncan's farm, *Glencoe* and alcohol was sold, at prices which were not too inflated and curiously enough, glass was still allowed on site. This



Sue Warne and friends set up camp for the weekend before the music began. (Courtesy of Sue Warne)

was the first year too, of the “second stage” – a smaller platform for arts, blues and jazz performers to play. Also a first - **Odessa Productions** had parted company with the **Bob Jones Organisation** and Bob along with his crowd controllers were not to be seen at this or the final festival the following year.



Headliners Queen went on to bigger things. Contrary to popular belief, they gave a great set despite early problems with crowd acceptance. From their “Works” tour program, photographer unknown.

Every year seemed to have a single highlight and Sunbury '74 will best be remembered as the year the “unknown British band”, **Queen** took to the stage in a less than auspicious debut on Australian soil. It is difficult now with the benefit of hindsight to consider that **Queen** were ever “unknown” considering their flamboyant star, **Freddie Mercury**, their huge catalogue of hits and their glam image throughout the late ‘seventies and ‘eighties. Yet in '74 they were just a struggling U.K. act looking for any sort of recognition and public exposure they could find. **John Fowler** remembers them a great bunch of genuine musicians who were not pretentious about who they were or being superior to the Aussies’:

JOHN FOWLER: “I think Queen went above the Australians’ head. They were a great bunch of guys – I can’t speak too highly of them. When they came to our office, which by that time we had established in St. Kilda Road, the bloody airline had lost their guitars and equipment and they were bit frantic about that. We were staying at a little motel

in Kingsway – a modern one at the time with the band. They were no trouble at all. In fact, if half the Aussie groups had been as well behaved as them... .” (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

At first, they failed to fire up the Sunbury public which was there to see their proven heroes, like **Billy Thorpe** and **Madder Lake** which had become almost Sunbury resident bands. But many agree the negative reception they received had nothing to do with **Queen’s** musical ability, it was more due to the attitude of the pro-Aussie crowd which wanted a repeat of the past glories and the chance to see new Aussie favourites from the clubs around town.

Freddie Mercury was reportedly heard to declare that the next time **Queen** came to Australia, they would be the biggest band in the world. By the time that their 1976 tour got underway, thanks to *Bohemian Rhapsody*, they were well and truly on the way to achieving that goal. However, to the Sunbury public this year, the Aussie acts were what they came to see and **Queen**, at that time was just occupying precious stage-space and time, as the crowd saw it.

To the acclaimed **Madder Lake**, the Sunbury gig was of strategic importance for them and they were scheduled to follow **Queen** on to the stage. Far from a struggling band by that time, **Madder Lake** had established themselves at discos, particularly Garrison in Prahran and on this night, they watched from the wings while the British rockers took an inordinately long time to set up their extensive equipment on stage. The fans at ground level became restless and impatient and **Madder Lake** knew how important it was for them that they get up on stage and really nail it!

BRENDEN MASON: “Then one of the Sunburys we did with Queen... and Queen were literally booed off stage and vowed never to come back to Australia. Our roadie actually got up... because they took such a long time to set up.... And our roadie got up and said, “... after these English poofers get off stage we’ll have *Madder Lake*.” The whole place erupted... I’ve never been so confident about going up on stage.” (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)



Michael Gudinski, sharing some refreshments with members of Blackfeather. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

MICK FETTES: "I remember the one with Queen (1974) because everybody was booing 'em. The crowd wanted us. (Fettes, www.milesago.com, op cit, February, April, 2000).

Popular belief is that it was **Michael Chugg** of **Frontier Entertainment** who made the inflammatory announcement from the stage, but Chuggie denies this and has nothing but praise for **Queen** who ended up, to their credit, giving a dynamic and stunning set; a pointer for things to come:

MICHAEL CHUGG: "Queen's reaction was to go on and play and they were unbelievable. By the end of the set they had the crowd eating out of their hands. They were humbled. They shoved it right up everybody." (Chugg, quoted, op cit, 25 January, 1997, P 11).

Gary Young, who had had several huge years with **Daddy Cool**, was there with his new band, **Gary Young's Hot Dogs**. This band had been formed with fellow **Daddy Cool** member **Wayne Duncan** on bass. Young was in awe of this British band whose performance, once they won over the restless crowd, took the festival to another level altogether:

GARY YOUNG: "Now, that's another story...Queen... there was a controversy because they brought this incredible light show with them and they wanted to make sure they were on when it was dark... after the sun went down. The last act finished before sundown and there was this long gap before darkness came, and the natives got restless. So by the time Queen came on, they were greeted with a hostile reaction from the audience, only because



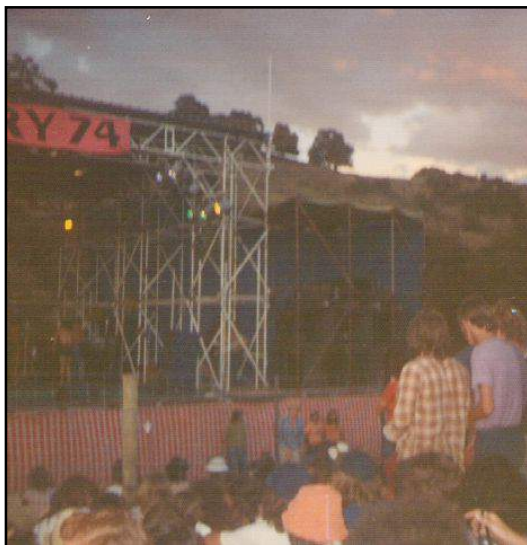
1974 was Skyhooks first bite at the Sunbury cherry with Steve Hill, their first lead singer. He resigned from the band in the days following this performance after seeing himself on TV. (Courtesy of Greg Macainsh)

they were kept waiting. But, I've gotta say that they were the most incredible band I'd seen up to that time. They quickly won the audience over... no one had seen anything like Queen. And the strangest thing, I don't think anyone there stopped to think about the band's name ... Queen... or that Freddie Mercury was homosexual... but through film clips, it's so obvious now. But no one knew... I think if the crowd realised that he was gay, they would have given them a harder time than they did!" (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005)

Aside from the **Queen** controversy, the Australian contingent once again, was generally in fine form:

JEFF STOCCO: "Being there for one day only I missed such great bands as the reformed Daddy Cool, the newly formed Dingoes, the Zappa-ish Full Moon and from what I was told a somewhat flat Madder Lake. The Aztecs went through the standard set of raucous boogie rock, which appeared to be unchanged from earlier years, only louder, and including the recently returned Warren Morgan to the line up. Chain had re-emerged from the disintegration of Mighty Mouse yet using nearly all of that line up, and Phil Manning had moved the band from jazz, back to blues, but with a more ballady background, as demonstrated by the recent hit *Gonna Miss*

You Babe. Ayers Rock, still with Ray Burton appeared with a sort of jazz rock format. They performed a number of soon to be hits such as *Lady Montego* written by bass player Duncan McGuire. This lineup included the excellent drumming of Mark Kennedy. The last band I recall was the early Skyhooks with Steve Hill on vocals. They were still a hippie-jeans and T-Shirt band from Eltham with no theatrics or makeup, but the songs were there, such as *Hey, What's The Matter*, but clearly Steve's voice did not suit Greg Macainsh's songs. His days were numbered



Somewhere around nightfall on the Saturday, an anxious crowd gathered for another Billy Thorpe set. (Courtesy of Sue Warne)

192.

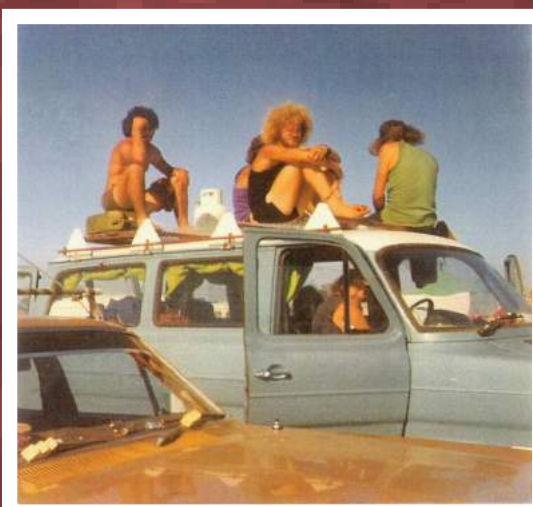
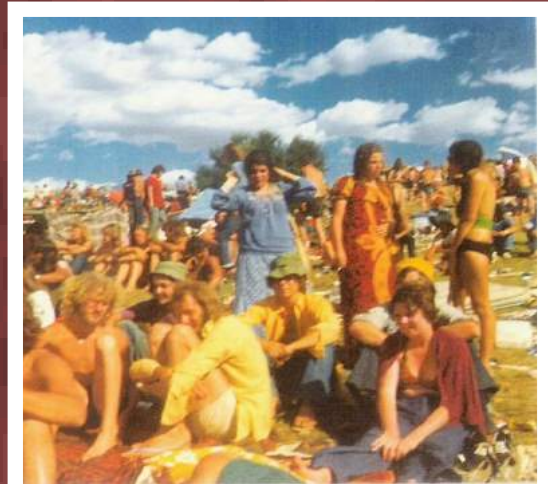
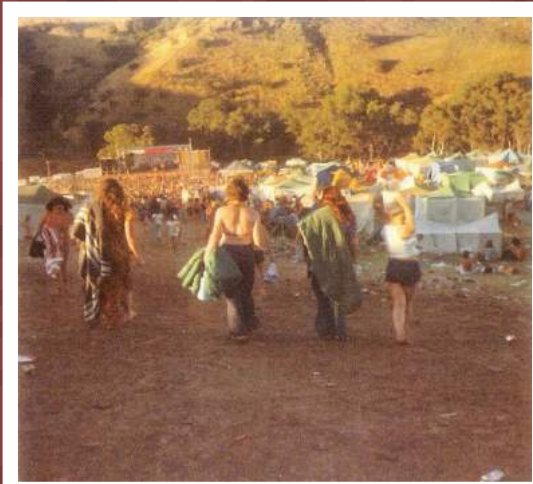
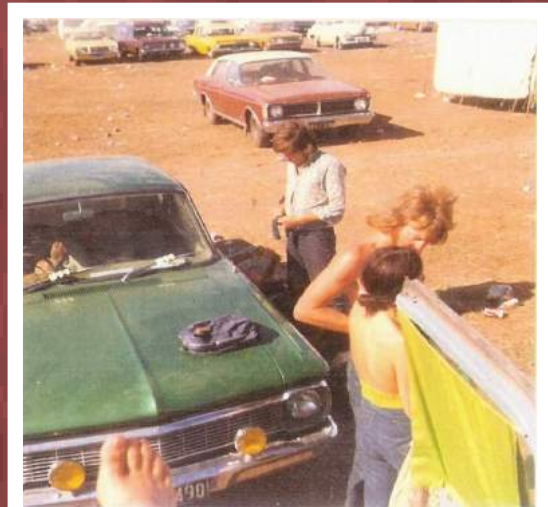
The Sunbury '74 Album, page 1...



**Above – Down by Jackson’s Creek. Courtesy of Sue Warne.
Below and the next page – courtesy of Annemaree Abakhair**



The Sunbury '74 Album, page 2 ...



with Shirley Strachan arriving within a few months. I was never happy with the timid guitar attack of this band and it showed even then. I vaguely remember seeing Buster Brown, a new band with a strong skinhead following. It included a young Angry Anderson (with hair) on vocals and Mark Evans on bass prior to his departure to AC/DC. Their new album *Something To Say* had just been released and they trotted through most of this and a rollicking *Roll Over Beethoven*." (Stocco, op cit, 31 December, 2004)



Mark Kennedy, drummer with the recently-formed Ayers Rock. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio)

SUE WARNE: "I remember all the great Aussie bands - Thorpie, Lobby Loyde, Madder Lake and of course my favourite at the time The Town Criers. I also remember the hype of this great overseas band appearing, of course being Queen and when they appeared in their satin outfits, they were booed off stage. Though I'm sure Skyhooks eventually got away with the same outfits." (Wearne, email interview, 26 December, 2004).

It should have been a resounding triumph for **Skyhooks**, a band that was destined for greater things. On the cusp of the Glam Rock period, Australian audiences were not prepared for a band that had taken its lead from **Gary Glitter**, **David Bowie** and other Glamrockers and was incorporating theatrics and bizarre make-up into its stage act. The Sunbury '74 crowd was a little stunned by this androgyny, considering what they had been used to. With **Steve Hill** as its lead singer, **Skyhooks** efforts were basically in vain because the crowd did not really warm to the band at all. The heat caused their make-

up to run and Hill reportedly engaged in verbal sparring with a heckler who represented a crowd that could not link with a band that was so different. The next day, Hill watched his own performance on TV and immediately quit the band – a telling decision in hindsight.

The compare for this year was **Jim Keays** who had just embarked on a solo career after the break up of **The Masters Apprentices** at the conclusion of 1971. He was no stranger to this duty because he had been co-compare for Mulwala's "Rock Isle" just under two years earlier.

Disaster struck Sunbury this year when the festival suffered its first fatality among the masses. The excess of booze and drugs had always threatened to put lives in jeopardy but it was the slow-flowing, muddy waters of Jackson's Creek which claimed the life of twenty-one year old **Richard Skew**. He was one of four people pulled unconscious from the water on this one day and the only one who did not respond to resuscitation attempts by the gallant St. John's First Aid volunteers who deserved all praise for their unfaltering work throughout all festivals. Reportedly, the unfortunate man had spent at least twenty minutes underwater, unnoticed by the huge crowd which was swimming and skinny-dipping at the waterhole.

Bill Pushkar who now lives in Broadmeadows witnessed the incident:

BILL PUSHKAR: "One person drowned in Jackson's Creek. He dived off a branch from an overhanging tree and didn't come up to the top. Somebody had dived after him but it was like minutes before he got rescued. People then got the body out of the river" (Pushkar, correspondence, 30 December, 2004)



In 1974, you could have a Sunbury car bumper sticker. (Author's collection)

Sunbury 1975 - 24 - 27 January - "... take us somewhere peaceful in the galaxies."

From the relative successes of the previous years, the final Sunbury has been labelled a dismal failure in many respects and has gone down in history that way – just don't mention that to those who partied there throughout that weekend – many for their fourth Sunbury in a row! The music was still great, featuring for the last time on the Sunbury stage, **Sherbet** with **Skyhooks**, **Ariel**, **Daddy Cool**, **Ayers Rock**, **Renee Geyer**, **The Dingoes**, perennial

favourites **Madder Lake** as well as **Kush** with the quirky, androgynous **Geoff Duff**, **Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band**, **The La De Das** and **Ross Ryan**. Security on the site was again handled by the members of the 4/19 Prince of Wales's Light Horse Regiment as it had been for previous Sunburys. Volunteers and past members of this regiment were engaged in administrative duties as well as again handling car parking, rubbish collection and entrance gate

duties. **Barry Davidson** recalled that each staff member was again issued with a T-shirt, identical in design but green for administration and orange for security.

The rain which plagued the festival was to be the final damper (and dampener) for Sunbury. The previous week had been typically hot and dry as could be expected in late January but by the weekend a characteristic Melbourne cool change had blown in. By about midday on Saturday, light drizzle had arrived and then more heavy rain arrived overnight with showers continuing for Sunday.

It effectively served to bring the curtain down on the whole Sunbury experience. Unlike previous years where the weather was kind to the organisers and the fans, the often capricious Melbourne summer weather really turned cool and inclement for this festival and as reported by many, it rained for nearly the whole weekend. As a result of the low turnout (only about 16,000 braved the elements) and the generous financial reimbursement set aside for the top act, **Odessa Promotions**, which had by now, moved to a city office at 470 Bourke Street, found that ends didn't meet. In the days following Sunbury '75, it went into liquidation resulting in any further plans for future Sunburys, going under with the organisation.

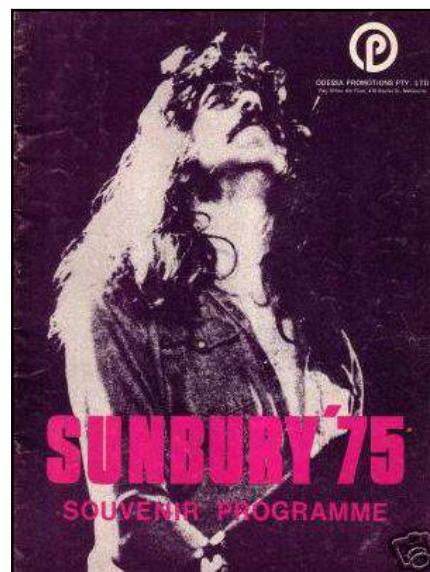


The official poster for '75 - Odessa Promotions.

hassles, declining public support and famous backstage punch-ups! The promoters secured **Deep Purple** as the headlining act, virtually assigning Australian acts to support status which was such a disappointment to some, considering that the festival had made a name for itself because of the fabulous support from and for, local talent. Reportedly, only **Deep Purple** got paid any money at all - quite a substantial amount, in fact - and all the other acts missed out. **Deep Purple** did, by all indications, still deliver the goods with an outstanding performance when they finally arrived on stage in the wee small hours of Sunday morning:

NERIDA DENNETT: "When Deep Purple finally came on, they were almost booed off stage; it was a very long day and night. From memory, it was about 2.30am or later before they arrived. After many announcements and delays, people on the hill did not want to leave their spots, so many peed into flagons or empty cans. One guy standing next to us in his sleeping bag thought he was peeing on the ground, but he was peeing in his sleeping bag. He didn't care! *Smoke On The Water* was spine-chilling!" (Dennett, op cit, 29 December, 2004).

There was also the much vaunted fist fight which erupted backstage between members of **AC/DC's** staff and **Deep Purple's** roadies. It may have even involved **Bon Scott** and **Angus Young** who were no shrinking violets when a good stoush presented itself. Resentment was high when **Deep Purple** arrived on site in limousines! At the conclusion, the Brits were reportedly paid around \$60,000 for their set; a staggering fee in 1975. But to their credit, after realising what they were getting and what was left over to pay the local acts, they reportedly only took a small payment and left the rest to be divided up between the Aussie musicians. Whether the local boys actually got anything at all is not known but, according to **Barry Davidson**, security and administration staff were all



For the first time, Sunbury had an official program. (Author's collection)

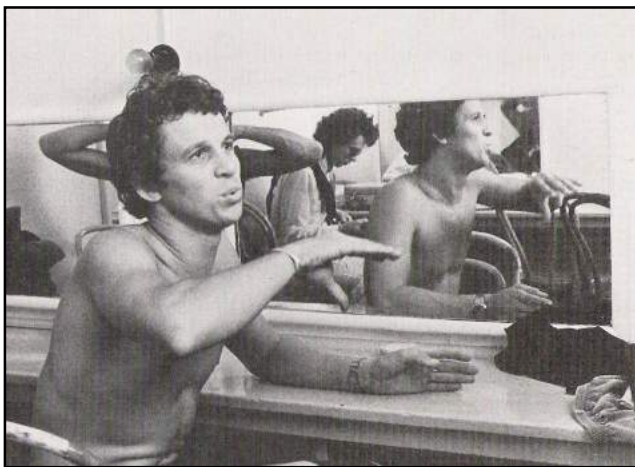
paid in full.

Still, there were some amazing triumphs. In a changing of the guard, so to speak, **The Keystone Angels**, from Adelaide received a standing ovation at that point in their history just before adopting the tougher, gutsier sound that would take them into the pub circuit as **The Angels**, with "Doc" Neeson and the **Brewster** brothers, **Rick and John**. With "Glam" bands **Skyhooks** and **Sherbet** on stage for 1975, music heralded that it had changed forever and a new era was being ushered in.

Located near the Gate 2, carpark entrance to the site, the second, smaller stage this year had scheduled acts as varied as **The Allan Lee Jazz Quartet**, **Ballet Victoria**, **The Red Onion Jazz Band**, **The Pelaco Brothers** and **The Foreday Riders**

The La De Das with **Kevin Borich** had succeeded in making it to the top of the heap by 1975, sharing the limelight with Thorpe and maybe, **Max Merritt** as Australia's leading live acts. True journeymen in their field, **The La De Das** had polished their act with years of live gigging around the country since arriving from Auckland, New Zealand in 1967. Borich had assumed the ultimate guitar hero mantle by this time or at least could push **Lobby Loyde** for the title. Throughout the early 'seventies, **The La De Das** played before huge crowds and did a topline national tour as the support act for **Manfred Mann's**

Chapter III. They also made a record-breaking appearance with **Gerry Humphrys**, **Friends** and **Billy Thorpe** and **The Aztecs** at 3XY's free concert at the Myer Music Bowl, which drew over 200,000 people, the largest concert



Graeme "Shirley" Strachan had joined Skyhooks after the departure in 1974 of Steve Hill. He added the voice of the band and the sense of flamboyant outrageousness that characterized the glam rock period which was just commencing. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio)

audience in Australian rock history. Their set at Sunbury '75 was also a triumph and actually made a lasting impression on **Deep Purple's** ace guitarist, **Richie Blackmore**. Borich remembers his backstage meeting with the legendary Deep Purple guitarist which led to Borich and Blackmore swapping guitar licks on the same Melbourne stage at Berties in the following days:

their retro-rock sound which was guaranteed to get the crowd on their feet at places like The T.F. Much Ballroom. By 1973, **Ross Wilson** and **Ross Hannaford** had put **Daddy Cool** "to bed" in favour of the new direction they were taking with **Mighty Kong**. However, for Sunbury '75, thanks to public demand, they re-formed DC temporarily for the occasion, enlisting a few extra members:

LINDSAY FARR: "In 1975, I played with Daddy Cool at Sunbury. Ross Wilson was concerned at the time that his production band, Skyhooks was stealing Daddy Cool's mantle. Ross added Joe Camelleri and me on saxes to beef



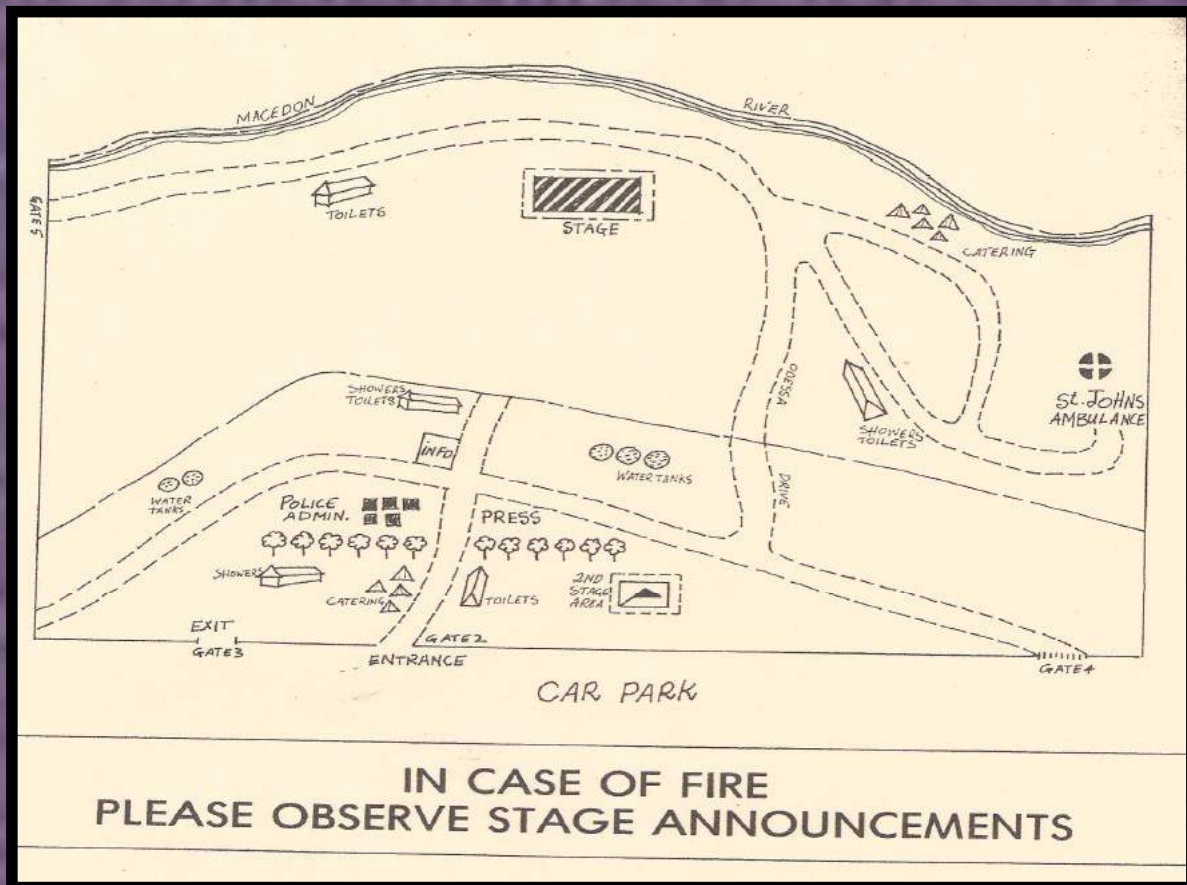
Glamming it up - Sherbet, with Daryl Braithwaite, made their debut on the Sunbury stage in 1975. Photo by Phil Quirk.

KEVIN BORICH: "Sunbury with Deep Purple was one I can remember, we played a few bands before them and as I was bouncing around out back I saw this caravan full of stratocaster guitars, and a geezer tuning them. Stuck my head in and said "Giddyay" Gezzer says "Hey, who was that then, playin' before?" I said it was me with my band. He told me that Richie liked it and if we were playing in town soon, could he come and have a blow? I told him we would be at Berties the next night. And that's how I got to have a play with Ritchie Blackmore." (Borich, op cit, 9 February, 2005)

From 1971, **Daddy Cool** had been a refreshing alternative on the heavy progressive scene for a number of years with

on the heavy progressive scene for a number of years with

The Sunbury Layout ...



THE ODESSA PROMOTIONS ORGANISATIONS PTY LTD

548 LATROBE STREET ST. MELBOURNE 3000

PRESENTS

SUNBURY '75

WITH INTERNATIONAL ACT **DEEP PURPLE**

STAGE 1

A.C.D.C.
ARIEL
AYERS ROCK
BILLY THORPE
BUSTER BROWN
CAPTAIN MATCHBOX
DADDY COOL
DEEP PURPLE
DINGOES
DRYSDALE, Denise
DYE, Iesi
GEORGE, Linda
GEYER, Renee
HOT CITY BUMP BAND
KEYS, Jim
KEYSTONE ANGELS
KUSH
LA DE DAS

MADDER LAKE
MANNING, Phil
OVA
PANTHER
RED HOUSE ROLL BAND
ROCK GRANITE
RYAN, Ross
SEDDON, Gregg
SHADOW FAX
SHERBERT
SKYHOOKS
SKYLIGHT
STUART & MCKAY
TAYLOR, Matt
UPP

STAGE 2

ALAN LEE JAZZ QUARTET
ANGELICO, Sam
BALLET VICTORIA
BENJAMIN HUGG
BRIAN BROWN QUARTET
FOREDAY RIDERS
GEORGE, Mike & Colin
LAMBERT, Marilyn
NEW HARLEM JAZZ BAND
PELACO BROTHERS
PRAM FACTORY
RANKIN BAND, The
RED ONIONS JAZZ BAND
RESOLUTION
ROD FREEMAN-SMITH & 'MANDANGO'
SILVER, Mike
STUART & MCKAY
WEST CREEK

STAGE 2

Sound and Lighting — JANDS
Stage Management — JANDS
Artists' Co-ordination — Evans Gudinski & Assoc.
Overseas Artists' Co-ordination — Pauline Durham and Spirit Management.

STAGE 1

Lighting — Brothers Sunshine and Edison Light
Sound — East Recording
Co-ordination (2nd stage) — Carol Rees-Jones, Australian Council for the Arts.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of countless people throughout Australia.
Special thanks to Brighton Travel Service, 3XY, 2SM, 5KA, 4IP, St. John Ambulance Brigade, C.F.A., Diggers' Rest and Sunbury Fire Brigades, Victorian Police.
The Sunbury Festival happens each year through the generosity of the Duncan family on whose property "Glencoe" the Festival is staged.

up the sound. A week before the gig, I got a call from Red Symons wanting me to form a horn section for Skyhooks. They were scheduled to perform straight after Daddy Cool. I declined and recommended Mal Capewell and Peter Frazer for the gig. I might have taken the gig had I known that history would determine these to be two of the most influential bands of the era." (Farr, op cit, 26 November, 2004).

Even by that stage some four years after they formed, those who were not used to **Daddy Cool's** infectious 'fifties brand of rock and do-wop could easily be as surprised as those who first saw them at The T.F. Much Ballroom in 1971:

RHONDA MARTINEZ: "I do remember a band coming on stage in the afternoon at which time most of us were either 'high' or just laying around, but that soon changed when they started singing.....the band.....Daddy Cool. I remember seeing Ross Wilson dancing around on stage with a fox tail hanging from his rear end and thinking, ... 'who are they?' They were actually a highlight for me even though I wasn't really into their music at that time. They did kick-start things though and actually got me up off the ground to see who was making all the 'strange noise'." (Martinez, op cit, 26 December, 2004).

They were a hit all over again and it seems in the interval between the break up of Daddy Cool and the "re-union" this year that there were some who had actually not heard the band or been around when they were "big", even though very little time had gone by:

GARY YOUNG: "Daddy Cool sounded much, much different to all the other bands which were around at the time because most other groups were doing boogies and progressive stuff... or like Country Radio... they were all different in their own way, but Daddy Cool was *really* different. We didn't fit into any of those categories... it wasn't original, mind you... but it may as well have been original because these people hadn't heard it." (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005.)

Young doesn't have very lasting memories of this performance but conceded that they must have gone over well or if they didn't, then that's what he would have remembered. He does recall that they may not have got on at all:

GARY YOUNG: "I can't remember the performance at all, except that I know that when we got on stage, we were



The speaker stacks by the stage at Sunbury. Deep Purple brought a Tycobrahe sound system with them and this was stacked inside the Jands system. (Courtesy of Jands Production Services.)

a bit anxious because no one could find Ross Hannaford... I don't know exactly why, but he had disappeared somewhere, crawled off into someone's car and fallen asleep in the back. We'd been doing all these gigs for nights before Sunbury and Hanna was absolutely buggered! And Hanna, when he falls asleep, you can't wake him up. So everyone's scouring the backstage area which was a huge area, and we're all looking for Hannaford. So time's ticking by and when they finally found him and woke him up he was all groggy... so we went on and I seem to remember that we went over really well." (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005.)

Bill Pushkar remembers it being so hot at that time that when **Daddy Cool** did their set, the crowd called out, "Daddy who? Daddy COLD!" This year though, there were some criticisms. Even the great **Billy Thorpe** who was on a quest for even more volume, didn't escape:

JEFF STOCCO: "The rain caused me to miss some bands, some of which played during drizzle, but others could not play at all when rain got too heavy. I remember Captain

Matchbox fresh from the hit LP *Wangaratta Wahine* which went down well. Mick and Jim Conway had matured the



The incredible Renee Geyer and her band. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio)

band from a jug band to a good time fun band. Skyhooks appeared again, this time with Shirley Strachan on vocals, showing new theatrics and make up, but they were riding on the hit success of the first 2 hit LP's and could do little wrong.

The international guest was Deep Purple with the changed lineup of David Coverdale on vocals replacing Ian Gillan and Glenn Hughes on Bass replacing Roger Glover. They were loud, professional, precise and tight and thoroughly entertained the crowd. The Aztecs were going to try to out-do Deep Purple in a way to prove that Australia can match anything that the UK can throw at us. The Aztecs failed miserably in an attempt at chest thumping by merely turning up the volume. I remember Billy going along the wall of guitar amplifiers and turning them all up as far as possible, creating the sound hiss from the speakers, then started the familiar "ta dump ta dump ta dump ta dump, etc". The sound was excessively loud, not well played and simply did not have the professionalism of Deep Purple and indeed many other Australian bands." (Stocco, op cit, 31 December, 2004)

Some cars were allowed to be driven onto the site. Nerida and **Graham Dennett** (since married) were seventeen and nineteen years old respectively in 1975 and because they knew **Odessa Promotions** manager, **John Fowler**, were allowed to park their car inside the ground at the camping area. However, some cars in the hands of drunks at night caused a problem:

RHONDA MARTINEZ: "...cannot remember a lot except camping in a very tiny tent and being swamped during the night by ants. I know I had a great time. Of course one had to be very, very careful not to get run over during the night by the drunks driving their cars around the camping areas. We sure had some close calls on that one!!!" (Martinez, op cit, 26 December, 2004).

Hopefully not one of those drunks, was **Glenn Jones** who also managed to secure a prime parking spot for his HR Holden on site. As an avid reader of American *Mad Magazine*, he often placed the Mad Stickers which were inside most editions of the magazine, somewhere on his car. One in particular he placed on his windscreen – for no particular reason. It had "PRESS" in large letters, and above and below in tiny letters: "Do not" and "against the glass". After getting some supplies at the nearest pub, he decided to try his luck and drive up to the main gate. To his surprise he was waved on site by the security who believed that he must be from the newspapers!

Graeme and Nerida set up camp with a few friends on the Friday night down by the creek. They both remember the rain and the mud but still had an incredible and memorable time throughout the festival. Nerida remembers the toilets as large makeshift sheds with hessian dividers that flapped in the wind and after a while, were blown away causing the toilet block to become just one large partition with no privacy and emitting a rather pungent odour after a while. But still the music lived up to everybody's expectations:

NERIDA DENNETT: "...the hill rocked with some of the most moving music there will ever be. ...On the hill there were these guys running through the crowds naked with all their bones painted with green fluoro paint, lots of people rolling in the mud, drunk or stoned or both. The freedom everyone felt was amazing. No one cared about the rain, mud or anything else, there sure were some awesome sights!" (Dennett, op cit, 29 December, 2004).

While the music may have impressed some festival-goers, **Jeff Stocco** has lamented the fact that the music which had captivated audiences in previous years was not as potent a force on the crowd as it had been in the past. Some bands, due to the rain could not actually complete their sets and they were not able to fully engage the audience this time around. There were small drinking and socialising circles where fans simply turned their backs on the stage and this managed to catch the rather unsympathetic press which was more intent on reporting on the "hippies in the rain" than anything useful from the festival. Certainly, this Sunbury Festival had its negative vibes which didn't go unnoticed by some:

ROB BETHUNE: "I want to say there are a few things today bothering me about Sunbury, I don't think it was the idyllic, peace and love experience that it's portrayed to be. I remember there were huge amounts of alcohol being consumed – it was pretty much a drink-fest and empty bottles / cans lay everywhere. I saw young kids of about ten



The headline act Deep Purple during their set. (Courtesy of Jands Production Services.)

years of age, intoxicated - this alarmed me." (Bethune, correspondence, 13 January, 2005)

Jim Keays, post-**Masters Apprentices** was present for the final two Sunburys and was no stranger to compare duties. On the same weekend that the inaugural Sunbury took place in 1972, he was organising and comparing The Meadows Technicolour Fair in Adelaide, which reportedly lured as many locals to its fairgrounds as Sunbury did to the Duncan's farm. But Sunbury got the kudos and The Meadows Technicolour Fair has been all but forgotten. In 1974, he was back in Melbourne and he co-compared Sunbury with **Ian 'Molly' Meldrum**. For this final year though, Keays had something quite different in mind.

One of the talking points from '75 for those whose memories are still together enough, was when Keays staged a concept piece, based on his recently released solo album, *The Boy From The Stars*. The idea was that he was to be lowered to the stage floor inside a large, purpose-built object resembling a spaceship. A performance had been organised on the main stage to present a theatrical version of this concept album- a look at life on earth through the eyes of a space visitor. His track *Space Brothers*, from the album, could possibly have been the inspiration for the stunt:

*Look up towards the sun
You might see something coming down
Could just be an aeroplane
Then again it might be something round
I believe the silver spaceships
Will come to cure the earth's disease
And rescue us from poisoned hell
Take us somewhere peaceful in the galaxies.*

(Reproduced courtesy of Jim Keays.)



The outrageous early Skyhooks in full glam - gear. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Greg Macainsh)



The Boy From The Stars - signed cover for Jim Keays 1975 concept album which he performed in its entirety on the Sunbury stage. (Author's collection)

lights would go dim and in the thirty seconds to a minute I had when the lights were being dimmed, I had the stage changed into a jungle with all these trees there." (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)

Keays remembers that he went on to repeat this performance only another two times, although he may have also performed it at The Camberwell Civic Centre as well. At The Dallas Brooks Hall, disaster almost struck when the rocket tipped over slightly on its side while landing on the stage. The door which Jim was supposed to open to climb through, was pressing against the deck of the stage, preventing him from disembarking. He kept on singing

however, in true “the show must go on” tradition despite his craft’s serious malfunction on landing. A mini-Sunbury legend has been built around this potential calamity, but it *didn’t* happen at Sunbury:

JIM KEAYS: “Contrary to popular belief, it (the mishap with the rocket) happened at Dallas Brooks Hall. I only did this three times: once at Sunbury, at Dallas Brooks Hall and then another time at The Myer Music Bowl, where I wasn’t allowed to use the rocket ship, because of the safety hazard of trying to come down. So theoretically, I only ever did it twice.” (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)

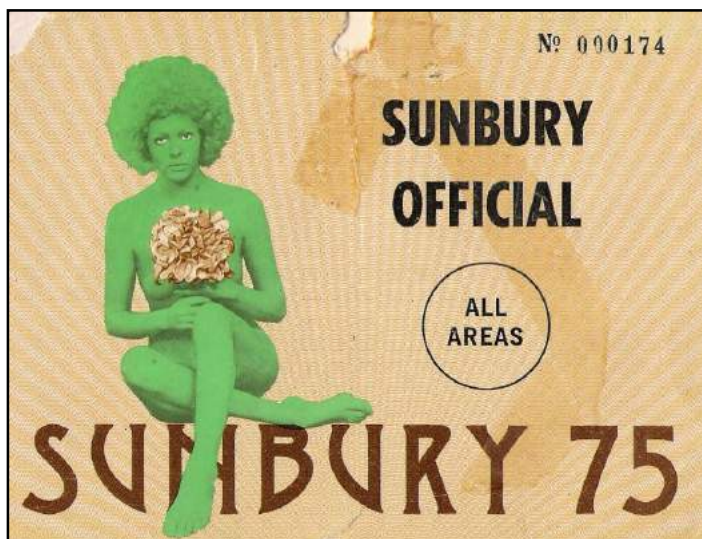
Those who were there that Friday night, still remember the only time that a theatrical concept piece was performed on Sunbury’s main stage and Jim Keays still reflects with pride on this achievement:

JIM KEAYS: “...it was quite an ambitious project really. Those who saw it swear that it’s one of the best things they have ever seen. I’ve still got people coming up to me saying, ...‘shit, I saw that *Boy From The Stars* thing at Sunbury and it was fantastic’.

A funny thing that happened was, I did the show, ran off stage and with 20,000 or so people out there ... *there wasn’t a sound!* Renee Geyer was my ‘dresser’ (I’d run off stage to get into another costume and she’d dress me) and at the end I ran off stage and looked at her, and there was not a sound! I looked at her and thought, ‘...oh no!!! *It’s absolutely bombed!!!*’ Then it started! A few claps....more claps ... more claps, then there was this incredible cheering. Then the applause came up. It took a while for it to sink in, then people thought, ‘... shit, that *WAS* good!’ It was just so different to pub rock. It was not what they’d expected and I’d come out with this weird, cerebral, esoteric concept thing and it took a while for it to sink in. But they loved it.” (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)



Jim Keays still has the brass helmet that he used in *The Boy From The Stars* spectacular, although he doesn’t wear it much these days! Bought from a costume shop originally for \$15, it has made a handy door stop since.



The original backstage pass belonging to the legendary roadie, tour manager and stage manager, Wane ‘Swampy’ Jarvis. (Author’s collection.)

out to me at Sunbury, ...(was) the naturalness of the situation. The majority of the people just behaved naturally; the alcoholics drank “piss” as most Australians so aptly called beer; the nudists shed their clothes; the music lovers just grooved to the music and the hot people went swimming.” (Tracksdorf, 1972.)

The landing on the Sunbury stage was made a little easier for Jim, because *The Boy From The Stars* Sunbury spectacular was sponsored by the makers of Colonials Jeans - The Sterling Clothing Company and because of this, Keays became the only local act to receive any money at all this year.

Way, way back in 1972, twenty-one year-old Bendigo Institute of Technology student, **Hans Tracksdorf** was moved to write about his experiences and those of others in the Institute’s Student newspaper, *Jamaga*, on his return from the first Sunbury. Like all other fans at this and subsequent pop festivals, he drew the obvious comparison to America’s Woodstock, but missing was the “peace and love” symbolism of 1967 and replacing it was the “suck more piss” hymn of the true believers on the hill. In the spirit of the time and place, Aussies did what came naturally:

HANS TRACKSDORF: “The “thing” that stood

But now in 1975, late on Sunday, a sombre announcement from the stage indicated that alas, this was to be the last Sunbury. Despite a number of glorious years, few in the crowd lamented the passing of the festival into history.



Every year was much the same – mountains of rubbish to be removed. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

on Australia Day over four years at Diggers Rest, were purely ephemeral – the rural slopes and the creek at Duncans’ farm have long since been restored to pristine pre-Sunbury rural cleanliness. The cans and cardboard have been assigned to the local garbage tip long ago (little recycling in the mid ‘seventies) and Thorpies “whoa-a-ho’s” have ceased reverberating around the hills. But, like many of the musical events of the period, Sunbury has found a distinct and unchallenged place in Aussie rock music legend and despite re-unions and re-enactments, it will never be repeated again.

When it’s over, it’s over! There was not to be another original Sunbury and the end had already become evident to organiser, **John Fowler** mid-way through the weekend:

JOHN FOWLER: ...It was decided the day it rained! It had run its course really. We’d thought that by ploughing all the money back into it, we were trying to model those overseas festivals like the Reading Festival in England which had run for a long time. We thought, here we are, we’ve created a scene and hopefully it will keep going, but of course, we got rained out... we didn’t collect the insurance. So we couldn’t go ahead. Financially, it cost us everything! So no thoughts that there would be a Sunbury ’76 – none at all. It was finished. The rain couldn’t be entirely blamed for it. (Fowler, op cit, 2 February, 2006)

Yet like Monterey and Woodstock, the events



The La De Das played the first and last Sunburys – Kevin Borich continues to mesmerise audiences. (Courtesy of Tony Jagers.)

MELBOURNE'S MUSIC PERSONALITIES.

Ian 'Molly' Meldrum 'Rock guru'– born 29 January, 1947.

There is no one in Australia, perhaps in the world with which to compare Australia's Ian "Molly" Meldrum. He is not "like" anyone else in the music business. In fact, he has a niche in the Australian celebrity spectrum all of his own. Why? A very good question! Lets face it, few people have heard him sing, he doesn't seem to play an instrument and he's not a noted D.J. As a compare he stumbles and mumbles. He has credits to his name as a studio record producer, (**Russell Morris'** *The Real Thing* for example), though his input into this area is somewhat uncertain if you speak to some artists. He is not a noted promoter in any way, shape or form. So why has 'Molly'



Ian "Molly" Meldrum. There has never been anyone as influential in Australia's pop music scene. (Courtesy of Network Seven)

Meldrum cast such an enormously imposing shadow over the music industry for over four decades? The answer certainly cannot just be explained by his T.V. appearances in such shows as the ground-breaking *Countdown*, the wacky *Hey, Hey, It's Saturday* or more recently, the unsuccessful reality-based talent search show, *Popstars*.

Meldrum's story is certainly unique in any industry or endeavour and it is a tribute to his undying passion and dedication to the Australian and world music industry. He counts so many superstars as his friends – and he is NOT kidding – not only has he interviewed them over time and influenced their careers but they really, genuinely call "Molly" a close friend. The international list includes **Rod Stewart, Madonna, Michael Jackson, Elton John, Billy Idol** and many, many others.

Dubbed "The Guru", Meldrum has been the butt of many a joke and along the way has allowed himself to be ridiculed and exploited without enduring permanent loss of dignity or any of the respect which the public has reserved for him. He is also the enduring, ultimate "groupie" who first hung around with emerging rock bands in the 1960's and in fact, became roadie for **The Groop**, whose hits included *Woman You're Breaking Me*. Their second line up included the talented **Brian Cadd** who for a short was strangely re-named **Brian Caine** at the insistence of one, Ian Meldrum who thought it would sound better for the purposes of song-writing accreditation!

Originally intending to study Law, Meldrum who boarded with **Ronnie Burns** and his mum for a while, became passionate about the emerging rock music scene in Melbourne and set about not only

being an integral part of it but actually catapulting it in a brand new, uncharted direction. Much of his spare time was spent at W & G studios and at **Bill Armstrong's** South Melbourne recording studio with a young English-born producer, **Roger Savage** who taught Meldrum the panel operator's job. At this point, his association with *Go-Set* magazine commenced with his first offering: probably his maiden article on flat-mate, **Ronnie Burns**.

For half an hour each weeknight on TV, the addictive *Kommotion* with its all-mime format gave Meldrum the chance to perform – he specialised in doing British duo, **Peter and Gordon's** hits such as *Lady Godiva* partnering **Tony Healey**. Rather ironically **Peter Asher**, (the Peter of **Peter and Gordon**) whose hits Meldrum mimed, now counts "Molly" as one of his close friends – but then doesn't just about everybody in the music business? In it's time, *Kommotion* gave us ground-breaking television although miming was not new to Australian audiences. The show went to air on weekdays at the kid-friendly time of 5.30pm – just a perfect excuse to put Maths homework back in the old school bag. So influential was the half hour show, that many lost sight of the fact that the artists, all chosen for their looks and style, were just mouthing other peoples' songs.

Not that miming was unusual at the time. Perhaps few would remember that when **The Rolling Stones** visited Melbourne in January, 1965 they did a taping for a T.V. special at Channel 0 Nunawading, to a select audience for

which I was lucky enough to get tickets. It didn't matter that they mimed the whole thing, it was the fact that they were *there*. Any footage of the show which went to air a few weeks later, will show that their guitars had no leads attached and no amps were present on the stage. Drummer **Charlie Watts** was his usual laconic self and was noticeably not even connecting with his drums and cymbals! Did anyone actually recognize this? Maybe... but no one really cared.

Ian Meldrum had been a country boy who came to the city to complete a Law Degree after finishing secondary school. But Meldrum had studied piano from the age of about 8 years old and this lasted until he hit high school. During this time he dabbled with show biz and he was in two musical comedy theatrical groups doing *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Auntie Mame*. His interest in pop music was fairly typical of most youths in 1964 – he was totally smitten by the whole Beatle phenomenon. Soon he was studying for his Law degree but his heart wasn't in it – disagreements with his aunt, with whom he was staying, soon saw him move in with **The Flies** singer, Ronnie Burns:

IAN MELDRUM: "Ronnie was starting off with The Flies at this stage which was a take off from The Beatles and even then, as much as I liked The Beatles, I couldn't come at what Ronnie was doing with The Flies. I still had friends from University then and Ronnie would be wearing long hair in town with me and I'd see some and think if they see me with this fellow with long hair, I'll just die! I used to push him into Darrods, anywhere, so they wouldn't see him because it wasn't the accepted thing then." (Meldrum, interview with Dean Moriarty, *Planet*, 9 February, 1972, P.7).

Meldrum was by now, interested in surfing and began hanging around Angelsea on the Victorian surf coast where he spotted a local band, **The Groop** playing at local dances. Meldrum became more than just an interested groupie and began getting seriously involved with the band:

IAN MELDRUM: "... I knew some people in the industry like Stan Rofe and Ken Sparkes and I said I'd try to get their record "Ol' Hound Dog" on air I was being the regular band moll.

Now Tony Dickstein who was The Groop's manager and I had this professional jealousy thing going like "who runs this group" and all this bit... .

During the time with The Groop, I used to go to all their recording sessions as well where I really became interested in recording as they were working under Roger Savage and Ivan Libeck at the time. I used to watch what the engineers and producers were doing at the time." (Meldrum, interview with Dean Moriarty, *Planet*, 9 February, 1972, P.7).

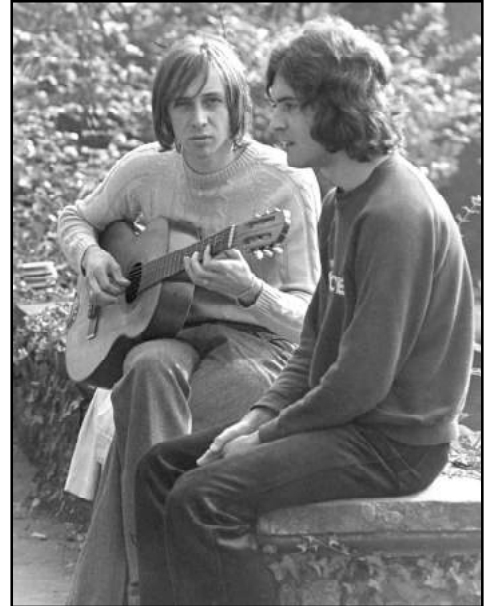
But it had all commenced for Meldrum in mid- 1966 when he began to hang around the new offices of the growing 'teen magazine, *Go-Set* in Charnwood Crescent, St. Kilda. Content for the time being to have even the tiniest contact with the rock music industry, he swept the floors and found little things to do, just to make himself look useful. Photographer **Colin Beard** recalls giving Ian his first reporting job:

COLIN BEARD: "One Tuesday night, dead-line night when I was busy in the dark-room, Tony (Schauble) came down and asked me if I could quickly interview and write a brief story on Johnny Young who had just arrived in town from Perth. I agreed to do the photographs providing he came to the office, but he would have to find someone else to write the story. "What about Ian, I suggested"

"Try him out," I said. "It's only quick, last minute coverage and I'll help him write it."

And so Ian Meldrum was given his first official assignment for *Go-Set*. Five minutes after Tony had returned to his office, Ian knocked on the dark-room door.

"What do you think of these questions, Colin?" he stammered handing me a sheet of foolscap paper containing a list of neatly handwritten questions. I scanned the list quickly, eager to get back to work on the printing.



Russell Morris with The Groove's drummer, Geoff Bridgeford in 1969 at Reigate, Surrey. Morris was touring on the back of the success he had in Australia with *The Real Thing*, produced by Meldrum at Armstrong Studios. (Courtesy of Rod Stone)

"Terrific Ian, they're right on the mark," I assured him and he went back upstairs. He reappeared again ten minutes later.

"I've changed some of them," he said in an anxious voice. "What do you think?"



'Molly' - can't sing, can't dance, can't play an instrument - but an unprecedented influence on the entire history of rock music in Australia (Courtesy of Tony Jagers)

"Terrific Ian," I assured him again. "They're right on the mark."

Even with his neatly handwritten list in front of him, Ian became tongue tied during the interview. When he did manage to get his mouth around some words he muddled the questions unable in his confusion to focus on any one line he had written. Johnny Young looked confused too, so I winked at him and smiled.

"It's his first assignment," I explained. "He's a bit nervous."

I asked Johnny Young the obvious questions... It didn't take long and I left Ian to type the information while I went back to the dark-room... Half an hour later there was a tap on the door and an anxious voice shouting my name.

"Colin, Colin. I've written it, I want you to read it - see if it's OK."

"I'm in the darkroom, Ian," I replied. "I can't open the door. Read it out to me."

"It sounds perfect Ian," I shouted through the closed door after he finished reading his article.

"Do you mean that, Colin?" he shouted back "You don't think it's too boring?"

"It's terrific Ian," I once again reassured him. "Sounds interesting"

(Beard, unpublished biography, Chapter 14, p.16, 17)

In fact the article was very mundane; Meldrum re-wrote it six times that night and with each re-write, he insisted that Beard read it. Schauble accepted the article with a few reservations but nevertheless, the following weeks edition of *Go-Set* carried Meldrum's maiden piece and much to his satisfaction, he was credited as "Go-Set's News Reporter". He had embarked on his most important journey. There is some conjecture as to whether this was his first actual assignment or whether another interview he did with his flatmate, Burns came first. According to Meldrum:

IAN MELDRUM: "Dickstein and myself had a confrontation (over The Groop) and I was booted out. I thought here I am and I've got to get a job because I was living off other people at that stage. Still living at Ronnie's place, someone suggested Ronnie should get some publicity shots ...so, I arranged it all. ... I asked Go-Set's photographer to come along which was Colin Beard at the time. Oddly enough, Colin was the only one who arrived at the Princess Theatre on this day and Tony Schauble who was editor of Go-Set then said "Why don't you write a little thing underneath the photo which I did... and the next week, I found I was a writer for Go-Set when I did a story on The Twilights winning the battle of the sounds." (Meldrum, interview with Dean Moriarty, *Planet*, 9 February, 1972, P.7).

As he grew in stature, Meldrum used his contacts with the industry and its emerging young local stars to continue his writing efforts with *Go-Set* magazine and it is certain, both benefited throughout the 'sixties from the partnership. His knowledge of the industry through his many contacts, coupled with his insatiable appetite for anything rock 'n roll and his keen appreciation of talent, led him to influence the careers of countless hopefuls in the



Snapped at Kooyong 24 October, 1971 waiting for Elton John to appear on stage - Meldrum with Billy Thorpe and friends. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)

music business. A particular stroke of genius was to take the **Johnny Young'** penned *The Real Thing* which Young had originally written with **Ronnie Burns** in mind, and insist that the former **Somebody's Image** lead singer, **Russell Morris**, record it instead of Burns. The rest is history – it is still a monster classic hit, forever entrenched in



A simple question – spot the odd one out. Not as easy as it seems. How well does “Molly” fit in with The Village People? The photo was taken backstage in Sydney during a recent tour by the 'seventies glam group. (Courtesy of The Village People)

the Australian psyche. “Molly” took much of the praise for knob-twiddling and slider-pushing on the consoles in Armstrong’s studio and remarkably, this song turned from potential disaster into smash hit.

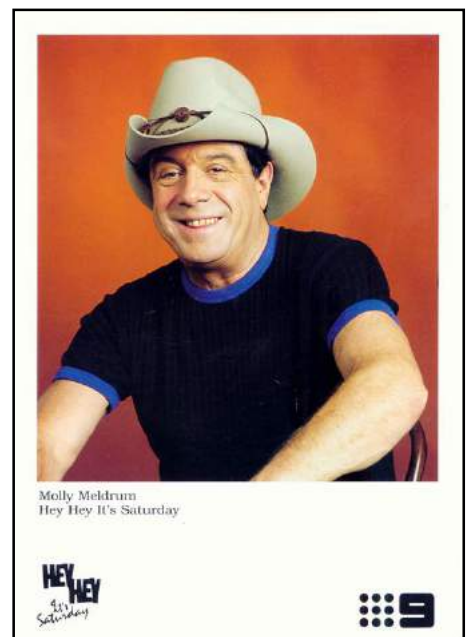
Rock writer **Ed Nimmervoll** formed an enduring partnership with Meldrum at *Go-Set* magazine when both joined the often chaotic and unorganised St. Kilda office in 1966. Both had their own agendas, talents and passions to add to the magazine. Nimmervoll describes their relationship as always harmonious, except on one occasion in 1972:

ED NIMMERVOLL: “When it comes to Ian Meldrum, we’d never talk about the work so much but we had the Yin and Yang; he would write about Russell Morris and John Farnham. That wasn’t in my sphere. So we actually, by our separate passions, gave that magazine its colour – we were two sides of the same coin. I didn’t want to write about the things he did and we never ever clashed. (Although once) when I got offered the job as editor, Ian’s nose was out of joint about it because he’d been there before me. I didn’t want it to seem like I didn’t care so I said to him, ‘...why don’t you be co-editor?’ So he had the title; I did all the work! (laughs)” (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005)

When *Kommotion* was brought to an abrupt halt in 1968 by bans placed on miming by Actors’ Equity, Meldrum moved on. After *Kommotion*’s shut down, Meldrum joined **Ross D. Wylie**’s *Uptight* for a short stint while being principle staff writer for *Go-Set*. It was during this period that he met **Jim Keays**, lead singer with **The Masters Apprentices**, on the band’s first trip to Melbourne in 1966. Keays had many debates with Meldrum over music, the passion they shared:

JIM KEAYS: “I first met Ian Meldrum on the set of *Kommotion*. He loved us instantly and ended up being one of our greatest champions. Our first social meeting was in a flat in Elwood where Ian was living with Ronnie Burns and Ronnie’s mother. He’d gone there with the intention of staying for a week and ended up living there for years. You couldn’t mistake how passionate he was about music – almost like a groupie in pursuit of it. We had an argumentative relationship in our many conversations about popular music and our conversations were often heated but never friendship-threatening. During them, we would pace up and down, debating our points of view. ...It was a healthy relationship and we’d always leave the best of friends despite differing opinions.” (Keays, 1999, P 50, 51).

There have been many ups and downs in the personal life and career of **Ian Meldrum**. He has made many friends and maybe a few enemies in this phase of his life. He was known to burn the candle at both ends and still continues to juggle many projects and commitments at any one given time. This has always been a part of his life. His sexuality is now a known fact, but was often ambiguous in the early days at *Go-Set* magazine. His professional relationships too, often ran the roller coaster ride of emotions. Colleague at *Go-*



A promo card for Meldrum at the time of his “Molly’s Melodrama” segment on Hey, Hey It’s Saturday. (Author’s collection).

Set, **Ed Nimmervoll** remembers:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "Another part of this whole *Go-Set* thing was Ian Meldrum's parties! His secretary, Glenys Long was in love with him and she was just this wild, red-headed girl and (at work) he'd just dictate his writing to her and that's how he would write his articles. So Glenys became very much a part of his "inner-sanctum" and he knew that she was in love with him. So at these parties, Glenys would run her car up against a tree outside just to get Ian's attention. At the office, they'd have a spat so she'd throw a typewriter at him and in retaliation, he'd shove her head in a filing cabinet. There was a lot of tension/fun/drama there and because of the way I am, I'd never got involved with this. When my wife got involved, she got on with them all like a house on fire and from then on they had a good relationship and over the years and I've steadily built up a good relationship with Ian as well." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005)

Meldrum turned his attention overseas in January, 1968 and it isn't well known that while working as a publicist with **The Beatles'** Apple Studio in London in 1970, he was asked by **John Lennon** to personally announce to the world the most significant, single music news item of the decade, **The Beatles** breakup – "The marriage is over...!".

On arrival back in Australia, he was offered the chance to host a teen music program to be called *Happening 70* which seemed to echo Britain's *Old Grey Whistle Test* and America's *Bandstand* and *Shindig* in format – live audience, Go-Go dancers, plenty of stars and hot, new music delivered to the public almost on a weekly basis. "Molly" however, declined the offer and continued his writing duties for *Go-Set*, until *Countdown* came along – his job was firstly as *Countdown's* talent co-ordinator then as compare (uneasily so at first).

He was almost single-handedly responsible for transforming this neat little weekly, half-hour talent program into the prime-time, hour long, weekend monster show that it became, running from 1974 until its lamented demise 13 years later when the music scene was changing yet again and suburban pub rock began to make the *Countdown* format, look just a little "daggy" and outmoded.

But, how many of those who were kids remember lining up at the gates of the ABC's Rippon Lea complex to go into Studio 31 just to be a part of the audience for the live taping of the show. (How many turned up with their "We Love Skyhooks" signs?). From the vantage point of his position of talent co-ordinator/host, Meldrum was easily able to manipulate the entire pop music scene, breaking new talent almost weekly with a mix of local and overseas bands and artists and creating a world-wide reputation for the program. The list of locals who would strut this studio's stage is almost endless – **Sherbet**, **Skyhooks**, **Dragon**, **John Paul Young**, **Renee Geyer** and many, many more who became staples on the music scene after exposure on the show. But, there were also some bands and artists were lauded by "Molly" but unfortunately faded into obscurity – "Molly" didn't always get it right!.

However, it would be an interesting possibility to speculate whether Sweden's **Abba** would have succeeded in Australia at all, without Meldrum's influence – so great was his say in the industry. There were the interviews that didn't quite go as planned with stars like a seriously spaced-out **Iggy Pop** and even **Prince Charles** who just happened to drop by the studio, much to the dismay of a totally overawed "Molly". At the time that "*Countdown*" reluctantly ceased production, "Molly" bid a fond farewell to the ABC and again landed on his feet, scoring a segment on Channel 9's already established *Hey, Hey It's Saturday* during which he continued his *Countdown* duties in micro format with "Molly's Melodrama" and the job he had created with *Countdown* – breaking new talent. Executive Producer of "Hey, Hey...", **Gavin Disney**, had briefly been the National General Manager of *Go-Set* and a long-time supporter of Meldrum. By 1973, Meldrum also did rock music reports for radio stations, **3AK**



Ian Meldrum from his days at radio 92.3 EONFM – with fellow announcers Gavin Wood and Lee Simon (Courtesy of Gavin Wood and Brendan Pearse.)

and **3DB**. With *Go-Set* now defunct, his writing skills were directed towards columns in *Listener In TV* and then the national, *TV Week*.

It is significant that *Hey, Hey It's Saturday* with its crazy format was so uniquely "off the wall" that as a variety show, it had no peer anywhere in the world and for that matter, and aptly so, neither did **Ian "Molly" Meldrum**. Who could forget the often bumbling, spontaneously, entertaining on camera segments repeatedly sabotaged by the show's regulars and his catch-cry, "...do yourself a favour" as he fended off cream pies in the face, exploding sets and props, unscheduled guests, continuous disruptions to his segments and the occasional deluge of water from the rafters of the studio in unrehearsed mayhem which sometimes got out of hand, but added enormously to the fun.

"Molly" was part of the discotheque scene in Melbourne during the 'sixties and could be regularly seen at **The**



Meldrum is very much in demand today – he is pictures with his publicist, Yael Cohn. (Courtesy of Matthew Deller Photography.)

'Tum, The Catcher and other venues as they came and went during the period up to 1972, checking for new talent and watching his protégés work the audiences in often hot, stifling and sweaty venues. Needless to say, Meldrum continued on to greater endeavours and is still possibly the most influential voice in Australian music. He still seemingly attracts controversy whenever he appears in guest spots on such Channel 9 programs as **Eddie McGuire's** Celebrity Edition of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* in 2003 where Meldrum blew the chance at half a million dollars for a selected charity. A recent controversial Celebrity Roast for him in 2004, which unmercifully mocked his sexuality, just added to the aura of the man. Then there was his stint as guest judge on the second series of 2004's, much maligned *Popstars* which,

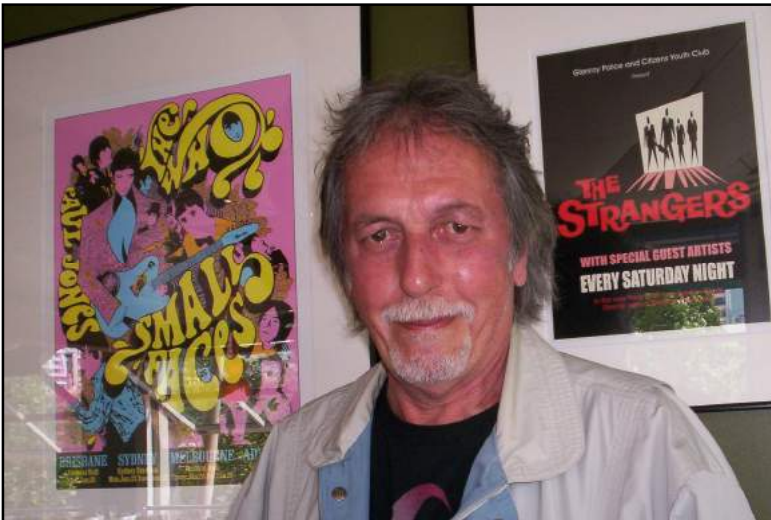
wouldn't you know, stirred up its share of controversy with reports of massive personality clashes with other judges emerging as the series progressed. Even a rather mundane trip to the U.S. in January, 2004 resulted in "The Man in the Hat" being deported for overstaying his visa. Needless to say, this incident made headlines for a short time as a rather bemused Meldrum was besieged by reporters at the airport on his arrival back in Australia.

The remaining question is, "Who named him 'Molly'? The short answer is.. well... there are two possibilities and you can choose which to believe. The first revolves around Meldrum's early presence at the *Go-Set* office where, according to photographer, **Colin Beard**, his colleagues began to refer to him as 'The Moll' which became, 'Molly'. The second explanation involves the great DJ, **Stan Rofe** ... who has been credited with swapping mock insults with him where they gave each other girls names. Whichever explanation you believe depends on who you talk to.

Ian McCausland - artist, illustrator, editor and musician - born 31 March, 1944.

"There were artists who were putting Go-Set together in the earlier times and then in 1968, they had a competition to design a poster for Go-Set. Ian McCausland won it and they made him the art director of Go-Set and that changed the dynamics of the magazine a lot. So now, you had someone on board who was really, really talented instead of part-timers or wannabees doing the mag. He was the one who really had an eye and that was a change in direction too for him, because you had these musicians coming in and they saw this creative person and they said, 'Why don't you design our next album cover?' Which he did, of course." (Ed Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005)

Ian McCausland is one of those rock-dogs who has had a strong foot in two camps – he actually played as a musician and sang in Melbourne's early days and probably more importantly, went on to achieve significant fame



Ian McCausland flanked by two of his posters – including his Who/Small Faces poster of 1968 which gained employment for him at Go-Set magazine.

in another corner of rockography – as Australia's premier rock 'n roll illustrator and poster designer. His work is without peer in this country and it embraces all forms of rock art - posters, album covers, illustrations and cartoons. He pioneered the use of the airbrush in his creative work and throughout it all, he has maintained his life-long interest in rock music in all its forms and styles and continues to wield his airbrush and play his guitar both on and off stage today.

There have been many highlights in his distinguished career which has taken him through the gamut of music industry experiences, but he is probably most remembered for the eye-catching poster which he was commissioned to complete for the **Rolling Stones** 1973 Tour of Australia. For this, he received a huge tick of approval from

Keith Richards, himself! On the basis of the success of this single poster, he was rewarded with the task of designing a companion poster for the New Zealand leg of the tour.

Back in the 'fifties, **Ian McCausland** like so many teenagers in Australia, was struck head-on by the wave of rock 'n roll when it first impacted on Australia shores through the first "rock movie", *Rock Around The Clock*; its driving sound track and monochromatic scenes of 'teen rebellion. **Bill Haley's** *Rock Around The Clock*, as it had done with so many kids at the time, had a profound effect on the northern suburbs boy who was not yet in his teens. Living in suburban Essendon with his parents, he was indelibly influenced by the music of the 'fifties which he couldn't help but hear being played on his neighbour's radio as he went past her house. The radio was constantly tuned to 3KZ which was at that time, playing all the new hit music from America:

IAN McCAUSLAND: "They played a lot of Hank Williams, Perry Como, Guy Mitchell, Patty Page and those sort of people. I loved all that kind of music. But in 1956, I was 12 years old when *Rock Around the Clock* came out. First of all, I saw the movie, *Blackboard Jungle* with *Rock Around The Clock* in the opening sequence, then a year or so later when Lee Gordon's Big Shows came to Melbourne, they brought out Bill Haley, Freddie Bell and The Bellboys and The Platters and they had as added extras, Big Joe Turner and Laverne Baker and I've got a feeling Johnny O'Keefe and The Dee Jays were on that show as well. So when I saw that first Lee Gordon show at Festival Hall, that set the ball rolling for me and I became a huge fan of rock 'n roll. I subsequently went to all the Lee Gordon Big Shows...

Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, Gene Vincent and the Bluecaps... a whole lot of people who are either dead or long forgotten. I just loved the whole vibe of those early rock 'n roll days." (McCausland, author's

210.

interview, 4 November, 2005)

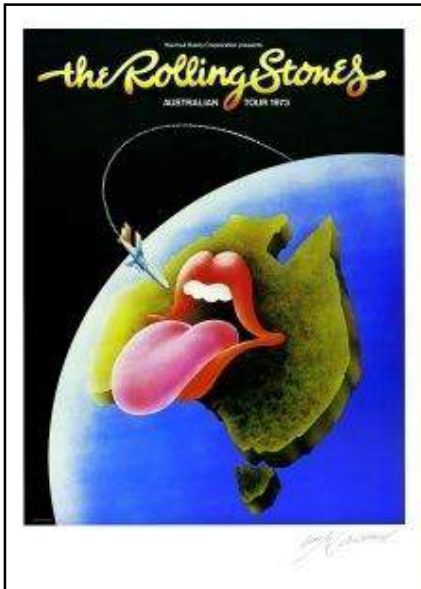
At this same time when the **Lee Gordon** Big Shows rolled into town and packed out Festival Hall to the rafters, McCausland and some of his Glenroy High School mates were forming themselves into a band – McCausland on rhythm guitar and vocals. Their dream of actually performing came to fruition when a dance opened up in a local hall:

IAN McCAUSLAND: "At high school, I ended up with a few good mates who were also musically inclined and also interested in rock 'n roll. We taught ourselves how to play guitars... bass.. and we got a band together, called ourselves The Linclons and we managed to get a gig at a new hall that had been built in Glenroy, called the Gordon Grove Community Youth Club. We started off there at the Saturday night dance and it sort of went okay... we were a pretty awful band but we managed to drag in all the local kids. The guitar player in that band, Fred Weiland went on to play with The Mixtures later on. He was always a much better player than the rest of us were." (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005)

Before too long, a couple of former Glenroy High School students had fashioned themselves into a band, too. **Laurie Arthur** and **Peter Robinson** had also embarked on a musical career and went on to form the highly successful, **The Strangers**. Like so many young musicians of the time, they were enormously influenced by the sounds that Britain's **Shadows** were achieving with their string of Top 40 instrumental hits.



Ian McCausland from his days at Go-Set where he took the magazine to another level with his Art Direction. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)



The McCausland poster for the 1973 Rolling Stones Tour of Australia which drew keen interest from Keith Richards himself. (Courtesy of Ian McCausland)

As was the practice at the time, bands like **The Strangers** often played at local dances as the backing group for vocalists, as well as playing in their own right. With Ian's ex-bandmate **Fred Weiland** now in

The Strangers, they took over the Gordon Grove Hall, Saturday night dance and although much smaller than the Coburg and Preston Town Halls, it was still an important youth venue in the northern suburbs. With **The Strangers** as backing group, throughout 1960 and 1961, McCausland picked up on the **Cliff Richard** connection to that great British outfit and would sing the Cliff songs out front.

Eventually, ATVO commenced its *Go!! Show* which first went to air on Melbourne TV screens in August, 1964. The Strangers were invited to become the "house Band" and **Ian McCausland**, aspiring singer, went along for the ride too:

IAN McCAUSLAND: "When *The Go!! Show* began..., they were looking for a band that could actually handle both musical and vocal backing and The Strangers just fitted that bill perfectly. They were augmented by Bruce Rowlands on keyboards and if they needed brass, they would get someone in. They were brilliant like that... that's the John Farrar version of The Strangers and once again, I was involved because of Peter Robinson's talent with vocal arrangements; they got me in to provide another voice with the vocal backing. I used to do all the vocal backings with The Strangers for The *Go!! Show* and

because of that, I eventually ended up appearing on The *Go!! Show*. I was on there about eight times, I guess. To give you an idea of the span of that, the first song I did was Chuck Berry's *Dear Dad* and my last performance was Bob Dylan's *Like A Rolling Stone*. It was a great show and a lot of singers came out of it... Lynne Randell was fantastic... Bobbie and Laurie.." (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005).

With the eventual demise of *The Go!! Show*, McCausland hooked up around 1965 and 1966 with another mate, **Gulliver Smith** who would eventually join the bands, **Cam Pact** and **Company Caine** (joined both during 1970):

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IAN McCAUSLAND: "Gulliver Smith ... I'd met while doing one of The Strangers gigs at The Essendon Plaza which was an old movie theatre. He arrived there one night and wanted to get up there and sing with The Strangers and that started his career. He released a single on W & G, Larry Williams' *Short Fat Fannie* and then he decided that he'd like to have his own band so he and I formed, Little Gulliver And The Children. I played rhythm guitar in that band and a bit of harmonica. We made an EP on W & G and we lasted for a while but we didn't have much success



Ian McCausland, left with Jenny Brown and Terry Cleary from the Planet days. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)

really." (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005)

When Smith moved to Sydney to further his career, McCausland was able, for a time to concentrate on the day-job which he had had since leaving school – as a ticketwriter and showcard writer with a local firm, Studio Services. It was while working in this environment that he became interested in the possibilities of combining these commercial arts skills with the rock music industry and capitalise on the potential that was beginning to appear.

At the time, he also played in a version of **The Rondells**, backing **Bobby and Laurie** who were topping the charts with *I Belong With You*. Through his association with **Ron Blackmore**, he toured western Victoria with **The Rondells**, **Bobbie and Laurie**, **Normie Rowe** and **The Easybeats** on one of their few Victorian tours.

But, he was also finding that his artistic skills were coming in handy. A number of musicians, particularly drummers like **Gary Young** employed McCausland to create drum signs on the front of their bass drums. Young himself, got a new one done whenever he changed bands! In all, McCausland estimated that he did more than twenty drum signs for local bands.

In early 1967, McCausland received a vital 'phone call from his old mate, **Gulliver Smith** in Sydney and he uprooted himself, his wife and daughter and headed north to play in a band that would become **Dr. Kandy's Third Eye** that Smith was forming. But, within a short time, the deal and the band fell apart and the northern suburbs boy found himself stranded in a strange city with no money. As necessity dictated, he found a paying job in a silk-screen printing firm.

It was at this point in his life that fate intervened to create one of those impossible-to-predict opportunities that most people often only dream of! The pop magazine, *Go-Set* launched a competition for a poster design for **The Who/Small Faces** Tour of 1968. McCausland not only entered – but won! His artistic talent and creativity shone through and impressed the judges at *Go-Set* so much that they offered him the job of Art Director for the magazine back at their Carlton offices. McCausland immediately accepted their offer and so began an extremely creative period for both the artist and the paper.



The Planet crew – from left, Lee Dillow, Jan Flint, Terry Cleary, Jenny Brown and Ian McCausland modeling the Planet T-Shirts. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)

His experiences at the enigmatic *Go-Set* office are many and varied and his memories of the times, the people and the events are also clear. As Art Director, he oversaw the design and layout of the magazine, crafting logos and

illustrations and overseeing photoshoots such as the one he directed for **The Town Criers** at Berties Discotheque where he had the band photographed on the roof and the circular staircases and looking out of the upstairs

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windows.

He was fascinated by working with *Go-Set* owner and publisher **Phillip Frazer** and others, because this was the first time he had made contact with “the Monash Uni. Lefties” in a climate of growing youth political awareness. Within a short time, he found his own political directions and philosophies were being coloured by their beliefs. He worked alongside **Lilly Brett, Jean Gollan, David Porter (Jacques L’Affrique), Glenys Long, Terry Cleary, David Elfick** and **Ian “Molly” Meldrum**.

McCausland witnessed first hand the often absurd, hysterical dramatics of Meldrum and his last-minute deadlines, yet he also saw the incredible rapport which Meldrum had with people. He remembers the contributions of **Ed Nimmervoll** to the charts which *Go-Set* printed weekly, and he still chuckles when he thinks about the transformation of **Geoff Watson** from a typical dark-suited, shirt and tie, short-back-and-sides accountant to a long-haired, bearded full-on caftan-wearing hippie – wooden beads and all! **Jon Hawkes** also worked at *Go-Set’s* Carlton offices and on many occasions, McCausland hitched a ride to work with Hawkes on his motor bike:



Using new air-brush techniques McCausland created the alien-like figure for Carson’s *Blown* album, which, thanks to a minor mishap, almost had to be re-done by McCausland.

IAN McCAUSLAND: “Jon lived in Caulfield and it was close to where I lived in North Rd. Brighton, so it was decided that he would take me as a pillion passenger into the *Go-Set* offices in Carlton every morning. I’d never been on a motorbike before and I was terrified - no protective clothing, often juggling poster tubes and artwork, couldn’t do the leaning into corners thing and wearing sandals. At least Jon had a substantial frame I could cling to. He was a big bloke, hence his role as the strongman as a founding member of *Circus Oz*. He was also an actor, performing regularly at *La Mama*, and he also got a role as a trooper in the Mick Jagger “*Ned Kelly*” film.” (McCausland, email correspondence, 14 November, 2005)

It was during his time at *Go-Set* that McCausland came into contact with the many musicians who came and went through the *Go-Set*

offices. Some he’d already known through the bands he’d played in. At the same time, he became interested in the possibilities of using the airbrush technique for his artwork:

IAN McCAUSLAND: “So far as my interest in art work went, I became known in the early part of the ‘70s for airbrushing illustrations. Not a lot of people were doing that. The reason I got into airbrush work, was that I was already using the airbrush as part of my ticket-writing/showcard work that I’d been involved in previously. There was an English illustrator named Allan Aldridge who brought out a book called, *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics* which was just a book with photographs or illustrations depicting each song. Alan Aldridge used airbrush and then I started working in that sphere. It was something new at that point.” (McCausland, op cit 4 November, 2005).

Those musicians wandering through the office



After *Go-Set*, McCausland worked on both *The Digger* and *Revolution* – strong satirical left-wing underground Melbourne publications which combined political satire and comment with contemporary rock music.

from time to time were undoubtedly impressed with the work he was completing for *Go-Set* as laid out on the drawing boards. Through these contacts, his work in designing album covers unfolded. These covers and the
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albums they symbolize are now firmly cemented in the Australian psyche as representative of 'seventies music. He managed to balance this new aspect of his work with his art direction at *Go-Set* and his first cover, *Toward The Blues* for the **Matt Taylor/Phil Manning, Chain**, was done mostly at the *Go-Set* office. Things were relatively free and easy there and when approached by musicians to design covers, much of the art work was done in the office or at home. There was a succession of 'seventies albums which he designed including, **Company Caine's** *Product of A Broken Reality*, *Daddy Who? Daddy Cool* and *Sex, Dope, Rock 'n Roll - Daddy Cool*, **Spectrum's** *Milesago* and **Carson's** *Blown*. The latter was completed just after McCausland left *Go-Set*:



One of those Fillmore poster artists who influenced McCausland – Lee Conklin photographed in 2002 by Chet Helms. (Courtesy of Lee Conklin)

IAN McCAUSLAND: "I remember doing the Carson album while I was working for Digger and we were in an old house in Canterbury Road in Middle Park. I'd done the cover and I airbrushed a background behind the illustration and I took it into the Digger offices the next day to deliver it to the band and one of the people said, "...oh, what's that?" "It's a Carson album cover." So I lifted up the album cover and he went... "fffffaantastic!" and spat all over the cover! So I had to take it home again and touch up the cover. You can still see some little spots on the background." (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005.)

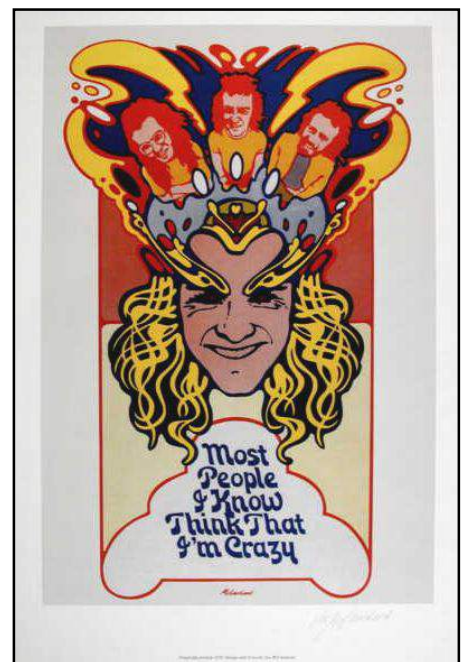
The influences of the incredibly talented, San Francisco Fillmore poster artists were obvious and relected to a certain extent in his work, though he was no mere copyist. He admired the inventive poster work that was being produced almost daily to advertise the regular gigs being performed at Bill Graham's Fillmore Theatre, (San Francisco) and the Fillmore East (New York), done by the greatest artists on the poster scene between 1966 and 1971. In particular the psychedelic posters by **Stanley Mouse, Wes Wilson, Bonnie McLean, Alton Kelley, Rick Griffin** and others were awe-inspiring pieces of work in their own right and McCausland recognised their worth as true rock 'n roll art. At one point, someone gave McCausland a set of the postcard-sized reproductions of some of the Fillmore posters and

he was particularly impressed with the psychedelic artwork which seemed to become more bent and distorted as the acid kicked in at The Fillmore design studios. He was particularly taken with the lettering and design which influenced his work for years:

IAN McCAUSLAND: "I still love those guys' posters to this day. I attempted to do my own style of Fillmore poster, but those guys were just masters! I guess that the way things turned out for me was that I might have been trying to copy something but it only went to a certain point because I didn't had the necessary styles or talents or whatever... to do what they were doing." (McCausland op cit 14 November, 2005)

Probably Ian's greatest break came when he received the mammoth commission to design the tour poster for the **Rolling Stones** Tour of Australia in 1973. He was offered the assignment from **Paul Dainty** after Dainty had seen his "Most People I Know Think That I'm Crazy" poster for **Billy Thorpe**. Using a flowing psychedelic design and only three basic and bright colours – blue, red and yellow – this poster from 1972 is an outstanding example of McCausland's artwork.

The brief from the Dainty group indicated that there was a few criteria – he had to use the new "lips and tongue" logo and include somewhere on the poster, a map of Australia. After submitting the design and



Another great McCausland poster in celebration of Billy Thorpe's 1972 Sunbury Triumph. (Courtesy of Ian McCausland)

gaining acceptance, McCausland was sitting in his house in North Road, Brighton one morning when he received a significant invitation – **Keith**

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Richards was requesting that he fly to Sydney and join The ‘Stones!:

IAN McCAUSLAND: “I came up with my airbrushed design, adding dimension to the lips and tongue and the globe and landmass of Australia, and hand lettering the Rolling Stones. It all went well, the Stones loved it and Keith sent a telegram (I had no phone) to invite me to Sydney for the last leg of the tour.



Billy Thorpe and Ian McCausland share a drink at Garrison Discotheque in Prahran – early 'seventies. (Photographer unknown – courtesy of Ian McCausland)

I spent Saturday afternoon in Keith’s suite at the Kings Cross Hyatt smoking all sorts of exotic dope and trying coke for the first time. I couldn't snort it, so Keith showed me how to rub it on my gums. Don't really know if it worked or not, I was so ripped anyway. I listened to Mick Taylor playing guitar, watched Keith try on different outfits, chatted to Charlie, stood dumbfounded on the outskirts as Mick held court to a circle of Aussie celebs, and then we all loaded into a fleet of mini-buses to go to Randwick Racecourse for the concert.” (McCausland, op cit, 14 November, 2005).

He recalls that Keith’s minder would, every so often, escort someone into the room who would hand over a small plastic bag to Richards with certain “substances” inside, saying that it was a “gift”.

McCausland was paid about \$600 for his work – a rather substantial amount in 1973 and was very satisfied with the whole experience. During that weekend in Sydney hanging out with The ‘Stones, **Charlie Watts** suggested

that McCausland might like to submit a cover design for the upcoming Rolling Stones album, which eventually appeared as *Goat’s Head Soup*. After submitting the design and mailing it to their London office he waited but it didn’t appear as the chosen cover when the album was released. To this day, McCausland doesn’t know what happened to his design and he didn’t keep a copy of it.



McCausland models the T-shirt based on his Thorpe design-poster. (Courtesy of David porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

McCausland moved on to *Go-Set*’s successor in the music magazine sector, **Phillip Frazer’s** *Gas* where he was appointed editor and by 1972, he had moved over to the more politically motivated publication, *Digger*. He describes this publication as “a pain in the arse”, particularly when it was virtually taken over by “radical feminists”. He lists the “good aspects” of this position as being able to continue to work with his ex-*Go-Set* colleagues, **David Porter** and **Terry Cleary** for a few more years.

It was while at *Digger* that he received a flying visit from the ever-vigilant, Victorian Vice Squad officers who were always on the lookout for potentially offending written material:

IAN McCAUSLAND: “The *Digger* offices were raided by the Vice Squad in 1972. They were looking for offensive material following a previous issue that

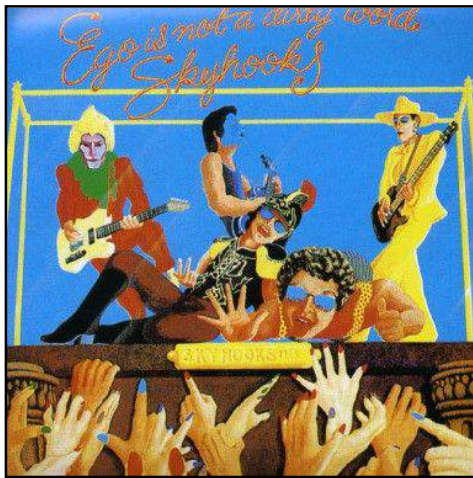


When Rod Stewart’s Faces toured in 1974, McCausland designed the tour poster. (Courtesy of Ian McCausland)

featured a cover story about porn (actually a serious look at the subject) and came across the back cover cartoon I had just finished. It was called Showday,

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where our hero Ace makes his way to his favourite show day attraction, the Police Exhibit, to check out the latest in drug paraphernalia. They confiscated it and took it back to Russell St where apparently it was pinned up on the Drug Squad notice board, and it took action from a solicitor to get it back in time for the next issue.” (McCausland, op cit 14 November, 2005).



A cover that's often attributed to McCausland – but he only did the lettering – Neil Curtis designed the cover!

Putting this minor brush with the law behind him, he moved back into the music area with the short-lived publication, *Planet*, (or as it was, *Daily Planet*) which provided him with the chance to become a little more relaxed: “Planet was fun. It was based in the rock scene, bands would drop in, teenage runaways would hide there, it was slack, and there was always plenty of pot.”

After 1974, **Ian McCausland** was invited to join Michael Gudinski’s growing concern, Mushroom Records and this he did with great pleasure as it led him back to his old love, designing record covers:

IAN McCAUSLAND: “I had known Michael Gudinski since he was 17, doing handbills and flyers etc. for his clandestine gigs and it wasn't long

before the odd LP cover came my way. Michael set up Mushroom Records and got me in as Art Director to handle all the print stuff, including album covers. The first Mushroom cover was Sunbury 1973. I set up the Art Department and left after a year or so to go freelance (still doing Mushroom work when needed).” (McCausland, op cit, 14 November, 2005)

The artist now lives back in the same Glenroy house that he grew up in, in the rockin’ ‘fifties. For a number of years, he cared for his elderly father while still completing freelance work. He is very philosophical as he sums up his life - rubbing shoulders with the elite of Australian music industry talent and making contact with many from the music industry overseas. But, he still remembers those first songs which emanated from his neighbour’s mantle radio and stirred in him a life-long love for rock ‘n roll:

IAN McCAUSLAND: “I often think of myself as being really fortunate being born when I was, because I was just old enough to get into it when rock ‘n roll first started and that led to an interest in blues and country music later on. Its always been the music that’s inspired me artistically and I’ve been lucky enough to be involved in the music scene through things like *Go-Set* and Mushroom at just the right time.” (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005.)

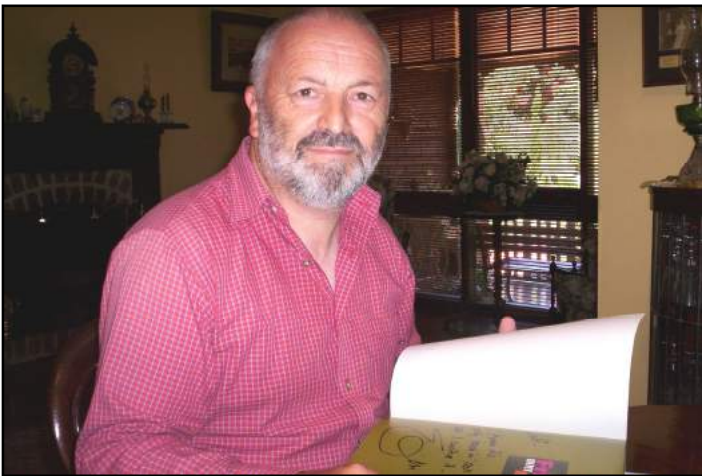


Confiscated! The Drug Squad didn't like the way they were portrayed– (Courtesy of Ian McCausland.)

Ed Nimmervoll – rock writer/music editor – born Austria, 21 September, 1947. Arrived in Australia, January, 1956.

"I was the "sole reviewer" at Go-Set at that early time and people formed a relationship with my reviews. So just about five years ago I went to do a bit at a community radio station and this guy took me to a shed at the back of his house and he had collected all my reviews in scrapbooks and he said, "My record collection is because of you". So I used to go to parties and people would say, 'Oh... you're that guy' So, over time, I've always been a name rather than a face." (Ed Nimmervoll, author's interview, 23 September, 2005)

In early 1966, a young R.M.I.T. architecture student wrote a letter to the St. Kilda office of the newly-launched Melbourne teen magazine *Go-Set*, taking issue with their published "National Chart" – an early feature of the influential rock and pop magazine. At 19 years of age, **Ed Nimmervoll** had already spent a number of years on his hobby which had become something of an obsession – charting the hit records as the major decade of pop and rock music unfolded.



Ed Nimmervoll – became the first person in Australia to chart the hits, nationally. From a reluctant start, he has become Melbourne's foremost rock journalist and historian.

Like many teenagers at this time, he had been smitten with the new directions which music had taken since rock 'n roll first arrived on the scene in the mid 'fifties. By the time of **The Beatles** and the British Invasion, Nimmervoll had become fixated with music but had gone further than anyone else – he had begun to collect and tabulate the positions which records were located according to sales. This was the basis for the so-called Top 40 – the listing of the highest selling single 45's in any one week. Young Ed took up the challenge on his own:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "In about 1963 or '64 I became really interested in music ... I became particularly enthusiastic about it. I don't really know why, but I began to collect charts. The Beatles were the genesis of this because they were just everywhere. So I would make up a chart of the top Beatles songs of the week. It got to the point where I would go to Brashes and Allans and I'd write down their charts. They would have a big board and from there, it was finding out what the local shops were doing." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

So after reading the first few editions of *Go-Set*, Nimmervoll felt that he saw a glitch in the new paper and he felt that he knew what he was talking about when it came to the charts. *Go-Set* was calling its published listing, a "National" chart. Ed knew that they were wrong! So he wrote to them. Perhaps he thought that *Go-Set*, which had been commenced by an experienced publisher in **Phillip Frazer** and by then, had **Ian "Molly" Meldrum** on board as writer, would not be remotely interested in the petty criticisms of a young upstart reader. But, to his surprise, in time, the magazine decided to call his bluff. "Okay", they said, "if you think you know all about it, then you do better!"

So began what has built steadily and culminated in an exceptionally distinguished career in rock music journalism which lasts to this day. It was however, somewhat of an accidental career and something that Nimmervoll did not actively pursue at the beginning.

Born in Austria, Ed migrated to Melbourne with his family in 1956, the year of the magnificent Olympic Games. By his 'teens he had been turned on to rock music and like so many, listened keenly to the guru of all things rock 'n roll, **Stan Rofe**. Rofe was the indisputable "king" of Disc Jockeys, whose unique position in radio gave him the

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opportunity to experiment with music, direct what was being played and influence what was being recorded. Mostly though, rather than just playing what the radio station thought people wanted to listen to, he sought out and imported "hot" new music and recording stars and actually began to beat a path into uncharted music territory. He quickly *became* the direction in which music was heading. Most of all, he championed local music and talent which in some instances were looked down on as being a pure imitation of overseas stars and not very good at that. **Stan Rofe** proved that this was not the case and the talent that Melbourne dances and discotheques were producing was as good as could be seen or heard anywhere in the world. Like so many in his age group, **Ed Nimmervoll** was taking notice of almost every word from "Stan The Man" which was emanating from his home radiogram. And not just "Platter Parade", but elsewhere:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "I would listen not just to the local radio stations but at night, I'd pick up Sydney radio stations and Brisbane radio stations. I had a really old-fashioned radiogram and there was a guy in Brisbane called Tony McArthur who had a half-hour program of Beatles songs – that was the first time I'd heard *Bad Boy* – which wasn't released here for a long, long time. Then in Sydney, they had a DJ called 'Mad Mal' who was like this American character and at the start of his show they'd rattle chains and open up the cage and out would come 'Mad Mal'. Now, you never saw him and if there were photographs of him he'd have dark glasses on and there were all these types of characters. So the music was getting me involved. I was getting charts from all over the country – from 5KA, 4BC and 4IP. And while I was collecting these charts I became very interested in Australian music and what really reinforced all this in me was Stan Rofe." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).



In 1966, Nimmervoll delivered his first "National Charts" to the Go-Set office in Charnwood Crescent, St Kilda on his way into Melbourne University.

Each night, after returning home from his architecture lectures and tutorials at R.M.I.T. in the city, Nimmervoll would sit down in front of the radio with his charts and try to log the new entries, the 'red bullets' and the movements of his favourite singles. Charting became a passion, even an obsession, and this base gave him the confidence to take up the gauntlet that was thrown down at his feet by *Go-Set*. He would send in his charts.



The St.Kilda offices of Go-Set – the shops in front and Go-Set at the back.

Nimmervoll would catch the train from his home in Mordialloc where he lived with his parents and older brother, and stop off at St. Kilda station. From there he would walk around to the *Go-Set* offices and quickly, slip his charts under the side door. He would then continue on to R.M.I.T.

Ed had already been importing overseas music journals direct to his home address rather than waiting for them to appear on sale at his local newsagent, by which time they could be three months old! And probably just as importantly, he was not waiting for records to be released in this country:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "By then, I was already getting *Musical Express* and *Melodymaker*. I wasn't prepared to wait three

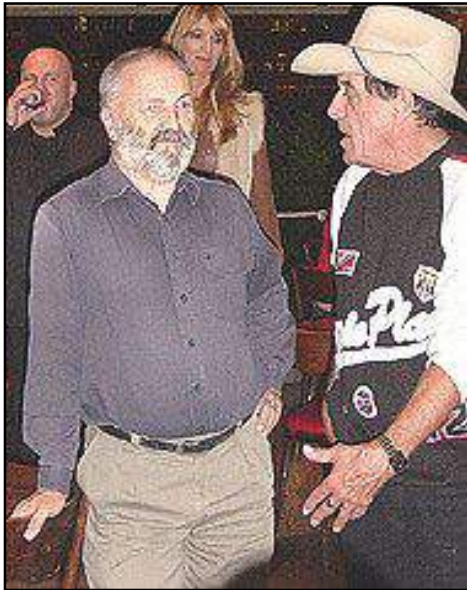
months for it to arrive at the newsagents, I was getting them sent out by airmail. And I was getting *Billboard* and *Cashbox* as well. So by then, I was so into it, but still as a fan and my older brother had a job and an income so we started importing records for ourselves. He would pay and I would tell him what we wanted to buy and that's

when I developed my “ear”, or my judgement, I guess. We had records way, way before they were ever released here and we’d import them.” (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

So young Ed was listening to new music still not available in this country, reading the latest overseas reviews at 218.

almost the same time as they were being read in the United States and Britain and making a study of the artists, the sounds and the trends in mid ‘sixties music. Very soon, he began to write small jottings at the bottom of the charts at his home before he dropped his offerings at *Go-Set*’s offices - his knowledge of music was increasing. *Go-Set* took to printing these notes as well as his charts and so, a reluctant career in journalism commenced.

Still a faceless contributor to *Go-Set*, Nimmervoll soon learned that he had provoked some curiosity at the magazine and there were staffers there, including **Ian Meldrum** who wanted to meet him. Meldrum, in particular



Veteran rock music writer Ed Nimmervoll eventually became one of the *Go-Set* crowd. He was chatting recently with former fellow *Go-Set* staffer, Ian ‘Molly’ Meldrum. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

Still a faceless contributor to *Go-Set*, Nimmervoll soon learned that he had provoked some curiosity at the magazine and there were staffers there, including **Ian Meldrum** who wanted to meet him. Meldrum, in particular felt a kind of kindred spirit with someone who was as passionate about music as he was. From there, Nimmervoll found himself involved in something that was to gradually assign his architecture career to oblivion. He was actually working in the music industry and was soon *Go-Set*’s Record Reviewer:

ED NIMMERVOLL: “So I was never one to pursue the headlines, it just happened. They had someone reviewing records and I thought, ‘I can do a better job than that.’ Again, I was getting all the new stuff before anyone else. So I put my hand up probably about six months after I started to send the charts in and then suddenly, I was the reviewer and this was really the start of the whole thing. It was really the breakthrough for me because I was good at it but also because I had that unique experience of “sole reviewer”. Today, in a publication there could be five or six reviewers. So people formed a relationship with my reviews.” (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

By 1967, Nimmervoll was still in architecture but growing in stature as a music journalist in his part time. However, something was to happen which was to polarise the two pursuits clearly for him:

ED NIMMERVOLL: “So then I started to go to Sydney by train on a weekend and I’d visit the *Go-Set* offices. I’d pay for it out of my own

pocket as I was being paid a pittance by them but by that time, I was already working as an architect. This helped me in and out of architecture in a way because I was already writing and getting a little income out of this and living at home.

The architecture course was such that you did three years full time, then three years part-time and when we reached the halfway mark, everyone in the class was sending out these hundreds letters of application and I wrote one letter to one of our lecturers – I said I’ll work for you for a year for nothing! I had absolutely no idea what type of office he had and as it turned out there were only two others and me. He had been a really, really good architect at one point but he was in his declining years. I had this idealistic picture of art in the street and what I saw was the ugly side of architecture – soliciting work, because you weren’t allowed to advertise at that stage.

This guy was going out to lunch and getting pissed, because you had to go out and tout for work. One of the turning points in this profession for me was when he took me out with one of his clients for lunch and I got so drunk I can’t remember how I got to a friend’s place. That wasn’t architecture to me so he took the love of architecture out of me.” (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

Nimmervoll still sees his move into full time journalism as accidental, in a sense. Yet, he possessed the uncanny knack of having a handle on the direction music was taking – from pop to progressive. This was important also for the path which *Go-Set* was taking. To this day, he still isn’t comfortable with the title of “Music Journalist”. He considers that he got the job by osmosis:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "...and I became quite paranoid with that, because people describe me as a "writer", but I learnt "on the trot". I was never someone who trained and learnt how to write. Obviously I could communicate with words and over the years I've found that my articles have gone into courses on journalism and I find that a bit intimidating because of that." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

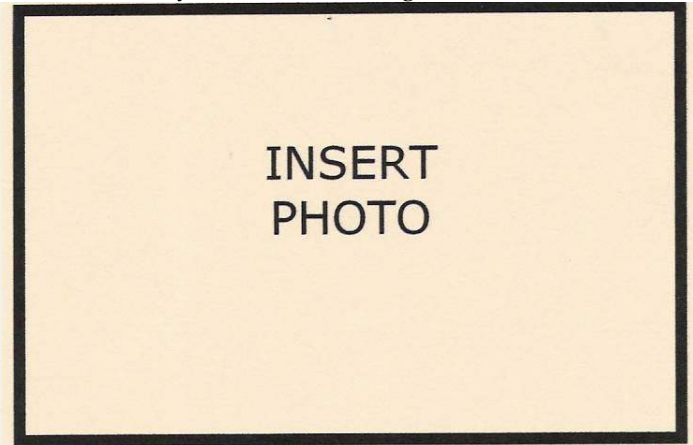
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Yet throughout this period up until 1972 when he accepted the position at *Go-Set* of Editor, he was compiling the Top 40, the Top 20 album releases and was responsible for reviewing all new music – overseas and Australian, in that time. Even though he was vitally involved in guiding the direction music was heading, Nimmervoll didn't go out of his way to accumulate the stars of rock 'n roll as his personal friends. Only when he began reviewing, did he actually go out around town to see, hear and meet the bands and artists, live.

Nimmervoll's "apprenticeship" in the music journalism field had many turns and learning curves. On one of his trips to Sydney, he was given the opportunity to interview Australia's premier band:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "... I'd gone there and someone was supposed to do an interview with The Aztecs and they were dead scared to. So I said, 'Yeah... I'll do it.' I guess I was about 20 years-old at that time. So I rolled up at the motel where they were staying, knocked at the door and Lobby (Loyde) answered with smoke pouring out of the room. Then I introduced myself and he said that he had a "bone to pick" with me over a review I'd done on *Chrome Plated Yabbie*, where I'd described him as "Australia's Eric Clapton" and he didn't like that. So I explained that I didn't mean that he played like him. We resolved that little 'moment', I did the interview and wrote it up when I went back to Melbourne and suddenly, I was doing feature stories as well." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

So **Ed Nimmervoll** - reluctant journo, record reviewer



and chartist - was now able to add "Feature Writer" to his growing list of achievements. But in the early 'seventies *Go-Set*, like the music, was changing rapidly – sometimes for the better, sometimes for worse. The "better" involved such people as **Ian McCausland** coming on board as Art Director and the less successful moves involved selling the paper to Sydney interests, as deals were done to minimise the substantial debt which had accrued over time. After several years at the helm of the paper, Nimmervoll saw the writing on the wall and moved on. His dream was to start his own magazine, but that would have to wait.

Nimmervoll felt that he now had the credibility as a writer and reviewer to remain in the business, but a move to Sydney with *Go-Set* had not been a possibility. Meldrum, less of a risk-taker remained with the paper until it ended. In the final days of *Go-Set*, Nimmervoll had been approached by **Michael Gudinski** to become editor of his new venture, *Daily Planet* magazine, however he refused this offer. In the meantime, he accepted a short-term position at *The Melbourne Observer* which as a newspaper, had fewer scruples than most other dailies at the time. Many assignments which he was given, went against the principles which he had established of not wishing to hurt or offend anyone: *The Melbourne Observer* had other ideas:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "The *Observer* was published by a real Maverick named Max Newton. When I went there, I was replacing this really hard-nosed journalist and he didn't like the fact that I was replacing him in the music area. So he said to me, '...I want you to do this story on Johnny O'Keefe. I want you to go to him and say to him that he is a has-been, he can't possibly make enough money to live, what does he do to make a

The publication that Nimmorvoll had always wanted – then had to walk away from after setting it up – Juke magazine.

living? Go out and get that story'. There was NO way I wanted to do that story so I contacted Johnny and said. '... this is what I'm supposed to write and I don't want to write it so let's pretend we couldn't get together. So I went back and said that John and I missed each other. The journo said, 'I know where John is, go and get him!'. By then, John knew what the agenda was so we made up

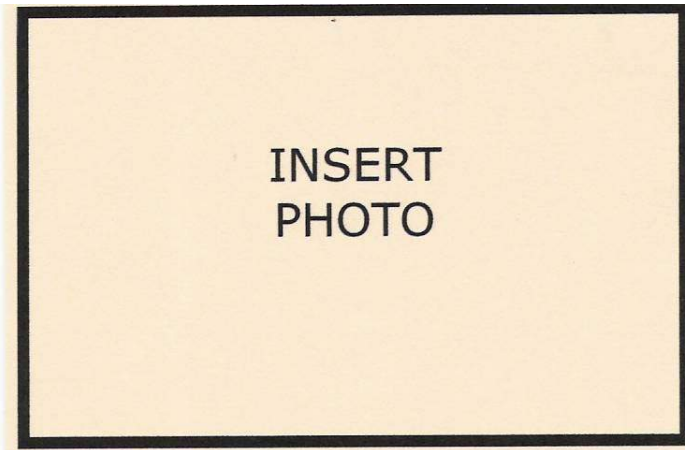
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the story and when I got back to the office, I went in with my story and with what John said; '...I believe you don't think I make enough money. How much do you want for your paper!?' " (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

He does remember doing one of the first stories on **Skyhooks**. By this time, **Graeme "Shirley" Strachan** had joined the band following the departure of the band's first lead singer, **Steve Hill** and one particular night, he visited Shirly's house just in time to see them putting on their stage make-up. Like **Ian Meldrum**, he had established the knack of being able to pick a winner and **Skyhooks** had everything needed to become a huge sensation, in his eyes.

At one point, *The Melbourne Observer* ran a readers' competition connected with a proposed concert which the paper was going to promote. The readers were to write in with their favourite Melbourne bands that they thought should appear in the show. Nimmervoll knew that **Daddy Cool** would be almost a unanimous choice but managed to "manipulate" the vote to ensure that **Skyhooks** went on to the bill at number two! He believes that this was an important step for **Skyhooks**, yet he doesn't take the credit for his part in their rise to the top during the "Glam" period of Australian rock music.

Having put his June 1975 dream of starting his own magazine on hold temporarily, now one year later, it was time to try to get his magazine off the ground. *Juke* was that magazine and it became much more of a challenge for the founder than he had first considered:



ED NIMMERVOLL: "Juke Magazine was my magazine – the original Juke was mine completely. I thought this was the kind of magazine I wanted to create. But in going into Juke, I had a list of things that I wanted. I wanted a business manager, I wanted to concentrate on the creative... I had all these things that I wanted." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

But even at the start in May, 1975, there were problems which beset the new publication. His staff firstly had to be trimmed down to fit into the budget; something that his financial backer demanded. Then, the woman he had chosen as deputy editor had a severe mental breakdown right on start up and blamed Nimmervoll for all her troubles. Finally, the art director was a true eccentric who would only work in a yellow room! However, there were positives. *Juke* was not to be a clone of *Go-Set*. It aimed at becoming a more widely-read, more mature magazine to cater for the increasingly sophisticated tastes of the teens that were now maturing themselves:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "...it was the next step on from *Go-Set*. It wasn't just about music ... I had a column called "Walls and Bridges" where I talked about the world and not just about music. We were more interested in wider things and with attracting good photographers, good artists and making it more a piece of work. Juke was a way of saying that we would start again after *Go-Set* and concentrate on delivering something that we could be proud of and that we could live with. ... So both the centre spread and the cover were done in a dedicated photo session. I got one writer to write about flying saucers. David Pepperell came on board and invented a column for me. I didn't tell him what to write about, I just wanted him to write. So he invented this character called "Dr. Pepper" and the idea of this column was that he'd invent a sort of "Dr. Jeckel and Mr. Hyde" where David was the meek and mild one and "Dr. Pepper" was the wild, rock 'n roll animal. Then David *became* the rock 'n roll animal and he would turn up at record receptions and start food fights. He quite enjoyed himself until he had to give it all away. (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

But trouble was not very far from the surface at *Juke* and because he was concentrating on his own writings, Nimmervoll was unaware of the problems bubbling away on the management front and in effect, quickly lost control of his own magazine. The financial backer soon distanced himself from the publication and despite being warned at the start that he would not make any money immediately, withdrew his support after about three months of operation. newspaper which as it turned out, was willing to take the new magazine on board:

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ED NIMMERVOLL: "So I got back to The Age and told them that we'd had three months and so, they took it on and we didn't lose an issue! We were given this little corner in The Age building. But, my art director who only wanted to work in a yellow room, didn't even want to walk into The Age building so we had to courier everything to him. It was a natural thing for them; they picked off my people one by one and replaced them, and he was the first to go." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

However, rather than see his dream dashed, Nimmervoll backtracked to a contact he had made with *The Age*

But, Ed was still becoming increasingly unhappy with the direction that his creation was taking under the new backers, not knowing what was awaiting him each day on reporting to his office. Although his stay with *Juke* only lasted one year, he had to deal with many stressful situations:

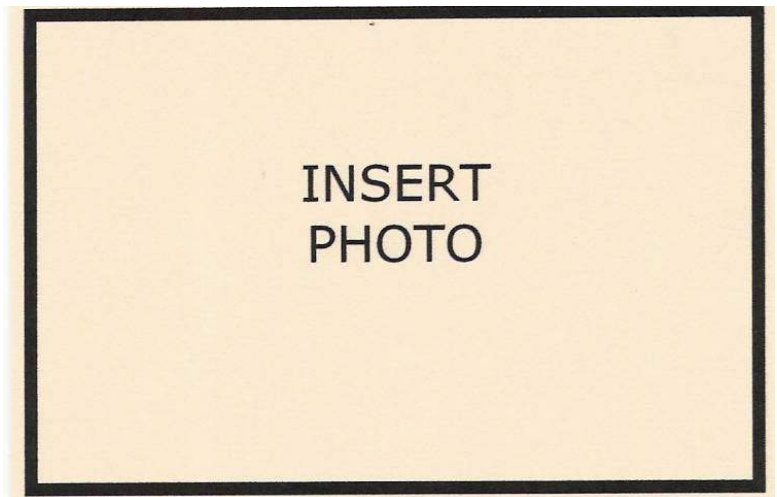
ED NIMMERVOLL: "There was this one writer who ran riot a bit, but I had him under control although The Age didn't realise that. But he stepped over the line when he was writing about Ted Mulry. He went out with The Ted Mulry gang and took some photographs of them with girls and stupidly, had them developed by The Age. When I came into the building, The Age thought I'd sanctioned these pornographic photos. That probably was the last straw but every day, I was coming in wondering what was going to be done to me." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).

His next move after leaving *Juke* (which still continued on for thirteen years) was to approach **Glenn Wheatley**, now managing a stable of stars with **The Little River Band** as the jewel in his entrepreneurial crown. Nimmervoll wanted to write more books and move into radio syndication, but to his disappointment, found Wheatley pre-occupied with his star attraction and their career overseas.

Out on his own for the next thirteen years, he achieved the aim of consistent radio work, completing many interviews and writing for various publications. He joined Take 40 Australia syndicators', MCM Networking on a full-time basis as a scriptwriter/writer/researcher of nationally and internationally syndicated radio and television programs. To this day, he continues to write books, articles and applies all his abilities and experience to his current Internet website, Howspace:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "I always had a really good ear and a passion for the music, but I know I turned a lot of people on to music. I'm not saying that I made this or that hit successful, but I helped in that I knew what to write about it because of my knowledge. I was a bit of a fearless critic, but not in a savage way. There were people who didn't like my writing but had to admit that I was honest. I didn't set out to be savage, but to describe a record and be honest about it, but they did no that I didn't set out to say that something was garbage. I would write that I didn't like it because.... . Now I think that back then, I hope I got it right.

A few times I thought that I'm too old for this, or I should let a new generation through because I'm not as enthusiastic as I was, and they are. At one point in *Go-Set*, I actually brought in a whole new set of reviewers to replace me then I realized that it wasn't me, it was the music that was changing. So today, I'm still as active as I was; still looking for the 'next best thing'." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005).



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Geoff Crozier – The Mad Magician. Born 1948, died May, 1981.

There could not possibly be anyone in the period of the great discos of Melbourne who could in any way match performance artist/magician/musician **Geoffrey (or Jeffrey) Crozier**, often known as “The Mad Magician” or “The High Priest Of Magic, Mystery and Madness”. He has a category in music created for him alone - he is the sole listee. Nobody else comes close! He was totally unpredictable on stage where chaos, madness and mayhem often reigned supreme. At the performance venues such as The T.F. Much Ballroom where musicians, jugglers, bands, singers all shared the one stage, Crozier was not just an ordinary rabbit-out-of-the-hat type magician but could also count the titles of illusionist, musician and actor among his many talents.

He was alone responsible for taking a rather well-worn type of performance, that is magic and illusion and match it with the pop and psychedelic phenomenon and thereby creating interest in young people who would not necessarily give a traditional magician in a top hat and cloak, a second glance. In doing this, he incorporated pop music, circus, vaudeville and dance all in the one act often making him a very difficult performer for his musicians to keep up with. There was also that element of pure genius and total insanity living inside the one man. It is rather ironic that he eventually needed to move to the United States before receiving the total acclaim that he deserved.



In a pretty insane era, there was no performer in Australia like Geoff Crozier and his magic show. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

Crozier spent some time in the late ‘sixties on Melbourne television as a “straight” magician although his lack of



Crozier’s first band – the Magic Word with guitarist Duncan Fry holding his Fender replacement for his prized Rickenbacker guitar which was stolen during one of his visits to Channel 9, Melbourne. (Courtesy of Duncan Fry.)

any formal or rehearsable routine led the producers of the show to insist that the performances be pre-recorded. **Geoff and The Magik Work** appeared on a number of prime time variety programs, particularly **Graham Kennedy’s In Melbourne Tonight** on GTV 9. He worked by day at the Richmond studios as a set painter, which became very handy when he needed to construct some stage props of his own. He became more adventurous in an era where experimentation on the stage was taking performers and musicians to new heights. In 1969, he combined his often outrageous magic act with rock music, forming **The Magik Word** which later included **Jan Sardi** on guitar, **Phil Stone**, bass, drummer **Tom Riley** and Crozier’s assistant, **Lady Air** (every magician has to have a female

assistant!) who was actually **Andrea Ewing**. However, back at the start, **Duncan Fry** was the first guitarist to play

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with Crozier; being hired after answering an advertisement in *Go-Set* sometime around 1967. Fry was joined by fellow interviewees from that day, **Cal Darra** and **Tom Suikart** as Crozier's first musical troupe. He recalled the experience of auditioning for *The Mad Magician*:



Magic and mayhem! You never knew quite what to expect – and neither did the band. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Duncan Fry)

DUNCAN FRY: "The auditions were held in a rambling guesthouse in Hawthorn run by his parents on a huge block leading down to the river. Geoff lived in a large subterranean closet underneath the house that was jammed to the roof with magic tricks and props. There was barely enough room for three people to stand, let alone setup drums and guitar amps. Various musicians turned up all through the afternoon; some took one look and left immediately, some played a few notes and then left, some just stood and stared as Geoff whirled around doing magic tricks.

What he wanted was free-form continuous music for the 30 minutes or so that he performed, while clouds of oily smoke, flashpots, and strobe lights alternately choked and dazzled the audience. Most of the musicians who turned up for the audition couldn't handle such a laissez-faire attitude to the music side of things.

"But what songs are we going to play?" they would whine. "No songs, just play, play" Geoff would reply, setting off another flashpot." (Fry, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).

Fry recalls that by sheer rate of attrition, he ended up with the job when all other applicants exited as quickly as they arrived. It was difficult to interest musicians who realized that Crozier just wanted them to play anything on stage for an unlimited time while he conjured up his magic and created his sparkling illusions. Eventually after gelling in some strange manner as a unit, they did take their act into the venues:

DUNCAN FRY: "We just banged around on various chords for a while in a no holds barred continuous solo reminiscent of the final chaos of (The Who's) *My Generation*. Tuneful it wasn't but I think it had just the right amount of anarchy for Geoff, and by having no fixed form it could be stretched out or shortened as required. So, that was it. We called ourselves *The Magic Word*, although that was a bit risqué for some dance promoters and on those occasions we were *The Magic Pudding*." (Fry, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).

His show was a mixture of psychedelic light, (provided at times by **Hugh McSpedden's** *Edison Light Show* or *Giant Edison Screw*) indoor fireworks and magic while **The Magic**



The whole team – Crozier and his Magic Word as photographed by David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique.

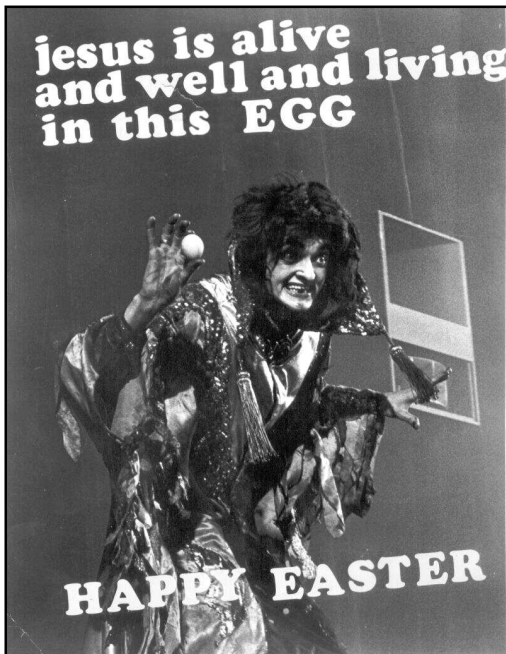
Word or later **The Indian Medicine Magik Show** played on valiantly trying to keep apace with the outrageous antics of Crozier. He employed various “props” in his act which tended towards fire and pyrotechnics of some sort as he searched for that certain something way beyond the normal experience of the audience. At the same time, he lived in his “mobile home” – his old furniture van which he often shared with a number of band members and friends who slept amongst the various stage props, instruments and amps.

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His act often incorporated large tea-pots, incense burners, bubbling witches cauldrons, on stage coffins, smoke machines and many devices thought up and made by him. But it was the extreme insanity, the element of the unknown and the often confusing and crazy nature of his performances which held the audiences spellbound in an era when most would have turned up at the venues for the rock bands, the dancing and the opposite sex. Crozier’s **Indian Medicine Magik Show** became a “must see” act at the legendary TF Much Ballroom in Fitzroy, and this continued on when it became The Much More Ballroom. A typical concert bill of the period was the T.F. Much Ballroom show at Cathedral Hall, Brunswick St Fitzroy on August 8, 1970. On the same bill as Geoff and the **Indian Medicine Magik Show**, this night were **Spectrum, Sons Of The Vegetal Mother, Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band, Gerry Humphrys & The New Joy Boys, Lipp Arthur, The Adderley Smith Blues Band, Margret RoadKnight, Tribe Theatre** and **The Flash Light Show**. (www.milesago.com)

Crozier himself often didn’t know just where his act was taking him and neither did his colleagues on stage or the audience for that matter. Nothing was predictable for Geoff Crozier. He shared the stage at times with well-known performer, **Benny Zable**. Animals featured prominently in many of Crozier’s tricks and he kept a virtual menagerie of farmyard animals, reptiles, rodents and birds. It would have been difficult to say that “no animals were harmed during these performances”, because there was perhaps a few that inadvertently got scorched or singed somewhere along the way. Perhaps most survived as they kept turning up in later performances:

DUNCAN FRY: “Every week we worked around the Melbourne dance circuit, although just what audiences made of the whole thing I don’t know. The shows always ended in absolute chaos - things would fall over, unintentional sparks would fly from electrical bits and pieces, while sometimes the smoke machine refused to smoke and just squirted hot oil over everything and everyone! Pity the act that came on after us!” (Fry, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).



Even such a mundane item as an Easter card from Geoff Crozier was far from normal. (Courtesy of Duncan Fry)

Above all, Fry recalls in the nicest way that Crozier was “as mad as a cut snake”. But that he was:

DUNCAN FRY: “...also a shit hot magician, and very well respected by his peers in the magic biz. One night after a gig we were having a bite to eat at Leo’s Spaghetti Bar in St Kilda, when he bumped into a fellow magician. Well, fair dinkum the two of them had the whole restaurant entranced as they did endless close-up magic tricks involving coins, spoons, knives and forks, plus the inevitable pack of cards. Just as guitarists always seem to have a plectrum in their pocket, so do magicians always have a pack of cards about their person.” (Fry, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).

The exceptionally talented Crozier became frustrated with his lack of real success at home and eventually inflicted his chaotic concept of rock and magic on the U.S.A over two tours. His frustration may have been linked with the inability of the Australian public (the conservative elements) to accept his form of rock ‘n magic mayhem. Certainly in Sydney in June, 1970, the police were less than impressed with the out-of-control pyrotechnics which emanated from the stage throughout the Crozier shows. In the super-heated atmosphere of the **Jim Cairns’ Vietnam Moratorium** demonstrations of 1970, Crozier pulled out one of his most spectacular, unpredictable and eccentric performances. He single-handedly caused unprecedented pandemonium at The Melbourne Town Hall Concert which took place on the evening of the march through the city.

Using a puppet resembling South Vietnam’s **Marshall Ky**, he

staged a mock battle between the flags of the National Liberation Front and the United States, set to strobe lights and a smoke machine. The billowing smoke proved all too much for the staff at the Town Hall and they pulled the plug on the whole act, turning off the strobes and bringing the house lights up. This bloody-minded act enraged Crozier who threatened to set fire to the stage unless power was restored. He then set fire to one of the stage curtains with a spluttering flare which he lit, then carried it off the stage as he ran out of the Town Hall into

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The mad, mad world of Geoff Crozier ...


SEALED WITH THE SALIVA FROM A DEAD MANS TONGUE

REVIEW OF MY LAST SHOW

THE SPELL IS BROKEN
THE TEMPLE DEFILED
THE CEREMONY IS NO MORE
THE MAGICIAN IS DEAD

LONG LIVE THE MANK

Geoff Crozier
BIRTHDAY of BIRTHDAY



MOON ROCK CIRCUS
14th September, New York, September 12, 9 p.m.
By Steve Rosen

Never have I been so surprised, amazed even, by an unknown band as by Moon Rock Circus. It was almost by chance that I stumbled into the Little Hippodrome one rainy Friday night, after checking out a funk-fleck supposedly starting an extended of those. Needless to say she never made the other screen deposit for alone the credits. With a few a piece music, and an evening rapidly getting down the stairs, he sat and I took a walk upstairs to the Hippodrome and immediately caught the wildest, wildest show I've ever seen. The band was straight out of the Great World Of Arthur Brown (remember - I've "I" got key-bugles, hats and drums and a variety of things).

The musician, Geoffrey Crozier, was like no home I've ever seen, a cross between Karpis and the mad monk, St. Drouot and I'd March, this guy made Gene Simmons' Dime look like a kid playing with matches. He made Alice Cooper look like a rich or very sophisticated in a Ben Cheetah costume and his hairdo made Gene Simmons' look like a punk. With dozens of props, flowers and weird magic, Crozier gave the impression that he could summon demons or the step of a flat. His gestures are unique and his poetry is otherworldly. The band added to the high magical atmosphere in the theatre, and I can't say I was bored at any time. There was a bit of a hiccup while the madman was changing costumes: the keyboard's wavy notes could have been drowned out, but this was undoubtedly the most exciting performance since Aladdin. The lighting effects alone were worth the price of admission.


Once the news breaks about this band, they're going to be heavily in demand. They'd go all the way to space, except for one thing: Geoffrey Crozier can't sing. He doesn't really even try, speaking, singing and growling out the words in a hoarse, hoarse sort of fashion. Maybe he shouldn't work for them, but I don't know, so there!




GEOFFREY CROZIER

VIC & SUZY TOSCA
791 MANOR ROAD
APT. 1 D.
STATEN ISLAND
NEW YORK, 10314.

Thankyou





Fission Chips
P.O.Box 66
THORA NSW 2492
Tel. (066) 55-8528
(03) 3768365

TRACK TITLES AND PLAYING TIMES

Album Title		mins./secs.
Side One	: HOUSE OF THE SUN	2 33
	: KHAN-KHALLILI BAZAAR	3 18
	: THE DEVIL MAY CARE	8 01
	: SLAVE TRADERS	2 33
Side Two	: LAND OF UNCLEAN SPIRITS	3 54
	: PERHAPS REINCARNATION	2 02
	: HOUSE OF THE JOKER	8 15
	: TAKE A LOOK	4 42
Side Three	: THE TEMPLE OF EXOTIC DELIGHTS	14 23
	: MUSIC BOX	0 30
Side Four	: FEED YOU TO THE SHARKS	1 43
	: LAPIS-LAZULI	6 35
	: I'LL BE A SPHINX FOR YOU	1 30
	: DOUBTING THOMAS	1 30
	: PAID YOUR MONEY	7 18

The Moon Rock Circus.
Geoff Crozier left Melbourne for New York in the early 'seventies where he unleashed his brand on pyro-wizardry of the unsuspecting Americans.

Top left - a review of his Moon Rock Circus from The Aquarian in 1975 with his notes and signature.

Top right - his stamp - note one "f" - deliberate or a mistake?

Above - the envelope.

Left - set list for the recording of Tranceformer. (All courtesy of Duncan Fry and Michael Toscarelli.)

Swanston Street, leaving staff and spectators alike confounded at this apparent spontaneous act of lunatic rebellion. It seemed to be the single defining episode which prompted him to quit Australia and try his hand overseas.



A very Dylanesque Jeff Crozier, just prior to leaving for America. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Afrique)

It was there in America, in the home of bizarre entertainment that he was accepted as a true genius. The success and acceptance he quickly gained there was something that had eluded him in Australia. He toured with **The Moon Rock Circus, (Danny Chambers, Steve Germinder and Peter Giordano)** which brought to the Americans much of what Crozier was doing in Australia only more frantic and bizarre – if that was at all conceivably possible. Reports have it that he lived for a while on a barge moored on The Hudson River at Staten Island, New York. Crozier continued with his unique brand of showmanship, mayhem and destruction in New York City. Some still remember the experience of being part of his shows:

I worked with Geoff in the late 70's. At that time the band was called **Snakehead**. At the time Geoff had moved into Brooklyn. He lived in a store front on 59th st and 5th ave which doubled as a rehearsal studio and menagerie which housed a turkey vulture, snakes and an assortment on NYC rats that Geoff fed and cared for. My job with Geoff would now be called pyrotechnic technician, back in the days I think he called me the "minister of fire", or something along those lines. We were regulars at Max's Kansas City, my favorite club of all time as I was just a boy and being exposed to the nucleus of the punk scene.

One of my favorite memories is having an incredibly messy food fight with Joey Ramone. One evening while playing CBGB's in the Bowery I loaded a bit too much gasoline and black powder in a cauldron. The flames were a bit too intense for the club owners who promptly called the FDNY. That was our last show at CBGB's... all our future advertisements included **BANNED FROM CBGB's**. I have some incredible memories of working with Geoff as things got so frantic on stage you never knew what was coming. It was imperative to stay completely awake in my position nestled between the PA usually wedged between walls, as the clubs those days were so small.

Geoff would light underwater smoke bombs, in an incense burner attached to a long chain (the type a priest would light for a funeral). He would swing that thing over the audience's heads with reckless abandon as he danced wildly. Very thick orange smoke would quickly fill the room and inevitably that incense burner would always come my way as I was the minister of fire. The first three rows of all shows always remained empty except for a few hardcore diehards who hoped to be hit with a live rat, or burnt from a torch. At the end of every show I would be completely black, hands sometimes burnt, with a thick coating of soot in my nose and (I) assume (my) lungs.

Geoffrey was magnetic - the energy at the shows was unbeatable, forget reality TV we never knew what was going to happen which made each show a special event for both crew and audience. (email from Robert Durso, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).



The album Crozier was working on at the time of his death - Tranceformer. It was released posthumously and didn't sell well, making it rare vinyl today.

Eventually, Crozier returned home to Victoria and continued his magical, mystical mayhem - this time with a band called **The Generator: David Mow** (aka Mojo or David N'Tondwe, guitars), **Robert Greaves**, (Roland 227.

Synthesiser) and drummer **Keith Casey**:

ROBERT GREAVES: "I was Geoff's keyboard player 1980/81, after his return from the States. A great man, a great performer; maybe not such a great singer - but a great story teller, and a maniac on stage. ...I spent far more money than I ever made (!), and apart from destroying his own gear, he set fire to my keyboards on more than one show - but hey! .. not only did the audience never know what was about to happen - neither did his band! Yep, rehearsals were great (in fact some of our best shows were in rehearsal), but running sheets were often torn up, burnt up, eaten up or whatever!" (email from Robert Greaves, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).

Many in the music world were shocked by his untimely death in his home town of Seymour in 1981. Many believe he was rehearsing the magic trick of self-hanging when it went tragically wrong. It is difficult to read too much more into this tragedy despite concerns that Crozier was experiencing some "lows" in his personal life. At the time of his death he was working on recording material for the Fission Chips label with his band to be released as *Tranceformer* (not to be confused with **Lou Reed's Transformer**). It was a double album of rather strange Crozier monologues and weird, spacey synthesiser background tracks and was released posthumously as being by **Geoff Krozier and The Generator**. The album



All smoke and mirrors - as an illusionist, Crozier was without peer in this country. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique)

contained tracks which were a combination of live recordings and rehearsal tracks recorded between 7 and 26 January, 1981. It was mixed and mastered at Fission Chips, Thora, New South Wales and pressed at EMI in Sydney. Tracks included two eight-minute plus songs, *The Devil May Care* and *The House of the Joker* and one fourteen-minute track *The Temple of Exotic Delights*. Greaves, who played on the album recalls his feelings on Crozier's death:

ROBERT GREAVES: "His death was a tragedy as we had just spent a month in a private studio in Sydney (January, 1981) and were to get together a few months later to rework the "test" tapes for an album, and to really get the show on the road (chooks and all!)." (Greaves, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).

Duncan Fry remembers the mad, crazy earlier times back at the beginning of the Crozier chronicle when the guitarist decided that his shortish tenure with Crozier's magic show had to be terminated:

DUNCAN FRY: "Like all good things it eventually came to an end. They say you can't stand too close to genius without getting burned, and I was certainly feeling its heat. ... So one day I told him I was leaving to just get my brain back in some kind of order. He shook my hand, we parted on amicable terms, and I never saw him again." (Fry, op cit, www.dunkworld.com).

Stan Rofe - the voice of Melbourne - born 30 May 1935 - died 16 May 2003.

"Without Stan's support many of Australia's biggest stars would not have seen the light of day. ...Rock music in this country owes a huge debt to Stan Rofe which I fear may never be repaid" (Keays, 1999, P 52, 53)



Stan Rofe from his days at 3UZ - a publicity photo. He continued his dominance of the airwaves after leaving 3KZ.

When we talk about pioneering radio personalities, Melbourne's premier D.J of the period 3KZ's Stan Rofe can be considered a pioneer without peer of both the broadcasting and rock music industries. Entering the era of the DJ –

Disc Jockey – on Melbourne radio in the late fifties, early sixties and through to the 'seventies, Rofe was THE most influential person in the period of the first wave of rock 'n roll when it hit these shores. Moreover, he became a power within the industry because he not only played the hits on his radio shows including "Platter Chatter" on 3KZ, but he also developed enormous clout in the industry – when Stan spoke, everyone listened. But he should be most remembered because of his undying passion for the Australian record industry and full support for those who had the determination to make a name for themselves as Aussie musicians, singers and performers – his support and direct assistance for many is legendary. He also had the vehicle to make it happen – his radio programs and his devoted listening audience – the ears of the record-buying public.

Billy Pinnell was a 15 year-old office boy in his first job in radio. Although he has gone on since, to his own stellar career in broadcasting, Pinnell did many odd jobs at 3KZ including working for Rofe:

BILLY PINNELL: "He was certainly someone I admired and looked up to. We became great friends over the years from when I first started in radio... Stan was at 3KZ, but I was aware of his program before that. I would listen to his afternoon program and

seeing him do his program live of course was very exciting. I helped to assemble his records for him for his program and when I first was at 3KZ, I got a job in the record library after being an office boy for about six years. One of my duties was to go down to Ansett's freight department every Thursday and pick up the American import singles that Stan would play in his program the following week. He had a segment one night a week where he would play the Top Ten from the American music magazines, Billboard and Cashbox. Cashbox was the one which KZ would subscribe to. So Stan would play the Top Ten and regardless of what style it was; Stan would play it and he took great pride in having the Top Ten singles of that week to play.

He would make a list of singles that he would play even before they made the charts sometimes, assuming that they would do some at some time. So many people got to hear all this wonderful, new music once a week, because Stan imported these singles.

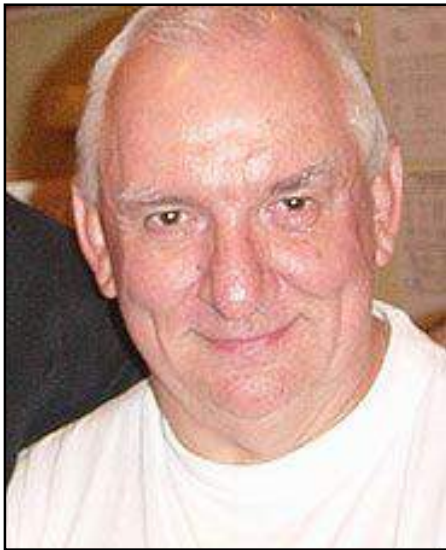
There were so many songs which got played which would not have been aired anywhere else in the entire country. I remember hearing Ray Charles' 'What'd I Say' before I started working in radio one day in his show, and the impact of those songs lasted a long time. He was the most important on-air presenter of rock 'n roll ever in this country." (Pinnell, op cit, 19 September, 2005)

I don't think it's drawing too long a bow to say that "Stan the Man" with his signature call, "...Hi-De Hi Victoria" single-handedly turned Australia onto rock 'n roll. Like many teenagers in the early 'sixties I would sit, with my ear

pressed against either our HMV kitchen mantle radio, (while Mum and Dad watched T.V in the lounge) or listen to my trusty leather-cased transistor radio in my bedroom. I just couldn't wait to find out what new import song was rocketing up the charts with "a red bullet" or what **Bobby Rydell's, Roy Orbison's** or **The Everly Brothers'** next hit 229.

was going to be. Homework could wait. I sat with baited breath for that week's number one hit and tried to predict what it would be. Although I really missed out on the first wave rock 'n roll because I was too young to be turned on by the early **Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins** or **Eddie Cochran**, I sensed that by listening to this man at the height of his popularity, his program and the records he played, I was participating in this fabulous new music revolution – and I LOVED the music.

This was what I would term the interim period here in Australia between the end of the early rock 'n roll and the emergence of **The Beatles** and the British Invasion. Some say the music was bland at this time, (and mostly American) and it was... in comparison with what had gone before and what was just over the horizon, but it was new and fresh. Australian content was quite limited and I really only remember songs (ballads) like, 'Little Boy Lost' by **Johnny Ashcroft**, although it was far from rock 'n roll and it is now what we would probably describe as an insipid "country ballad". There was also a little Skiffle filtering in from Britain thanks to **Lonnie Donegan** and I couldn't get **Johnny Horton's Running Bear** out of my brain! How could anyone forget the impact in 1958-9 that *The Purple People Eater* made, (was it by **Sheb Wooley?**). Rofe was also very selective about what Aussie music he played other than Melbourne music.



Firstly a fan of "Stan the Man" then a broadcasting colleague and friend – Billy Pinnell. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd.)

Stan Rofe had the unique ability to know when a song or an artist was going to succeed – how? I really don't know, but it was probably a combination of instinct, his own personal likes and dislikes and an acute sense of knowing what the teenagers at the time wanted. Foremost though, it was probably because he loved the music, which counted a lot. When he was a little tied down with station policy which demanded he play a record that he didn't like, he would put the 45 on at 78 rpm– no apologies! When he liked what he heard, he would announce "... I like it so nice, I'm gonna play it twice." Even an embargo didn't stop him from playing **The Beatles' White Album** – in its entirety. He casually noted that this was a new album from a band called The Seltaeb! Touché folks! He was writing the book on rock radio DJ-ing and ripping up a few standard manuals in the process. But it was the way he championed Australian and particularly Melbourne talent that makes **Stan Rofe** a giant in the industry.

Born in Melbourne, he attended primary school in Carlton and did his secondary years at Collingwood Technical School. He answered his call-up to military service which at that stage simply required three months training then a further period in the C.M.F. After a "crash course" in radio announcing at Bill Roberts' Radio School, which lasted all of three days, he did a short stint in Tasmania. He began his working life there in sales with a radio manufacturing firm, but soon got his first on-air break with 7AD Devonport, before returning to the mainland in 1955 with Melbourne radio's 3AK. This followed his introduction to Lee Murray. He commenced at 3KZ with an afternoon slot and also presented a program which invited listeners to call the station to identify a record – "Call up KZ". He hosted a gruelling midnight-to-dawn shift and a Saturday afternoon shift with "... records about modern music".

In all, Rofe worked with 3AK, 3XY and 3UZ over his long career, but it with 3KZ that he gained the massive following and devoted audience that many announcers could only dream of. At 3KZ, he hit the airwaves with the catchy introduction to "Platter Parade" leading into his program which was stacked with new music. He didn't just spin the discs, he broke all the new music at the time. He was also a competent Aussie rules radio commentator and official Olympic Games commentator in his pre-rock 'n roll days.

It was at a meeting with **John Laws** in Sydney that Stan learned how to get the latest new releases from American record companies – simply get Qantas pilots to bring them into the country! He played these new rock 'n roll records, intermingled with the more established post-war artists such as **Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Tony Bennett** or **Peggy Lee** – rock 'n roll was beginning to take hold.

It took less than a year from the time "Platter Parade" was first aired by 3KZ in February, 1957 for it to become established as the most listened-to radio show in Melbourne and set the stage for fellow announcers like **Ken Sparkes**, **Billy Pinnell**, **Lee Simon**, **Alan Lappan** and **Don Lunn** to make their names as DJ's over the ensuing 230.

years. At a time when the payola scandals (money given to DJ.s by record companies for playing records on radio) were rocking the American music scene, dominated by **Alan Freed**, Stan "the Man" would have nothing of this. He could have done the same in Melbourne, but this was the furthestest thing from his mind as he set about the task of taking up the causes of many Aussie newcomers in the business and putting their records on air. A brash and self-confident young Sydney singer one, **Johnny O'Keefe** was struggling for airplay anywhere in the country until Rofe first suggested that O'Keefe record a cover version of the **Isley Brothers** mediocre U.S. charting song, *Shout*. Rofe then played O'Keefe's records on radio when no one else would even touch them. This uncanny knack of picking a winner would not desert Rofe during his stellar career in radio or in the print media.

Rofe defended and promoted young Melbourne talent from all sectors – rock, pop, blues, jazz, folk and probably his greatest discovery was a then 16 year-old **Normie Rowe** who came to the studio to see Stan and instead of being sent on his way, was given some great advice which resulted in Normie recording the show tune from the musical *Porgy and Bess*, *It Ain't Necessarily So* which became a monster hit for him. Stan, in fact was responsible for selecting many of the earlier hits which catapulted Rowe to fame:

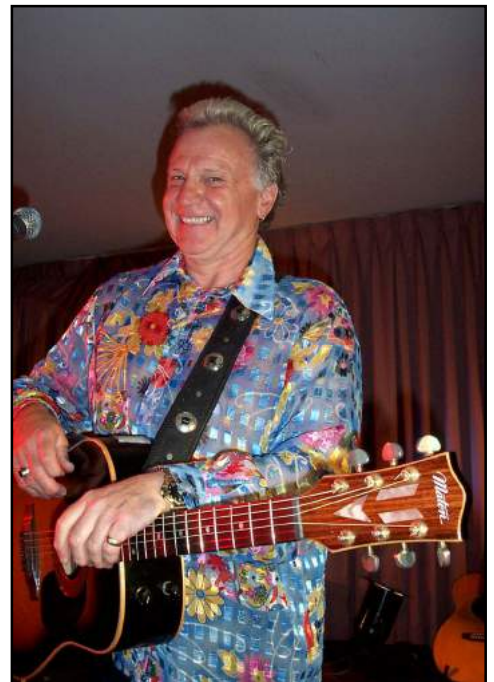
BILLY PINNELL: "– Stan saw Normie sing at one of the local dances – may have been the Northcote Town Hall – may have been Preston. And Stan saw the enormous potential in Normie and he found the first dozen singles that Normie recorded. Stan was finding these songs – 'I Who Have Nothing' was a Ben E. King song ... He found an R & B version of 'Que Sera Sera' by a group, I think called The High Keys. Normie wouldn't have found those himself. Stan found him all of those. He found him a pop version of 'It Ain't Necessarily So' by either The Mindbenders or The Mersey Beats. 'Shakin' All Over' was another one that had been recorded a few times before. Stan knew the sort of songs Normie would be comfortable with and that had commercial potential." (Pinnell, op cit, 19 September, 2005)

At around the same time, just to illustrate the influence which he wielded in the industry, Rofe slapped a temporary ban on playing records from Sydney-based artists, with the exception of **Johnny O'Keefe**, whom he felt he couldn't desert because he had so much to do with O'Keefe's initial break in the business. More to do with getting additional quality airtime for Melbourne talent than discriminating against Sydney music, Rofe saw it as his duty to promote local performers.

In an era of payola, Stan was not in the least interested in making money from his position in the industry or from his on-air or off-air influences. In 1960, a young rocker named **Johnny Chester** who had been singing with **The Jaywoods** at a rock 'n roll dance which he self-promoted at St Cecilia's Church Hall in West Preston, went to see Rofe direct:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "Johnny had just started his own dance at the Preston Town Hall and he thought 3KZ and Stan Rofe was the place to let people know about it. He went to see Stan just to find out what the rates for doing this were and Stan put him on air to publicise the gig. Then he became the compare of that dance from that day forward. So every time John tried to pay him back, even put money in his pocket when Stan wasn't looking, Stan would always return it. That's the typical Stan, the Stan I want to remember." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005)

BILLY PINNELL: "I've never heard of anybody who had the influence that Stan did – I've always compared what he did here to what Alan Freed did in America. Alan Freed played music for American 'teenagers that they would not have the opportunity to hear anywhere else and Stan did the same here. Then, when he started to go to dances



Rofe kick-started Normie Rowe's career and the showman in the young entertainer took over. After a tour of duty in Vietnam, Normie's career took many turns but he doesn't intend retiring for quite a while yet. (Courtesy of Tony Jagers)

to watch bands, he saw artists which he thought had the potential to be great recording artists like Johnny Chester, Normie Rowe, and many others and without Stan's patronage, and without him going to record companies and saying, 'Hey there's this fellow at Preston Town Hall and his name is Johnny Chester; I think you should record 231.

him.', they wouldn't have been heard.

And so, having someone like Stan endorse an artist meant that record companies took notice of what he said. Once the companies started to sell records by people that Stan had suggested, they knew they were on to something. As an example, Stan introduced many artists to Ron Tudor when he was at W & G Records. Because of Stan's standing in the industry, if he went to a record company and told them that he had someone who was a potential hitmaker, they would listen to him. Normie, Johnny Chester, Marcie Jones, Bobby Cookson and others



Peter Rechter of The Tol-puddle Martyrs renewed acquaintances with Stan Rofe not long before the radio legend passed away. (Courtesy of Peter Rechter)

would have sold enough records to convince them that Stan knew what he was talking about. So anyone that Stan endorsed, the record company would be crazy not to listen to him." (Pinnell, op cit, 19 September, 2001)

On the other hand, if Rofe disliked what he heard he was quick to act. **Mike Rudd**, when he played with **Ariel** was invited to perform live on one of Rofe's radio programs and chose to play *Confessions Of A Psychopathic Cowpoke* from their *A Strange Fantastic Dream* album, but as Rudd has explained, the station programmers didn't check the material well enough. Within a few minutes of starting, they were unceremoniously pulled off air by Stan who objected to the lyrics!

Later, after the radio ban was lifted, Sydney bands like **The Easybeats** benefited by what was close to national promotion for their records, thanks to **Stan Rofe**. Locally, young **Russell Morris**, lead singer with Melbourne band, **Somebodys Image**, wandered one day through Stan's open studio door and walked away with the advice, "...why don't you do a cover version of **Joe South's Hush?**" They did - and it became a gigantic debut hit for yet another top Melbourne band. **John**, (or as he originally was - Johnny) **Farnham** found himself a huge hit with, *Sadie The Cleaning Lady* - something that he has tried desperately to live down over the years. It became a hit because Rofe conspired to use reverse psychology to promote the record. Corny though this song really was, Stan smelt "talent" and saw huge potential in this personable blond kid. Although he played *Sadie*.. regularly on his show, he usually proceeded to mercilessly "can"

the record when it finished. The result - the more he denigrated the tune, the more copies it sold!

He was also the first DJ to have the courage to play the early **Rolling Stones** songs such as *Not Fade Away* and *Little Red Rooster* - possibly the first time anyone in Melbourne had heard what we now know as "rhythm and blues" - complete with wailing harmonica, maracas and raw, thumping beat. 'Stones bass guitarist **Bill Wyman**, in his 1990 book, *Stone Alone* notes his surprise at landing in Melbourne in January, 1965 to find that,

BILL WYMAN: " 'Stones singles were "...breaking all over the Australian Charts." and, "...we had a load of singles released that were not out in that format anywhere else, including *Walking The Dog* ". (Wyman, *Stone Alone*, 1990)

There could be only one reason for this - **Stan Rofe**. Stan became compare of the 'Stones, St. Kilda Palais' shows on 28 and 29 January and was involved in a number of rather tense behind-the-scenes dramas mostly relating to guitarist **Brian**



Johnny Chester was a struggling, young rocker when he approached Stan Rofe. Rofe eventually compared the northern suburbs dances that Chester ran. This photo was taken on 18 November, 1961 in the Myer Record Bar with 3AW DJ, Ralph Rickman. (Photographer: David Holmes)

Jones which have been recounted on a number of occasions. The show certainly looked smooth from the stalls of the Palais and it featured a support act - a reasonably unknown local band, **The Flies**, with **Ronnie Burns** as lead singer. What was astounding about them was that they actually

232.



The very psychedelic, beads-and-all, Russell Morris was a beneficiary of Rofe's deft ability to recognize enormous talent in Melbourne. (Publicity photo - photographer unknown.)

now had others like **Ian "Molly" Meldrum** on the local scene whose views were becoming gospel. It was obvious that Rofe wasn't quite mustering up the same passion for the new waves of psychedelic and progressive rock which he did for first wave rock and Beat music. To some colleagues, he seemed out of his depth with the likes of Frank Zappa and he seemed to have lost that vital contact with the direction music was heading.

But, back in his beloved early rock period, it seemed to be a natural progression for Stan to turn his hand to writing on the current music scene, given the unique position he had carved for himself in the music industry. *Go-Set*, was essential reading for teens in 1966, so who better to have reporting on the gossip about town than the highly respected "Rockey Jockey":

BILLY PINNELL: "He had a flair for it. He may have written copy at his radio stations - I'm not sure whether he would have had a hand in that earlier on because the jobs people had at radio stations were not as defined as they are now - people were just able to do various jobs. Anyhow, his column was widely read in *Go-Set* in those days." (Pinnell, op cit, 19 September, 2001)

As the magazine/paper matured so Rofe's weekly contributions in his "Stan Rofe's Tonic" column, began to tackle more serious material around the industry. In this column which ran until 1971, he spoke out on some seriously, heavy issues relating to the way he saw moves made by those in the music industry whose jobs placed them in the roles of decision makers. Stan did not always agree and his criticisms in print came from a keen perception of what was best for teens and their music. He would often advise young musicians and singers to pursue their dreams of recording a Top 40 hit single or album, much to the disgust of many parents who were locked into the "... get a haircut and get a real job" vision for their offspring. He was known to have used his own money to help struggling local kids get into a recording studio and would contact promoters on their behalf to get them some gigs at the local discos and suburban halls.

For a man of his stature in the industry, with his wealth of experience and clout, Rofe was always willing to talk to anyone and many young people, after visiting Stan in the KZ, UZ or XY studios would find themselves leaving with an armful of singles and LP's that Stan did not need. A young guitarist and vocalist with a local band firstly known as **Harper's Bazaar** then as **Bazaar** has fond memories of Stan:

had hair that was longer than the 'Stones! It was a shame that they broke up not long afterwards, without really making a ripple on the charts with their three singles which were released in 1964-5. Their sound however typified a distinct move to a local form of rhythm and blues such as was being heard in the new discos, dance halls and other venues, put out here by the likes of **The Loved Ones** with the amazing **Gerry Humphrys** wailing out front. Again Stan Rofe was instrumental in bringing this music, which was certainly very new to us, to his Melbourne audiences. I remember when I first heard *Ever Loving Man* and *The Loved One* (both released in 1966), it was difficult for anyone to convince me that this was a local band and not an overseas R & B group. Stan loved them, I loved them and so did Melbourne.

By the commencement of the progressive rock period, perhaps around 1967, some believe that Rofe's best work was behind him and that he wasn't as relevant in the industry as he had been.

From being the sole authority on teen music, he

HARRY TARASINSKI: "Pete (Bass Guitarist) lived in Elgin Street, Carlton, just a few doors up from where Stan Rofe lived, and we often had a beer with Stan at the Clyde Hotel, across the road, when we took a break from rehearsal and Stan sometimes came across and sat in on our rehearsals for a while, offering suggestions or criticisms 233.

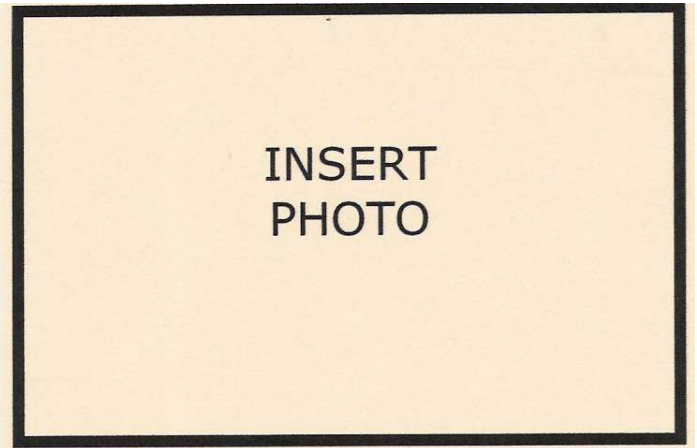
about the selection of our material. In hindsight, I think it's a pity that we were too busy working to spend any time in a recording studio because I'm sure Stan would have supported us if we had released a single. (Tarasinski, author's email interview, 1 November, 2004)

Now, what about the relationship between Rofe and **Ian "Molly" Meldrum**, two heavyweights (musically speaking) in the business? Essentially it developed into some sort of love-hate partnership based upon mutual understanding and respect as both had the best interests of the Australian and local music scene in mind. Meldrum, who like many music fans at the time, was in awe of Rofe and both wrote for *Go-Set* in the late 'sixties. Meldrum, in his column would be quite devastating in his criticism of Rofe in one issue and Rofe would open fire the next week in his "Tonic" column.

There have been two plausible explanations as to how Meldrum obtained his nickname of "Molly" One involves his relationship with Stan Rofe. So the story goes, one week, while working out just how to get back at Meldrum for scathing comments he had made in print, the suggestion was made to Rofe to give Meldrum a girl's name, hoping to infuriate him. "Molly" was the final choice. Stan credits himself with a little touch of genius in this one – it stuck and perhaps while it did initially cause some minor irritation for Meldrum, has become a distinct term of endearment for ever. This was again a deft piece of publicity. A further explanation revolves around meldrum's early period at Go-Set when his colleagues referred to him as "The Moll" – then "Molly". You be the judge on that one!

It is fitting that Meldrum should rightly have the final say on **Stan Rofe**. He wrote, this time in total sincerity in *Go-Set*:

IAN "MOLLY" MELDRUM: "There is no guy in the pop business that I admire more than our Stan. He has been a good and helpful friend to me. If I have had success in the business, I owe part of it to Stan. Stan, to me is the king of the Australian pop scene." (Rofe, *Go-Set*, November 22, 1972). No arguments there!



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Bill Armstrong and Armstrong Studios.

Armstrong Studios - commenced at 100 Albert Road, South Melbourne, north side near the Kings Way intersection.

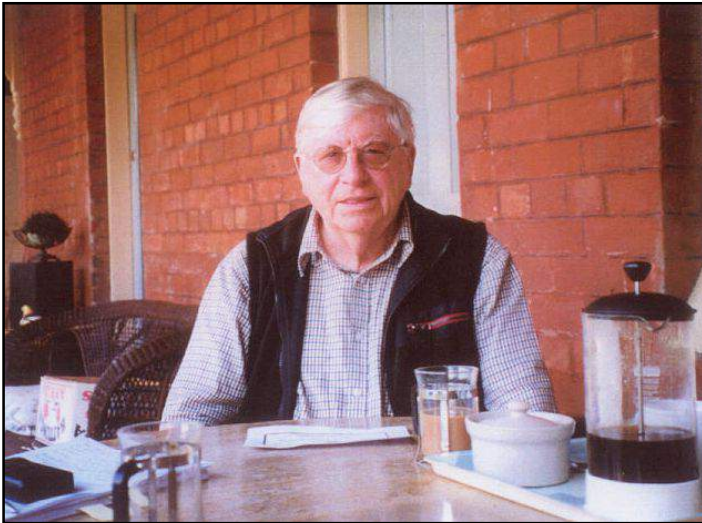
Operated from: 1 December, 1965 to December, 1972 at Albert Road then from December, 1972 to March, 1974 at Bank Street, South Melbourne.

**Now: Albert Road - A multi storey office complex.
Bank Street - Metropolis Studios.**

"I don't really think he has been recognized enough for his contribution to music ... good Australian music. Bill, single-handedly changed the face of Australian recorded music because he pioneered technology that ... developed multi-track recording. We led the world here at one stage in multi-track recording and that was all because of Bill's insistence on having the best technology available.

I'll tell you what I remember about Bill, he was obsessed with recording - he was obsessed then and he's obsessed now. And his success was borne of his enormous love for music. He's amazing." (Mike Brady, author's interview, 17 May, 2006)

Bill Armstrong opened probably the only large-scale operational recording facility in Melbourne in the early days of Melbourne rock 'n roll period. It all began in a single-fronted, single-story terrace house at 100 Albert Road,



Living not far from the studios he once owned, Bill Armstrong still has time in retirement to pursue his interests in jazz, which was where he started in the recording business.

South Melbourne almost opposite the Albert Park Lake and the Albert Park Golf Course, late in 1965. At the time, few if any recording facilities existed in Melbourne, let alone a large studio with quality state of the art imported recording machines. He introduced the first eight-track recorder into Australia in 1968, then sixteen and twenty-four-track recorders. It's a tribute to Armstrong and a core of producers and recording engineers, that they were willing to take a huge punt on putting some of our finest young rock and pop talent in front of a microphone when few others were willing to take such a chance. That "core" went on to establish separate careers in the recording industry as time went on and a number still work in the industry. Names such as **Roger Savage**, **Ern Rose**, **Howard Gable**, **John Sayers** and of course, **Ian 'Molly' Meldrum** have become important figures in recording and distribution circles. **Ern Rose** in fact, now owns and runs Metropolis Studio in Bank

Street, South Melbourne. This company is the original Armstrong Studios which Bill sold in 1974.

Bill Armstrong is a true Melbourne boy, born in 1929 and living today in St. Kilda, not far from the places where he launched his great contributions to Australian music. Working in law courts as a transcriber from the time he left school, Armstrong began his fascination with recording and was the first person to be given official permission to take his recorder into an Australian courtroom when requested to do so by **Philip Opus, Q.C.** Opus was with the law team which unsuccessfully defended Pentridge escapee, Ronald Ryan who had escaped his jail cell in December, 1965 allegedly gunning down Warder George Hodson in Sydney Road, Coburg on that fateful day.

Coincidentally, Opus was also a shareholder in Telfil Recording Studios which would figure prominently in Armstrong's recording career later. With his own recording company he had dabbled in recording techniques from about 1955 and was probably the very first to do an "outside recording" Armstrong has clear memories of recording some of his favourite jazz performers:

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BILL ARMSTRONG: "I recorded "Smacka" (Fitzgibbon) and Graeme Bell... and some I did in mono and some in stereo too. This was in 1956 and nothing was released in stereo. We called them "'Frisco Joe and The Good Time Boys with Smacka, The Singing Barman" and it was recorded in a pub with all the atmosphere... We called them this because, back then if you put it out as, "Graham Bell and The "Smacka" Fitzgibbon Quartet", it was too Australian and the radio stations wouldn't play it but if it had an American feel to it, they might play it. So having a coffee with Bell and "Smacka" one day... there was an American fighter called Joe 'Frisco, so Graeme said, "Oh well, we'll just switch that around." So we just happened to hit the market at the right time and I was selling about 500 78's a day! They were pressed by EMI at their pressing plant in Prahran. Then I worked at the ABC as sort of radio Presentation Officer. I worked for the ABC whereas the technicians worked for the PMG (Post Master General's Department). So working for the ABC, I wasn't allowed to touch controls or microphones. So even recording a piano... it had to be me as presentation officer and a technician. (Armstrong, interview, 29 September, 2004)



Roger Savage (right) was an institution at Armstrong Studios. Later he worked with Byron Kennedy and George Miller on the *Mad Max* movies. (Australian Motion Picture Yearbook 1983, photographer unknown)

While employed at the ABC as producer, Armstrong worked on quarter-hour programs for what was called The Light Music Department. The ABC at that time also had its Variety Department and actually employed a full time orchestra. Armstrong was involved in producing and recording many of these shows. His duties could vary and he recalls that even when the Sound Effects man went on holidays, he got that job as well!



An early 4-track EP by Melbourne's trad jazz pioneer, Graeme Bell.

In his next move, he secured the position of recording engineer at 3UZ, commencing in late 1955 and he worked on disc-cutting, radio commercials and recordings of the great radio programs of the era which went live to air. In 1956, on the eve of the Melbourne Olympic Games he became manager of W. & G. Records and was called on by Phillips Bell to supply the sound for the games main stadium, the MCG. Bill also conducted his own recording business at the time. He recalls the experience:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "In about 1955, I worked for Max Byer in Dorcas Street, South Melbourne who made tape machines... they were brilliant machines. At the time, stereo was just on the horizon and he made all the machines that the ABC used for the Olympic Games (1956). He made 200 of them for the Games and (he made) one machine with two decks and stereo heads which he used to lend it to me occasionally. (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

In his role as manager for W & G, he oversaw the creation of their West Melbourne recording facility. His first task was to find a place suitable to act as a recording studio. Few, if any studios existed and

most of those were housed within the radio stations. They were usually just small rooms and probably only the ABC's Broadcast House in Lonsdale Street would be considered big enough to record an orchestra. Built in a converted church building it was known as Studio 320.

In West Melbourne's top end of Kings Street, just opposite the Flagstaff Gardens in one of Melbourne's historical districts, he found a large church hall in the grounds of the Anglican Church of St. James. This building is one of Melbourne's oldest buildings, dating back to 1842 and the adjoining hall seemed to suit the purpose of recording.

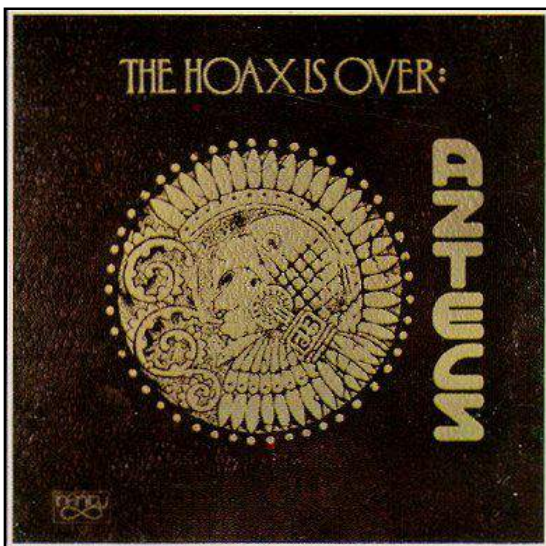
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Bill describes the brief he was given by W & G management to establish a W & G recording studio in Melbourne:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "...what happened was I kept putting out records and they didn't sell. I'd moved into 10" LP's and EP's but basically... I was going broke! As W & G were just starting up their record side of the business, they wanted someone to come in and supervise the cutting side. I had ordered a disc-cutting machine from Germany and that was about to arrive but I had run out of money. So it was convenient for both of us that they basically bought all of my equipment... and gave me a job there to run their recording department. So that was basically cutting mono masters from tapes coming in from ABC/Paramount in America ... and from other labels. So when they bought my stuff, they also bought all my portable recording equipment. So we could still go out to a hall and record... people like Ernie Sigley... or I'd hire a hall and supervise the recording there. So they wanted a permanent recording studio and I hunted around to find the appropriate hall or place so we found the hall behind St James Church in Kings Street which was vacant and attached to that was a pretty good carpark. I happened to know the Anglican Dean of Melbourne whose friend's church choir I'd recorded and we were able to negotiate a lease for the hall. We managed to build a box within the hall to isolate the noise. So at that time I got some helpful advice from the CSIRO acoustics people. So they helped me set that up because nobody seemed to know much about that stuff in those days (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)



One of a very talented bunch of engineers and recordists at Armstrong Studios - David McKay. (Everybody's magazine, 8 March, 1967



One of a number of ground-breaking albums recorded at Armstrong Studios - Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs - *The Hoax Is Over*.

In 1960, it was a return to radio for Armstrong who took on the task as manager of The Custom Recording Department at 3DB, again recording commercials for radio and TV. This came about because of a chance meeting at the time. Through this contact, Bill was offered the chance to work at the station:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "I was visiting a friend who was the studio manager with 3DB and he said, "come and work here and set up a custom recording operation." So that was about 1959, '60 or so. I went about recording commercials there and I also did work on Music For The People there. Then I got the job to record the Viscount cigarette commercials ... they actually employed The Victorian Symphony Orchestra and the only place big enough (to record it) was Telefil Studios in St. Kilda. It was while I was on this job there that Phillip Opus approached me and asked me to go and work for them." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Time to move on again and Bill took up this position in 1961 with **Telefil Sound Recording and Film Studios**, a place he had used in the past. It was established in a disused theatre complex in Acland Street, St. Kilda. As the industry began to expand, work increased and clients included the major labels - EMI, CBS and

RCA. Equipment too, began to reach new levels of sophistication and he imported one, two and four track Ampex recorders. Bill then set about the task of recording both radio commercials and potential hit music.

It was during his time at Telefil that Armstrong met **Roger Savage** who had married an Australian girl and was acting as a free-lance engineer when they worked on a couple of projects together at Telefil. Armstrong admits to having known little of **Roger Savage** who had already been active in the industry back in his native Britain. But, as Bill states, Savage blended into the rock 'n roll fraternity in Melbourne very well, whereas Bill's passion was for

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jazz. Savage had made something of a name for himself by his engineering work in England on some **Dusty Springfield** tracks and most importantly for his C.V., he engineered the early Rolling Stones track, *Come On*, a cover version of a **Chuck Berry** song which served to introduce The 'Stones to the world. Bill remembers working with **Roger Savage**:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "...at Telefil we did a number of recordings. I did Normie Rowe's, *It Ain't Necessarily So* and *I Belong With You* ... Bobby and Laurie. Now in this period, Roger Savage ...came to see me. I didn't know much about him... what he'd done. Being younger than me, he mingled into the rock 'n roll fold as a freelance engineer. People liked what he did and hired him as a producer and engineer. Then I had a bit of a disagreement with Telefil and I left them in mid-'65 and I worked from either home or other places I'd hire doing... well.. anything I could do to earn some money." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004).

A young **Mike Brady** who was already playing guitar and singing with firstly, **The Hearsemen**, then **The Phantoms** before moving on to form the influential **MPD Ltd** with Peter Watson and Danny Finlay, first came to Bill Armstrong's attention when he began hanging around Telefil's studios, just soaking up the atmosphere:

MIKE BRADY: "First of all, Bill was the first person I did any top-end recording with at that Telefil studios in St Kilda. Then he started his own studio, but before he started Telefil, Roger Savage came to Australia to join him. Then he started in Albert Road. Telefil's first employees were Wilma Reece, Roger Savage and Phil Webster – Wilma did the books, Roger was the recordist and Phil did the voice-overs. Phil in particular really encouraged me

so I just hung around there and I got a lot of session work. So that's why I was there all the time and I used to sing, 'We're all here for Hoadleys' Violet Crumble bars', for The Battle Of The Sounds. I did all those voices and sang on all those commercials and I think I got \$17.50 for a lead vocal and \$12.50 for a three-hour vocal session, and it was an exciting place to be." (Brady, op cit, 17 May, 2006)

Not all the bands and artists that recorded with Savage were known bands and not all recordings that were made went on to become huge hits. A relatively unknown band from Maryborough (Vic), **The Elois** had won their regional finals of The Battle Of The Sounds in 1966. They decided to try their luck with recording a single and they did this at Armstrongs. They recorded two songs, *I'm A Man* and *By My Side*, the "A" and "B" sides for their first release. The single was eventually released on W & G's IN Label in April, 1967 and made a medium impact on the Melbourne charts but was quickly swamped by the release of **The Spencer Davis Group's** version of *I'm A Man*.

The recording process even at that early stage at Armstrong's was fairly streamlined and the band paid for it all themselves, as lead guitarist Dennis Fiorini recalls:

DENNIS FIORINI: "We did the recording which we pretty much did straight off. We went to Bill Armstrong Studios and Roger Savage did a great job of it. Then it was just getting as much work as we could to promote the record.

We just walked in and did it. Eighty minutes it took and I thought that was an enormous amount of time until I realized that it took bands days and days to record. We paid for it ourselves – one dollar per minute! The result was fantastic. Then they took it and re-mixed it a bit, especially on the guitar sound and the feedback. They did quite a lot of work on that. It was there but they thickened it a lot with dubs and overdubs. They played around with it for two or three days.



Hans Poulsen, one of Bill Armstrong's most memorable characters had a hit with, *Rose Coloured Glasses* which Johnny Farnham also recorded. (Photographer unknown.)

We brought in our equipment and set up then we did our thing – it was all over pretty quickly. It was a two-take recording. I remember there was a bit of a stuff-up with the drumming. In fact there is a slight mistake on the record. The drummer wasn't a very good drummer so no one knows whether it was deliberate or not! He wasn't very into synchronisation. (Fiorini, author's interview, 1 November, 2005)

Armstrong Studios had been created in 1965, firstly in one small, single-terrace house in South Melbourne and quickly expanded into the adjoining terrace houses until there were four operational studios recording somewhere 238.

in the vicinity of 80 percent of Australia's recorded product. **The Easybeats** came down in 1965 to record *She's So Fine*. **Billy Thorpe's Aztecs** recorded *The Hoax Is Over* on which **Ern Rose** was the engineer/producer. All of **Spectrum/Indelible Murtceps** albums – *Spectrum, Part One, Milesago* and *Warts Up Your Nose* were recorded at Armstrong's during 1971 and 1972. This was only a small representation of the music that was recorded there.

Armstrong noted that in mid-1965, he had a disagreement with Telefil Management and left, not knowing what to do next. He took on any number of recording projects, just to earn enough money to live. He even recorded segments for radio broadcasting on country Victorian stations for The Wheatgrowers Association. He was living in outer suburban Blackburn at the time but decided to sell his house and rent a place in Inkerman Road, Caulfield while investigating the possibility of establishing and developing his own recording studio. But where? Some help was needed:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "My eldest brother was a builder and we did a map of Melbourne and pointed to where all the advertising agencies were, because that's where the money came from then. And we pinpointed the corner of Albert Road and Kingsway... a point that was equidistant from all of the agencies. Most (advertising agencies) at that point were in the city area, around Queens Road. There was no money in recording otherwise ... (but) radio



Progress in Albert Road, South Melbourne has ensured that multi-storied buildings now occupy the places where Bill Armstrong's single- and double-story Victorian terraces, once stood.

and television advertising was quite lucrative. So my brother and I spoke to the Town Planner in South Melbourne and he said to walk around in particular areas where recording studios were permitted. He said just to ask people. So I asked this old man mowing the lawn... Roy Hicks his name was... around about 100 Albert Road ...where I could find a place to set up a recording studio. As it turned out, he owned half the bloody street! He was a lovely man and I left my name and address with him and one day, his wife rang and said, "100 Albert Road is becoming vacant now and you can have it for 18 pounds a week". So that was the birth of Armstrong Studios and we opened the doors on 1 December, 1965." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Armstrong remembers that the very first job at The new Armstrong Studios was a Peters Ice Cream commercial with local band **The Strangers** organised by **John Farrar**. At this point the staff



Mike Brady went on to create such significant memories as *Up There Cazaly* for the then-VFL and Channel 7 football promotions. He also wrote (for better or for worse) *Shaddap You Face* for Joe Dolce. Brady was one of the first to work with Bill Armstrong.

consisted of Armstrong, engineer Savage who was working on engineering projects there part time, and Wilma Reece, employed as office manager. Not long after moving in, **Ern Rose** joined the staff and they all set about the task of turning 'number 100' into a fully operational recording facility:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "... 100 Albert Road was just a single-story cottage. As you went in, through the passage to the kitchen out back, there were a number of rooms. When I leased the building, I rang up Ted, my brother ... and he took all his blokes off a site and went "whack"... put in acoustic panels, control room, windows... At one point he said, "...where's the permit?" I said, "What permit?... oh...it's on the way. It's a retrospective one!" We knocked down one wall to make a studio and this one was the one we recorded The Easybeats and LRB

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(Little River Band), The Masters Apprentices and all of the Fable stuff in. It was about 20 feet by 30 feet and we set it up with mono equipment and quickly brought in a 2-track machine followed by an Ampex 4-track recorder. Then I bought a couple more Ampex 4-trackers then a Scully 8-track machine." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Progressively, and quite rapidly, the studio began to expand. Even newer machines were imported; shipped in by air freight from the U.S.A. Soon, the two-storey terrace house at 96 Albert Road became available and Armstrong rented that. Then, there came further expansion, with the burgeoning studio taking up leases on adjoining or nearby properties as time went by. All were converted in some way for the recording business but some were used as office space:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "100 Albert Road was the main studio then 96 became available which was a two-storey place. So I had 96, 100, 110, 112 and 118... and I also had one behind in 65 Palmerston Crescent. So we ended up

with the eight-tracker in 100...and one in Palmerston Crescent, a 4-track in 110, doing commercials and the flat upstairs at 112 was my office. It was becoming ridiculous because we had illegal cables... like about an inch and a half thick and other cables and telephone lines going between the buildings. So we had illegal telephone and program lines ... and if we wanted to dub from eight-track to eight-track we had to play it in 100 Albert Road and send it around to Palmerston Crescent!" (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Armstrong Studios operated a two-pronged business. There was the recording side which Bill looked after and then there was the commercial side which produced mostly advertising jingles. Bill remembers the reciprocal deal he had with those such as Farrar, **Mike Brady** and **Peter Best** and their staff involved in advertising industry work. He would offer them free office space and telephones in return for the exclusive rights to their recording work, which he was most interested in. Despite their different interests, the Armstrong studio crew were quite close and an interwoven group in those days. Bill recalls some of the talented musos who passed through the Albert Road complex and later at Bank Street, South Melbourne:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "Hans Poulsen...Brian Cadd... we were all like a big family at that stage. Johnny Farnham. How Farnham got involved was he had a band called Strings Unlimited and there were the Susan Jones commercials for Ansett-ANA and the suggestion was to use Farnham on those. Then David McKay from Sydney had this funny song... a demo.. from America, *Sadie The Cleaning Lady*, then he (Farnham) got to do that and then signed up to EMI." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Poulsen recorded his hit, *Rose Coloured Glasses* at Armstrongs and he stands out in Bill's memory:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "I always remember Hans Poulsen... he used to drive a yellow Mini Moke and had his beret and his goatee beard. We often wondered how he got anywhere because he often drove along totally oblivious to all the other cars on the road... a lovely little bloke." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)



Captain Matchbox Whoopie Band during a chaotic recording session at Armstrongs. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique.)

And then there was **Ian 'Molly' Meldrum!** There has been circulating a number of stories and myths surrounding 'Molly' 's expertise in the field, but Bill states that he definitely fulfilled the requirements as producer, despite some doubts raised on his activities and abilities. Meldrum himself has confirmed the importance of the opportunity which Armstrong gave him to learn the procedures and processes associated with producing a record. He was very keen on the idea of becoming a producer an "apprenticed" himself to **Roger Savage** who taught him some of the basics of operating the control panel.

Probably Meldrum's most famous project was with **Russell Morris' *The Real Thing*** which has become one of those landmark singles in Australian music history. The story of the recording of *The Real Thing* offers one of those classic episodes in Australian recording history and it is probably the most publicised track to be recorded at

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Armstrong's. Written by **Johnny Young** while in England with Morris in 1969, many have eluded to the similarities between it and **Donovan's *Hurdy Gurdy Man*** yet the end product stands in a category of its own. **Russell Morris** is certain that Young had in mind a different song on which to model his tune:

RUSSELL MORRIS: "Roger Hicks from The Zoot played on it. Roger was a classical player and he was the one



Former lead singer with Somebody's Image, Russell Morris had the perfect voice to record *The Real Thing*. With Ian 'Molly' Meldrum taking over as producer, the record took way too long to finish and began to go way over budget – but it became a national hit anyway.

who came up with that magical intro, because the way Johnny Young wrote it, it was 'Pictures Of Matchstick Men' (Status Quo, 1968). That's what the song was and Roger changed it and Ian changed it too. Yeah... Hurdy Gurdy Man – very similar – same chord progression. Maybe Johnny Young got away with a few things in those days because nobody sued you for this." (Morris, op cit, 22 May, 2006)

In its original form, *The Real Thing* was definitely intended by Young to be a much shorter and more conventional song, the lyrics of which were really a side-swipe at commercialism and Coca-Cola advertising. However in the studio, it became an epic recording task, where successive workings and re-workings altered the very structure of the song from its original beginnings.

John Sayers and **Ian Meldrum** both held their own visions for the mix and each didn't always necessarily equate to the other or to Morris' own concept for the piece. Meldrum, in a 1972 interview explained his early concerns with the recording:

IAN MELDRUM: "... Russell Morris, Somebody's Image' singer asked me to manage him and also be his record producer. We looked around for songs and Hans Poulsen was "in" at that stage ... so we recorded three of Hans' songs but they didn't seem to be right for Russell... I fell in love with "The Real Thing". I don't know why. I just did. So we had to talk Youngie (Johnny Young) into giving us that song, because he'd promised it to somebody else but we finally talked him into it. By this time, Howard Gable had come over from New Zealand to replace David McKay. Howard and I had a few hassles at the time and Howard took over Russell's sessions and said he was dropping "The Real Thing". ... I was pretty furious about it (so) I raced down to Lorne where The Groop was playing and said come up and please back us on the record. So they came up and through Brian's (Cadd) piano and Richard's (Wright) drumming they made it so good. We recorded it." (Meldrum, interview with Dean Moriarty, *Planet*, 9 February, 1972, P.7).

The musicians assembled in the studio for the sessions present an impressive list and is befitting of the eventual single. As well as Meldrum's and Morris' mates from **The Groop**, Cadd and Wright, they called in **Ronnie Charles** to do backing vocals. **Don Mudie** was on bass and these musicians formed the core. Added to the mix was **John Farrar** who was completing a lot of session work at Armstrongs at the time, Hicks and vocalist **Maureen Elkner**.

Recorded as a series of segments, the musicians began to jam and flesh out many of the segments and both Sayers and Meldrum liked what they heard and encouraged more experimentation:

RUSSELL MORRIS: "In the end, the length of the record was an accident. The band, once they finished playing, went into a jam and Ian just said, 'Let them go, we'll fade it!' Then after he listened to it, he said, 'Hang on...that

sounds like a good idea', so he came up with the idea and I thought he was *nuts*... He said, 'We're going to make it a big, epic record and we're going to put all these sounds on it.' I said, 'WHAT!!! For three minutes? !!! Where are you going to find sound effects for three minutes???' And he said, 'I'll do it.' And he was right. He was the total architect of that whole record.

Without 'Molly' that record wouldn't have been what it was. They remixed that ending hundreds of times. Some things were fortuitous accidents... such as the piano break ... that was an accident. We were sitting there and the engineer punched out all the other instruments and that piano just there, and he left only the high hat and the piano in. We all went, "Whhhhaat!!! That's fantastic!!! It was John Sayers." (Morris, op cit 22 May, 2006)

The result; a spacey, epic, part-psychedelic Aussie masterpiece which has stood the test of time. Analytically,
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The Real Thing is a song of four parts, far removed from **Johnny Young's** original concept. Young himself, voluntarily stayed away from the recording session so as not to interfere with the process. The end result was a unique creation, with a gradual and floating beginning, a second part which gets moving and incorporates choral singers and sitars, a third segment which introduces echoes and the final stanza that becomes like a sound mixers nightmare sending the song off into astrospace only to explode high above the earth. Never straightforward, the behind-the-scenes and recording studio shenanigans certainly matched the epic nature of the finished product:

RUSSELL MORRIS: "When you listen to the second verse, there's another accident which occurred. I was trying to sing it and Ian said, "I want you to sing it *differently!*" I said, 'How?' He said, 'Let me go in and try and sing it.' We all groaned, 'ooohhhhh!' So they played it and he started singing and we were laying on the floor laughing. He came back and said, "Oh, stop it!!! You know what I mean!" I said, 'No, I don't... but I'll give it a go.' And I sang it and they said to come in and have a listen to it. But... they had forgotten to erase Ian's voice... and if you listen very carefully, you can hear Ian's voice behind me and it sounds like my voice is phased! And it was so bizarre we went... , 'That's so unusual, it works! Leave it in.'

And the end, that's actually off a Nazi record. Ian did that... 'We'll fight them on the land, we'll fight them on the beaches'... Winston Churchill. That's Ian. We had tapes from Dick Hemmings at 3XY – he actually collected Nazi memorabilia. So Ian was the one who said, 'we're going to put all these Nazi things in'. And I said, 'Ian, I don't know if that's a good idea! (Morris, op cit, 22 May, 2006)

As Morris elaborates, when the recording was finally completed late one night at Albert Road, Meldrum, fuelled by a few drinks, ran around in a hysterical frenzy clutching the master tapes while they all awaited the executives from Sydney who were flying into Melbourne to collect the finished tapes. Apparently at one point Meldrum ran across Albert Road and hid in the lakeside golf course opposite Armstrong Studios. He kept repeating, "...they'll hate it, they'll hate it!":

RUSSELL MORRIS: "Ian panicked and didn't want them (EMI executives) to hear it – he thought they wouldn't like it, so he ran off with it. We had to go and search for him on the golf course. We found him with torches. We brought him back and they played it ... *and they hated it!* He was right. Strangely enough ... Bill Armstrong denies this happened, ... Bill Armstrong said to me one day, 'That never happened' I said, 'Yes it did, Bill' 'No, it never happened!!!' I said, 'It did, Bill! He was terrified that someone was going to take his tapes out of the studio and run off with them...

The only reason we got any airplay on it was because Ian and I got into a car and drove to Sydney and saw the main program managers at the (radio) stations. So we got in there and played them the song and they said, 'FANTASTIC, we'll play it.'" So we got them to tell EMI that they'd play it and EMI finally released it." (Morris, op cit, 22 May, 2006)

Eventually, radio and the buying public disagreed with the EMI head honchos' assessment and rightly so, making *The Real Thing* into an Aussie superhit. Bill Armstrong, who wasn't there on the final night realised that they all had been under a great deal of pressure:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "Cliff Baxter, the manager from EMI had a budget of... I'm guessing... around \$2000 for this. The thing was getting out of hand in terms of time spent and the bill was going up and up. Then Cliff said, "...that's it. Just get it finished and bar Meldrum from coming into the studios!" But he eventually got over the back fence ... even over the barbed wire we had there for security ... ripping his pants." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

In the end, *The Real Thing* was to both define and haunt **Russell Morris** for decades.

Finally, there is no doubt about the importance of Armstrong Studios in the period of its operation at the two sites, Albert Road and Bank Street. **Bill Armstrong** is a true pioneer of the Australian recording industry, but with typical modesty, he credits those around him and those who worked with him as the real achievers – and this may be so, however, his expertise and foresight are the keys to the success of this Melbourne institution:

BILL ARMSTRONG: "... I couldn't play an instrument but I could record and I knew a bit about microphones... things were pretty simple in those days. I suppose though, looking back, the thing I did was to have a great enthusiasm to record anything in good quality, regardless of whether it was my music or not. I strove to have the best quality you could get, associated with the best engineers... people who made the best equipment or who could advise, like Ern Rose or Roger Savage. I think I created a situation where I was able to give a lot of very good people an opportunity to get in and do recording or production." (Armstrong, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

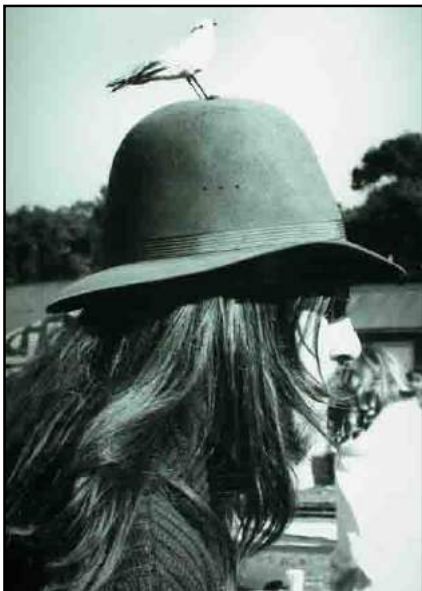
242.

Bani and Hugh McSpedden - Entrepreneurs and artists

Bani - born

Hugh - born

While it was the musicians who impacted most on the Melbourne music scene in the decades of progressive rock,



The bottom half of The Leaping McSpeddens - Hugh. His light shows were revolutionary in Melbourne. He is pictured at Sunbury, 1975. Courtesy of Hugh McSpedden.)

no story of Melbourne at this time should be without mention of **Hugh** and **Bani McSpedden** who were both unique fixtures around the venues. They were performers of sorts, having **The Leaping McSpeddens** up on stage at The T.F.Much Ballroom in the early 'seventies. They were a juggling and balancing act adding variety to the evenings' performances although Hugh has admitted that they were never serious performers, just out to have a bit of fun. Bani, of course, was co-organiser of The T.F. Much with **John Pinder**. The early Leaping McSpeddens performances at The T.F.Much really just evolved from an 'on the spot idea':

BANI McSPEDDEN: "...that grew out of a concert John (Pinder) had done in Canberra – he'd done a kind of rock circus. There was a lull between getting bands on. Hugh was there doing the lighting and John said to me, 'why don't you and Hugh go on and do something ridiculous? Keep them amused while this band's setting up.' So the idea of The Leaping McSpeddens was conceived, 'on the spot', backstage in a caravan. Five minutes after we had the idea, we were on. It was a complete accident, as a lot of things in life are. It was a completely un-thought out thing which

people kind of responded to." (B. McSpedden, author's interview, 14 March, 2006)

HUGH McSPEDDEN: "In the early days (of only 2 Leaping McSpedden Brothers) Bani would

explain to the audience our next death defying stunt then we'd do it. But it was mostly variations on him leaping onto my back, and balancing there whilst the audience applauded! Oh, how I craved a bit of glory! But I was barely more than a footstool! I felt like a stool! Then we'd do a blind-fold leap which involved me being thoroughly blind-folded, before getting down on all-fours to be walked all over, again! But then I'd get up, somewhat disoriented, and bow to the audience in the wrong direction!" (H. McSpedden, email interview, 19 September, 2004)

The McSpeddens only performed at The T.F. Much and at **Daddy Cool's** Farewell Concert and Welcome Home concert and the act was expanded to include some "non-organic" McSpeddens, **Eric Wolstonecroft** and **David Lancashire**, two advertising industry friends of Bani. They also performed the opening title for a children's TV show called, *Do It*, spelling



An expanded Leaping McSpeddens at The T.F. Much Ballroom, Fitzroy. (Courtesy of Harley Parker)

out the letters with their bodies. In true form, Hugh describes the act as, "something you did when you were stoned for the first time and trying to keep a straight face in front of relatives!" The "heads" at the Ballroom loved the absurdity of the act and Hugh comments on his favourite part:

HUGH McSPEDDEN: "my favourite act I was not even involved in, but Bani was supposed to run and dive thru a hoop and headfirst into a bucket of water! In actuality Bani, clad in a bathing costume and rubber bathing cap, ran and sprang into the air, to be caught by the other 3, who thrust a hoop over his head, worked it over his body, then thrust a bucket of water onto his head! (maybe you had to be there!)" (H. McSpedden, author's email interview, 15 December, 2004)

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Hugh's career goes well beyond the exploits of **The Leaping McSpeddens** and leads us into the mystic, dazzling and trance-inducing world of psychedelic light shows which many would remember around this city and suburbs. He began a fascination with light projection which has progressed throughout the decades. A country boy, Hugh had experienced problems with congenital Nerve Deafness and in the less tolerant education system of the 'fifties, found that no-one understood the problem and he received little help or support from his teachers. Hugh also



A familiar sight around town in the early 'seventies – Hugh's Kombi which he used to transport his lighting equipment to discos, dances and festivals. (Courtesy of Hugh McSpedden)

suffered from a string of other illnesses and these, along with the family's move to the city, caused him to miss quite a lot of time at school. Hugh admits that being without proper support was the cause of learning difficulties which set in as he progressed further through school. After leaving school early Hugh drifted in and out of a number of jobs, none successful until he felt as if he was losing the plot. A visit to a psychiatrist proved to be a life changing experience for Hugh when he was prescribed LSD -50 to assist him with seeing the world "in a new light" – in fact in a whole new psychedelic light for that matter! It's difficult for us to understand today that in 1964, LSD was not a banned drug and considered highly beneficial for some emotional and anxiety problems.

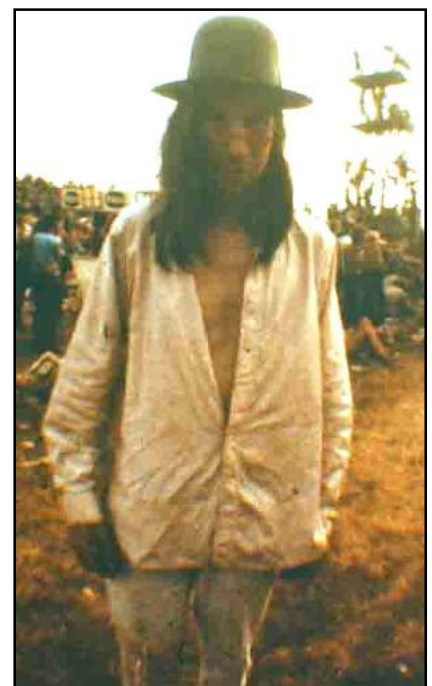
However, it opened up a whole new universe:

HUGH McSPEDDEN: "He told me I could expect to see my surroundings in rainbow colours. "Sounds nice" thought I!.....He neglected to mention that for the first few lifetimes I'd get a roller coaster tour of the parallel universes, returning just in time to witness my very being reborn and rebored, melted and vaporized, inhaled and absorbed, reconstituted

and pixelated, and poured back into my light body thru the funnel of love, each grain of sound representing an incarnation in the saxophonographical user interface of life and limbo some more as we sing some all enveloping jasmine centred nectar of the gods imbibing dichroic bubble juice till my wiffle wafted out the window to become one with the girl-next-door in a spontaneously combusting arabesquimo becoming and begoing on holidays with her house-trained Ornithorhynchus, Scooter, signing "Get well soon, Otto" and behold, "I saw things in a new light" (H. McSpedden quoted in, www.pooterland.com, Edison Light Show)

Hugh, that must have been one helluva trip!

From 1968 onwards, Hugh ran *The Edison Light Show* after becoming fascinated with large scale light projection both inside and outside. He came up with the *Edison Light Show* name which had a more psychedelic ring to it and because most people could not remember "McSpedden". His first camera was an old Super 8 Movie camera on which he began to shoot his



Hugh as he was at Sunbury, '75. (Courtesy of Hugh McSpedden)

own experimental movies. His first was titled, *Certain Things* which ran for twenty or so minutes:

HUGH McSPEDDEN: " ... (It was) crammed with depth, meaning, prismatic colour and distorted superimposed imagery." (H. McSpedden, op cit, www.pooterland.com)

His second movie was shot at some of the early outdoor rock festivals around the country during 1968 to 1969 and as Hugh admits, it was also a "little trippy with lots of superimposed images." However, Hugh became more fascinated with actually projecting movies onto buildings and walls rather than shooting them and began to experiment with projecting his Super 8 movies onto the soaring church steeple of the Catholic Church across

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the road from where he was living in Fitzroy. And then it was on to playing with images, movement and pattern to see what effects he could create with light and projection equipment. Even at only 50 watts of power, people around loved it, according the Hugh. From there he bought an Aldis 500 watt projector and using pieces from an old Meccano set, attached 7 inch rotating Perspex or glass wheels. When Hugh took his newly discovered technology inside, places like The T. F. Much Ballroom, he found that his patterns of light worked well for light shows in discos around the city and suburbs. Using what was basically home projection equipment that he had



A bewildered Hugh is assisted to his feet by Bani – all part of the act on stage at The T.F. Much. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique.)

adapted for a forty-foot wall rather than a four-foot screen, he found that by further experimentation, he could adapt his system to project moving psychedelic images behind musicians on stage. One problem that he faced was competition from the stage lights that all musicians wanted trained on them. Remember that this technology was all new – not something that had been bought and tested for use in discos. Hugh explains the problems he faced:

HUGH McSPEDDEN: "I acquired a vintage Cinema Carbon Arc Projector housing, (a 1919 Zeiss) A.C. mechanism, elliptical mirror and a Transarc for \$40. I managed to get some 7mm A/C Carbons, and made a rough frame to support the housing and some big lenses, etc. The housing & leads were covered in asbestos & all the terminals were bare and it actually took me a few weeks to overcome the techno? fear and turn it on! Then I had to make an exhaust for it to remove the nasty carbon dust! The Light output was SCARY! So, what to

PROJECT?

Any glass or film or plastic etc that I put into it lasted about 2 secs then shattered or exploded or dissolved producing voluminous clouds of toxic smoke. After cooking some clock mechanisms I had a brainwave. I sussed out perforated metals seeking the smallest pattern I could find, which just happened to be tiny (POLKA Dots!" (H. McSpedden,op cit, www.pooterland.com)

From this point onwards, throughout the period when Hugh re-named his company **The Giant Edison Screw**, he gained a reputation for not only his light shows held indoors, but also for polka-dotting large and small buildings, weather balloons, beaches and even fog ... yes... fog! Hugh began seriously doing lightshows when he met cameraman and animator, **Eddy Van Der Madden**. And as well as taking his show to smaller discos, he also did the larger outdoor light shows throughout the seventies. He lists the artists – local and overseas – he has worked with over the years:



HUGH McSPEDDEN: "John Mayall, Tangerine Dream, Buckwheat Zydeco, Spirit, AC/DC, Split Enz, Colin Hay (pre "Men at Work"), Renee Geyer, Jeff Crozier's Rock & Roll Magic Show, Max Merritt & The Meteors, Billy Thorpe (& the Aztecs), Daddy Cool, Spectrum/Murtceps, McKenzie Theory, Sanctuary,

A Hugh McSpedden light show – this one for MacKenzie Theory's live recording session at TCS Studios, Richmond in May, 1973. (Photographer, David Few)

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Captain Matchbox, Banana Fish, Tamam Shud, Country Radio, Company Caine, Lipp Arthur / Lipp and the Double Decker Bros., Skyhooks, Sherbet, Caesars Palace, Waak Waak, Jungi, Al Jadida and 100 others....." (H. McSpedden, op cit, www.pooterland.com)



Thoroughly and elegantly in control – Bani McSpedden went on to become one of the owners of the re-opened Ballroom – The Much More. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

Hugh McSpedden, who carried his light shows and present company, **Humania**, into the ‘nineties and beyond is a true character of the Melbourne scene who should be recognised for his pioneering light show work. His light shows in recent years have illuminated the chimney of the Newport Power Station and The Melbourne Exhibition Centre. Although not a performer in the true sense of the word, as a light show technician nevertheless he brought a whole new world of light, colour and performance to the disco and live music scene.

Hugh’s brother Bani would appear to be his antithesis – whereas Hugh is tall, Bani has a more stocky build and both have found their successes in different fields of endeavour. Hugh has continued his love affair with creative lighting techniques whereas Bani has since successfully shifted into advertising and creative writing since moving from the Melbourne scene.

Both Hugh and Bani were the sons of the **Rev. William McSpedden**, a Church of England minister who at one time was appointed to the parish of Drouin, in central Gippsland. Bani attended University High School in Carlton but left before completing HSC because he had been offered a cadetship in journalism with The Age.

Bani by now had a strong interest in music, particularly jazz and he had already played piano in a jazz trio and on joining The Age, found that he was thrust into the pop arena by accident:

BANI McSPEDDEN: "I joined The Age when I was about seventeen and because no one else there was doing it, I started to do pop music reviews. So in fact in that period, I covered a lot of people from Ray Charles to The Rolling Stones. It was a brilliant period and I sort of inserted myself into it because at that time, The Age wasn't covering that sort of music ... it was covering classical but not really doing much in the pop area. (McSpedden, author's interview, op cit, 14 March, 2006)

After a stint in London, he returned to Melbourne only to find that this city had become rather quiet after the frantic beat invasion period and the city and suburban discotheques had begun to wane – the first phase of the progressive Melbourne scene was becoming a little tired and worn:

BANI McSPEDDEN: "It seemed quite quiet because the discotheque phase was busy indeed... and a lot of fun. But needless to say, the discotheques tended to be smaller venues and they came and went fairly fast.



In 1972, Spectrum was one of the favourite acts at The Much More Ballroom. Bani and friend show off the album, Milesago. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique)

And smaller venues don't afford the bands the opportunity to make much of a living... and you really need volume or numbers in order to look after bands. But most importantly, the real reason I became involved with promotion was not because I suddenly thought I wanted to, but my brother was doing lights at that time for a lot of bands. What had happened was that Cliff

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Hocking had decided to open a venue in Melbourne and Hugh was going to do some of the lights for that and for some reason, that fell apart. I was very disappointed by that... times were tough, not only for bands but for Hugh. Then I met John Pinder and we decided, somehow jointly, to do something... not a big decision, it just happened." (McSpedden, author's interview, op cit, 14 March, 2006)



John Pinder (left) and Bani McSpedden. Their partnership allowed the Much More Ballroom to operate as the second phase to the immensely popular T.F. Much Ballroom.

Ballroom. He felt that Cathedral Hall was still the obvious venue to use as the former patrons knew it so well and so, he managed to convince Pinder to embark on a second phase of the Ballroom – this time not offering as much offence to the Church hierarchy by calling their new dance, The Much More Ballroom. To all intents and purposes, little was to change with the program offered and many young patrons were quickly drawn back noticing few alterations except for the name.

Bani had been able to use a little influence in getting approval to re-open a youth dance again. His father had been the Church of England chaplain at nearby Pentridge Prison and there had become friends with his Catholic colleague, **Father John Brosnan**, whose chaplaincy at the prison had seen him become the personal priest to **Ronald Ryan**, the last man to be hanged in Victoria. Brosnan was to administer his last rights on his execution inside the goal in 1965. Father Brosnan was able to supply Bani with the names of the appropriate contacts inside the Church hierarchy to speak to.

So with Pinder supplying the enthusiasm and drive and McSpedden conducting business end of the venue, The Ballroom prospered again for a short, but second glorious period where all types of music and mayhem abounded, on a three or four- weekly basis. The ballroom again became the place to be and for musicians now firmly pushing the envelope with their experimental rock music, THE place to play in during the early 'seventies in Melbourne.

Until its final closure in early 1973, both Pinder and **Bani McSpedden** shared the planning and running of the nights. At one point, as well as acting as part of the Leaping McSpeddens and conducting his Edison Light Show, Hugh became a partner in the business, but found the whole thing just too onerous.

Bani had been impressed with the music scene he had seen overseas and began looking for an opportunity to put together a venue which would present a variety of acts and music. Although he visited The Fillmore in San Francisco, he does not believe that it influenced his planning. **John Pinder** had already commenced his T.F. Much Ballroom operating somewhat infrequently from the expansive Cathedral Hall in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. But after operating for about twelve months there, it began to run foul of the Catholic Church authorities who become a little suspicious of the activities at The Ballroom – time to close it down. Even the name smacked of indecency.

Although the T.F. Much became just a memory, the concept that it created and the interest which still existed amongst young people, wasn't quite dead and on meeting Pinder, **Bani McSpedden** outlined his thoughts and dreams of possibly reviving The



Bani's adventures overseas - real or imagined - often featured in Go-Set, where he became more or less, a correspondent.

Most around town would label The Much More Ballroom definitely a “pot venue”, and it became well-known for this in an era when marijuana smoking was on the increase with students who came to the Ballroom. But Bani didn’t see this as a problem. His main concern was to create a unique venue for a unique bunch of people:

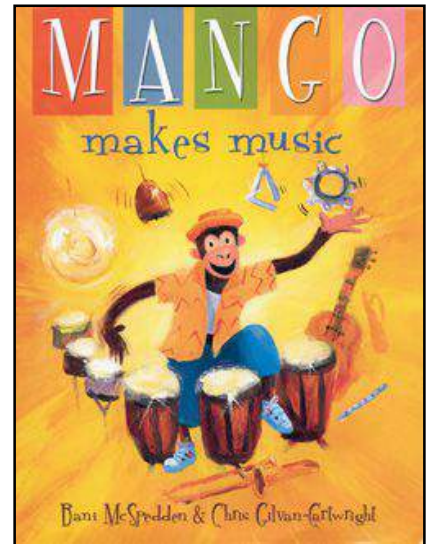
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BANI McSPEDDEN: “The fact of the matter is that you didn’t have to be into anything to enjoy The Ballroom. I personally have never been into “anything”. I’ve never been a fan of marijuana – I haven’t even tried it. So it wasn’t the intention but I think what was the intention was to cater to people who were gentle, thoughtful and at the time, I think a lot of these people enjoyed marijuana. I can’t say that it was ‘thick in the hall’ – that would be wrong, but I also say that there were people who recall that being the case. It wasn’t that I tuned deliberately out to it, it was just something that was so prevalent all over the place that I thought, there is no point in being hypocritical about it. If it’s going to happen, it’s going to happen. It never became an issue. In the times and in our most outrageous act, we’d feature draft dodgers who would come and make an appearance on stage. That meant that there was a police presence – they’d either wait for them or come later. There was never any problem with drugs of any kind, but mind you, there were no hard drugs. These were pretty gentle times compared with today. We were never raided – we never had that problem, but on the other hand, I would acknowledge that there would be people who would say, well.. hey....!! (McSpedden, author’s interview, op cit, 14 March, 2006)

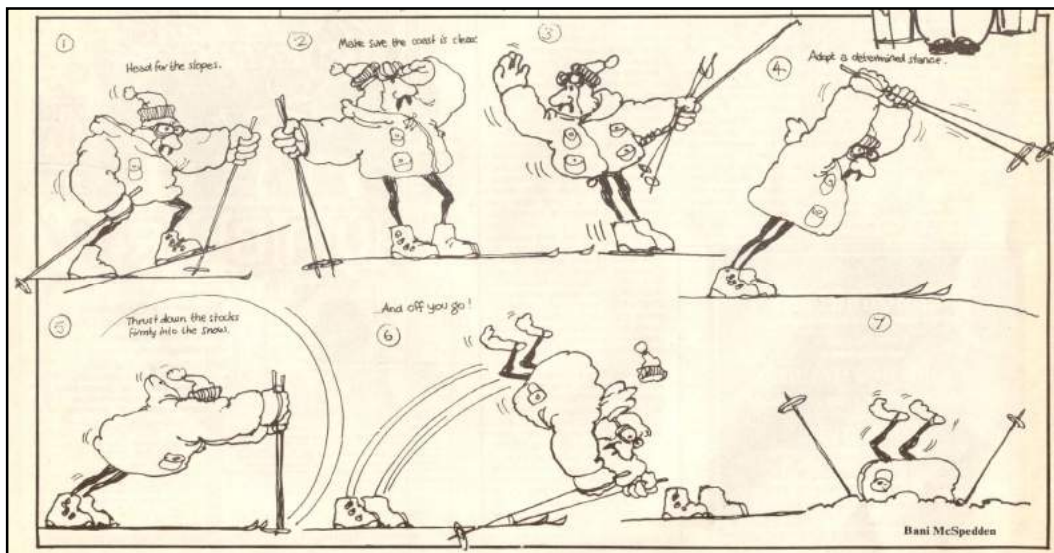
Following the closure of the ballroom, **John Pinder** left for Britain for a short time and on his return, began to concentrate on his other interests with the Let It Be agency and in 1974, he opened up yet another stage of Ormond Hall’s flirtation with the new rock music creating the renowned Reefer Cabaret in 1974 which continued a succession of successful popular music dances. When this venue closed, he went on to establish a new institution in Melbourne, a permanent home for comedy at The Last Laugh – a cabaret and theatre restaurant catering for all types of comedy acts.

As for **Bani McSpedden**, he has continued in advertising and developed an interest in writing children’s books. Possibly his best known work is the humorous book, *Successories - A Biased Guide to the Best of Everything Australia*, published in 1986. Since 1991, he has engaged children with his book, *Mango Makes Music*, an illustrated story about a monkey that moves to the city.

In 1980, **Bani McSpedden** moved to Sydney and joined with author **Peter Carey**, creating the advertising firm, McSpedden Carey Advertising Consultants. Carey had been best known as a Booker Prize winner for his 1988 novel, *Oscar and Lucinda* as well as his research into the Ned Kelly saga. Most recently, McSpedden, was still involved in the creative advertising industry and is credited with the successful television advertising campaign for John West and is credited with the tag, “It’s the fish John West rejects that makes John West the best.”



Another of Bani McSpedden’s creations, this time for primary school kids, Mango the lively monkey.



Jeff (Geoff) Duff – “Beelzebub in fish-net stockings.” Born – 30 October 1956 (his “stage age”).

“If ever there was a performer in this crazy industry who was innocence and knowing all in one, a perpetual outsider and a Peter Pan, it’s Jeff Duff...and that’s why the angel wings that have adorned a lot of his publicity photos and CD artwork make a lot of sense too. A fallen angel perhaps and perhaps not. Maybe he’s a creation of Wim Wenders circa ‘Wings of Desire’ and he doesn’t know it. (Michael Smith, sub-editor, Drum Media)

In a time when being outrageous was just becoming par for the course in suburban and city venues around Melbourne, punters in the clubs and pubs thought they had seen it all – that is until a band named **Kush** hit the stages. In the early ‘seventies, androgyny and cross-gender images were something that were to “arrive” on the world scene years later with **David Bowie** (and his creation, “Ziggy Stardust”) and **Lou Reed’s** mystifying persona and perhaps, **Iggy Pop**. Yet in Melbourne in the early seventies, **Jeff** (or as he was known then - **Geoff**) **Duff**, lead singer with **Kush** was creating an all-out assault on the senses and was fully testing the bounds of what was acceptable and decent behaviour in public in these shifting times.



No one else could come up with anything to shock the senses like Jeff Duff. This outfit was too much for the citizens of Ballarat and he was charged with indecency while wearing it on stage there in 1975. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber – Australian Rock Folio)

His band which formed in 1971, lasted with a few changes here and there until 1975. Always an eight or nine piece jazz-rock band with influences from **Blood, Sweat and Tears**, **Kush** differed from many bands which played similar jazz-rock fusion by incorporating an often bizarre stage act which almost, thanks to Duff, took the emphasis away from the actual music they were playing. In this way, they were probably more like **The Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band** than perhaps **SCRA** or **Heart ‘n’ Soul**, on the Australian scene.

Jeff Duff was a Melbourne boy, brought up in the leafy suburb of Canterbury and at the age of fourteen, was sneaking out to go to the discotheques which were flourishing in the city as the Melbourne music scene gathered momentum in the late ‘sixties. While at primary school, he developed a distressing case of pleurisy which cost him nearly a year at school. When he recovered, his doctors advised his parents to, “let Jeffrey run wild!” In response to this unprecedented freedom, Duff channelled his efforts into a number of

sports, becoming proficient at footy, cricket and hockey. The Duff household in Canterbury offered Jeff a fair share of music and as he hit secondary school, like many adolescents, he was influenced by the music being played on radio and on records. It was inevitable that he tried this out too:

JEFF DUFF: “As for music, I remember loving ballads – The Righteous Brothers and The Walker Brothers and of course, there was early Frank Sinatra ... my father used to play Frank Sinatra. In our house we used to listen to anything that was happening. The girls of the day; Peggy Lee, The Chiffons, The Supremes ... all those girly groups. I remember that I made a kit of drums when I was about ten, because I was very good at art and I entered them in a craft competition and won that competition. The prize was to appear on a children’s television show and I did and started playing drums. (Duff, author’s interview, 17 June, 2006)

He was also intrigued with costume and its power to transform someone into an entirely different personality. Soon, he began creating his own costumes – both to wear on stage and also to go to the discotheques of the day, even though he was clearly underage. At the local hang-outs like The Circle Ballroom (later Lord John's) in Maling Road, Canterbury, he peeled and served oranges and worked in the cloak room on Saturday nights. However, he had also discovered that sitting on his drum stool limited him a bit as he joined with other classmates over time, in the formation of a few school bands:

JEFF DUFF: "I did the art course at Box Hill Tech. and I was in a band when I was 12, playing drums and singing. So the first year there, my band which was called WHY, we played at the school assembly, (we were always told by the principal that we were too loud). I was in a number of bands at Box Hill until I was about 14 or 15. How long did I last there? Oh gee... not too long because I wanted to do a proper art course so I went to Swinburne. I was playing drums in these bands and after a while, I got sick of sitting down. And also, I was making my own clothes and thinking I was pretty groovy ... so I was sneaking out of home at that stage and attending all these clubs like The Thumpin'Tum. And I remember my parents saying, "you're not going out dressed like that!" ... but I did anyway." (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

His interest in art and live performance did eventually lead him to Swinburne Technical College which, throughout this time was the hub of art, architecture and design for students and a number of future musicians had similar interests in mind, including Madder Lake's Brenden Mason and Kerry McKenna who also enrolled there. The mixture of music and art was to Duff's liking and it was here that he encountered a band which would form the basis of the future **Kush**. However at this time, they were mainly a Big Band orchestra with a strong horn section



A very early Kush line-up, possibly about 1971 with Jeff Duff, far left. Note the hint of outrageousness already apparent in his pose for the camera. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Jeff Duff)

which had originally been with **The Barry Veith Big Band** playing no where in particular and in an effort to update, worked on a sound similar to the jazz-rock fusion of America's **Blood, Sweat and Tears**. To do this, they would need to find a singer and one fateful afternoon, Jeff Duff arrived to audition:



The full band – live – with their infectious jazz-rock sound coupled with outrageous stage antics not normally associated with the Blood, Sweat and Tears-style fusion of the two forms. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Jeff Duff)

JEFF DUFF: "They were rehearsing at the Shell offices in Glenferrie. I remember that Roger Pell, his father was managing-director of Shell Australasia at the time and we would rehearse in their offices. I remember they weren't called Kush at the time, they were just a whole lot of top Melbourne horn players at the time which started out as an instrumental big band. ... and Blood, Sweat and Tears was just happening. So they decided to call themselves Kush at the time which was a piece by Dizzy Gillespie, the jazz trumpeter and they decided to audition for singers. It probably would have been advertised in *Go-Set* and gee... I was only seventeen at that time." (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

They may have wondered just how they were going to fit this oddly dressed chameleon into a serious band when Duff turned up for the audition wearing a diamond tiara, tight mini-dress and stiletto shoes, however as Duff

recalls, it was his voice which took their interest and it blended immediately into the band's requirements for a singer:

JEFF DUFF: Yeah... rockin' up, half in drag, but I got the gig because of my voice, because I was a singer. I remember the audition because I sang The Letter ... and Spinning Wheel. They were after someone... you know
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...a cross between David Clayton-Thomas and Joe Cocker. They didn't care what I looked like. I remember the first gig I did with them was at Ormond Hall, where they had Opus, but this was a private function in the hall. I think it was for a school staff function ... can't remember the school. I remember I was very, very cheeky to the audience and the leader of the band said, "hey, you can't talk like that to an audience!" I was being silly and not to be taken seriously. That was the first of many times I was told off because of what I said or the way I dressed." (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)



When he went to England at the height of Punk Rock he was at his outrageous best (Courtesy of Graeme Webber – Australian Rock Folio)

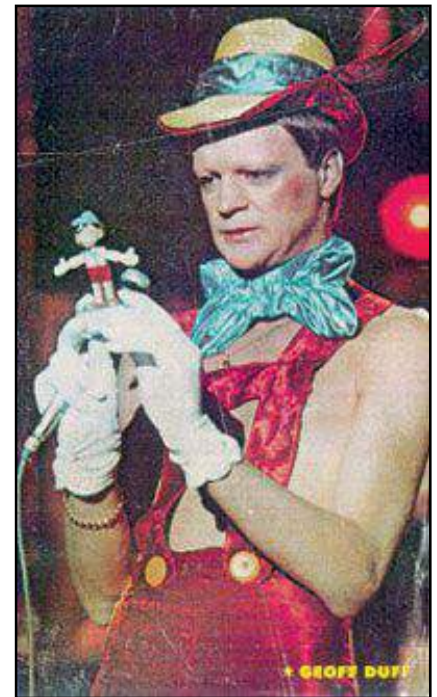
At the outset, Duff presented an utterly striking contrast to the rest of the band – in stage performance and dress. He presented an image that had not been witnessed before and the terms "androgynous" and "gender-bender" were still a long way off. His wildly over-sexual cross-mixing of the genders produced an act which was weirdly outrageous to his often-confused audiences. Certainly, his self-produced form of stage lunacy and outrageousness looked to be at odds with the band which backed him. Only the voice seemed to match the jazz-rock music – and even their songs didn't escape the Duff treatment. On more than one occasion he caused his share of consternation from his peers:

JEFF DUFF: "Oh... I was a complete contradiction because I had according to Glenn A. Baker, Walker's voice (The Walker Brothers, Scott Walker) but dressed like a "gay cavalier". I didn't know ... I still don't know that I was any different to anybody else. I had this thing about creating my own image. I wouldn't have known what an image was .. I wouldn't have planned anything, I just did what I did and if people didn't like it, well, that was their problem. Of course, I would have had to have been very careful. I wasn't gay but I wasn't afraid to wear makeup to go out ... and playing in the band, I'd wear makeup." (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

It is difficult to say whether Duff intended to deliberately shock his audiences or whether, as he states, he was just being himself. Possibly the other members of **Kush** would have been as shocked at the costumes and antics as the general public was. His guise was certainly at odds with the direction the band members wanted to travel in and he was often chastised by the band, although this did little to change his unpredictable nature.

But, whether the rest of **Kush** liked it or not, their lead singer was certainly creating that desired reaction to the band and they were a live sensation in the first few years from 1971 onwards. The publicity they gained – both positive and negative – helped them to plenty of live bookings and television appearances. This plethora of work in and around town along with the vocal styling of Duff may have more than made up for any dissatisfaction from the band with the up-front antics and the image he was creating. After all, they were gathering genuine interest in their music:

JEFF DUFF: "Well.. it was unfortunate that I joined the band at that stage but I guess we became notorious because of my antics, but it was originally formed as a Blood, Sweat and Tears/Chicago type unit and we did all those wonderful covers, but we started writing ... I started writing with the guitarist or the keyboard player and we ended up writing the first album ...



A true performer in all respects, Duff was not afraid to add more than a touch of theatre into his acts. (TV Week, courtesy of Jeff Duff)

mostly original things. It was meant to be a real musicians' band but because I was upfront, dressed like a lunatic, it really took the band on a different direction. Because of that direction, we ended up getting loads of press and also, loads of television. We got media ... radio, television.

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We became the resident band on this live radio show called, *Eureka, it's live!* put on by Jeff Joseph and Gary Spry. We were the house band and I'd sing a couple of songs each week. It was on every Sunday night; a bit like



After relocating to London in the 'eighties, Duff mixed it with the best – such as Rolling Stone Bill Wyman whom he met on a boat trip in Paris. (Photographer Jean Pierre, courtesy of Jeff Duff)

Countdown, but it was radio. It had whoever was happening at the time... Linda George. *Kush* was a nine-piece and we were an ideal band to back some of the singers.

Yeah... regarding the direction, the band leader was completely pissed off at me when I started to wear makeup and dresses and leotards on stage – that's not what David Clayton-Thomas did with *Blood, Sweat and Tears!* But, we crossed over completely because we were acknowledged by our peers for our musicality and the audiences loved it. And we were also attracting a different audience because of the way I looked. We ended up doing a lot of gay events in Melbourne like a place called *Jan's Dance*, above the cinema in Toorak Road ... maybe once a month we did that. So apart from dressing, I was pretty over the top on stage. I can't say that I was ever encouraged to do what I did... I was fairly tunnel-visioned about the way I was perceived on stage. I just did what I did and I didn't really think about the repercussions. Even after being beaten up a number of times..." (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

They began to record from 1973 onwards, although their first single was a cover of Henry Mancini's *Peter Gunn* theme – an instrumental track which Duff only played percussion on. From there, the flamboyant Duff seems to have taken over the songwriting duties (in part anyway) and his eccentric character gradually shone through as the rest of *Kush* buckled up for the ride.

By late 1973, Duff and *Kush* came to the attention of **Ian 'Molly' Meldrum** who was initially as intrigued as anyone with the odd blend of theatrics and rock music, and the seeming contradictions which *Kush* presented to the eye. However, the talent was quite obviously present and Meldrum recognised this when the band recorded its first full album:

JEFF DUFF: "Well, 'Molly' called the album, "Snow White and the Eight Straights". He first called us that when he came to see us. I was probably wearing a wedding dress and the band was dressed in jeans and t-shirts ... you know, normal rock 'n roll gear. I remember he wrote an article on us and called us Snow White and the eight straights. In sexual terms, the band members were all straight, but they were either dope-heads or alcoholics! So they weren't "straight" in that respect. (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

However, as with all bands of this period, the pressure of performing, recording and touring was taking its toll on many members of *Kush*. This was apart from other concerns with Duff's increasingly bizarre stage antics and the band's experimentation with recreational drugs, which was increasing at an alarming rate. A tedious rail trip to Perth from Melbourne proved to be a breaking point for some members of *Kush* during 1973. Duff describes the experience and the tensions within the band over a number of issues which included, of all things, Duff's driving skills! This was just one of a number of incidents which landed him in 'hot water':

JEFF DUFF: "a number of times ... well.. I think early on, I got into trouble with the band members as well. A lot of the original people left because well... we became quite popular. Our first record was an instrumental which I didn't even sing on ... I played timbales ... it was a version of Henry Mancini's *Peter Gunn* and that was big. I think it cracked the Top 40 and that enabled us to tour. So the first time we went to Perth ... maybe '72 or '73, we caught the train over there and we had to do a long residency at a couple of different clubs, and they were really, really popular live venues.

I had a really bad reputation as a driver ... I'd had a couple of cars and I'd written them all off. That little car in the photo with the eyes on it was one of them and it ended up going to 'car heaven'. So, one of the rules from the

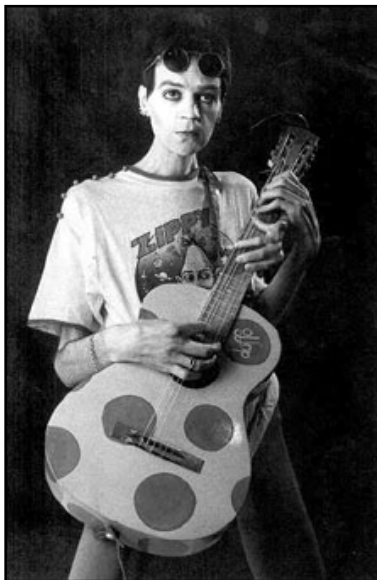
band leader was that Jeffrey wasn't allowed to drive. The first real trouble I got into in Perth was after everybody got really, really stoned on the train going over, because it was four days on the train ... we had a lot of marijuana on board. We'd smoke in our little cabin which was like torture for four days for musicians ... everybody would get

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completely wasted on like... alcohol from the bar and smoking. Then we closed all the vents in the carriage so somehow, the marijuana smoke ended up going through all the vents in the train ... so we figured that by the time we got to dinner, everybody on the train would be stoned!! Unwittingly. One of the guards found out and they stopped the train in the middle of the Nullabour and called the police from some outback station. They came on board and nothing really happened, we were just reprimanded. That was the start of the trouble and I was probably to blame for a lot of that ... but not alone; everybody was into it.

So the first day we arrived, our tour manager, Ray Hearn got really, really stoned and really, really hungry and he wanted to go out to buy some food. So I said, "can I drive?" He said, "no, you're not allowed to drive, Jeffrey." I think everybody else had gone to bed after the four days on the train. So anyway, I got behind the wheel of a car we hired and on the way back, I crashed into a car and this car had a fish tank in it and the fish tank came through the windscreen into our car ... fish all over the place. So that car had been written off. I'd only been driving it for five minutes. So when the bandleader found out we had an incredible argument and a couple of the other guys just left and flew back to Melbourne. So we had to get three new horn players in Perth ... everyone was blaming me because they said I was out of control." (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

One particular costume which Duff created just cemented his camp-ish image and **Kush** found that, whether they liked it or not, the band was extremely popular with Melbourne's gay set and they did many gigs within the gay community which saw Duff flaunt his overt Drag-queenish sexuality. Not everyone however, found the cross-gender escapades acceptable for public viewing:



The waif-like Duff after entering the London punk scene and assuming the persona of 'Duffo. (Photographer: Graeme Cooper, courtesy of Jeff Duff)

JEFF DUFF: "It was always like a freak show when I performed. I didn't deliberately try to freak people out, but my particular style of dress was pretty much over the top. I remember making clothes out of those sex dolls – you know those blow-up dolls? I got arrested for one ... you know that leotard with the breasts and the female head on the crutch. The reason I got arrested was because it's got an open mouth ... and the oral sex thing ... Now there was a pipe inside and I pulled this pipe out on stage and some girls at the Ballarat Civic Centre thought I had my penis out, so they called the police. And under the 'seventies strobe lighting the police came and they saw this pipe hanging out so they hauled me off stage. They told me I had to get changed before I went back on stage so I had to go and get into my civvies. They arrested me and I had to go to court ... well, I was charged on the night. I could go home but I was charged on summons. I didn't know what they were charging me with. As it turned out in court I was charged with offensive behaviour and fined \$60." (Duff op cit, 17 June, 2006)

Duff believes that he didn't intentionally seek the notoriety, but nevertheless, it certainly came his way and he often attracted unwanted attention. He was occasionally beaten up and yet this failed to curb his outrageous behaviour and performances. Did he go too far at times? Many of those who considered themselves part of liberated society believed that he did.

Yet Duff was always unrepentant, believing that his stage shows were often unplanned and that he did not deliberately set out to offend the public. Yet at the album launch of *Snow White and the Eight Straights*, many believed that he just went too far:

JEFF DUFF: "I remember we worked at the pub on the corner of Commercial Road and St.Kilda Road – The Chevron – I wrote a song called, *Satanic Deity* which is about a priest being possessed by a devil, and I'd start this song dressed as a priest. I'd start by giving a mock sermon and if there was a Bible on hand ... a Gideon's Bible, I'd take it up on stage and start preaching. I'd get so angry that I'd start ripping out pages of the Bible. I'm pretty ashamed at doing this now, but at the time I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't know about shock value at the time. Underneath the priest's robes, I had this devil's costume and Channel 9 happened to be there and somebody

from Mike Willessee's, *A Current Affair* was there and they picked up on this and filmed some of it. It made a big splash in *Truth* newspaper. They did the story headed up with, "*The Priest that rips up Bibles*". And because of that, I had to go on to a *Current Affair* and debate with the leader of one of the churches and man, that was so

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embarrassing for me... I didn't really think about what I was doing then all of a sudden, I was on national television! I was debating and trying to protect my innocence really and I was just ripped to shreds by this minister. My father was really down on me after that... I remember saying to him, "It could have been a Mickey Mouse comic or a copy of *Playboy* that I was ripping up" but that didn't wear with my father. The priest said on television that if I continued to behave like that, something terrible would happen to me. Then I had a couple of members of



A 2006 Kush reunion of sorts for original members, (from left) John Montesante (aka John Santos, trumpet), John Ellis (saxophone, clarinet), Colin Chapman (trumpet), Rob Matthews (bass) and of course, Jeff Duff.

the band who refused to play with me ... things started happening in the band. A few weird things happened and they attributed anything weird ... to the fact that I was ripping up Bibles! In fact, that was the only Bible I ever ripped up and it happened to be so public! (Duff, op cit, 17 June 2006)

With this Beelzebub masquerade and the ripped Bible episode behind him, Duff and the rest of **Kush** entered the recording studio again for their next album, the title of which reflected Duff's quirky songwriting efforts. This second album titled, *Nah Tellus Wh't Kush Means Yer Great Sausage*, was recorded after yet more walk-outs and changes to the band and by early 1975, Kush had broken up. Yet, in solo mode, Duff continued his outrageous escapades. The question is: was even a fairly

liberated Melbourne ready for Jeff Duff? Despite not being gay, he revelled in the blatant camp-ishness he built into his characters which was exhibited in the clothes and make-up he wore on and off stage. It can only be surmised that the attendants at The Thumpin' Tum way back in his youth didn't quite know what to make of him when he turned up at the door. Yet Duff was never going to change just to suit other people's wishes:

JEFF DUFF: "I think I'd done a lot of what I'd wanted to do (in Melbourne) and I remember that I'd written a rock opera thing which I took to EMI up in Sydney actually, and I remember I took it to Paul Hogan and John Cornell, his manager because I was appearing on The Paul Hogan Show, and the whole thing got lost in Sydney when I was coming back to Melbourne and I was really pissed off about that, because I'd spent so much time writing fourteen songs. I'd written and illustrated this whole book, worked out this stage play and everything. I'd been working in small combos and I'd gone solo and released *Temptation's About To Get Me* on Mushroom and Gudinski said to me that I'd have to change my image a bit because it was just too weird. He gave me this money and said, "I'd like you to go out and buy a three-piece suit." And I came back with this Lawrence Of Arabia-type thing and he was really pissed off, so I got dropped from the label. So I'd wanted to do a big orchestrated album and I started negotiating with RCA and I was going to do that with 'Tweed' Harris from The Groove." (Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

So rather than be disillusioned with continuing his career here, he planned the next phase of his life – an assault on an unsuspecting London which, by 1978 was beginning to awaken to punk music, safety-pin, mohawk wearing youth and The Sex Pistols. Here, he unveiled his new persona – "Duffo" and immediately found the freedom of expression to his liking.

There is no doubting the enormous talent and versatility which Jeff Duff possesses and there remain few regrets in his life and career. Well... perhaps ripping up the Bible made him a little more notorious than he'd wished, but there is the thought that he wouldn't have had it any other way. From 1971 to 1978, Duff found a unique niche in Melbourne music circles but maybe he was just too far advanced for us to accept at the time. He has been called,

“ahead of his time” but dismisses this terminology as being meaningless. It would be more likely that he believes that he created “his own time” and that not even liberated Melbourne was ready for him. Food for thought, folks.

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Jeff Duff and Kush do Sunbury in '74...



Jeff Duff – prancing on the Sunbury stage with various members of Kush, particularly bassist, Rob Matthews and (below left) with Beverley, Wendy and Margaret Cook from Marcie Jones and The Cookies as backing vocalists. All photos courtesy of Jeff Ross.



MELBOURNE MUSIC IN PRINT - Go-Set Magazine - February 1966 to August 1974.

Offices: April, 1966 to May, 1969 - 2 Charnwood Crescent, St. Kilda

May, 1969 to December, 1972 - 27 (and 17) Drummond Street, Carlton

December, 1972 to March, 1974 - 28 Cambridge Street, Collingwood

March to May, 1974 - 374 Little Collins Street, Melbourne

May to August, 1974 - 425 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne

Printers: Waverley Offset Printers - Railway Parade North, Glen Waverley and Geddes Road, Mulgrave

"In the beginning the editor created Go-Set and the word was with Go-Set and the word was Go-Set."

"I've heard Go-Set hailed as a phenomenon and dismissed as a populist teenage tabloid. But, whatever people say about it, Go-Set's biggest achievement was the level of co-ordination and co-operation it reached in making the hard work of putting the magazine together seem interesting, and fun -- and be perceived by its readers as interesting, and fun -- each week, every week, for eight years. That was the Go-Set I knew, and what many companies are still trying to build: A dedicated team making a conscious effort to develop and maintain what marketing people would call 'our brand' -- the way we do things. (Michael Edmunds in www.4.tpgi.com.au)

The 'sixties brought out a degree of radicalism in young people in the way in which this generation wanted to express itself in print - separate and quite distinct from their parents' reading habits. The conservative elements which published the daily newspapers in Melbourne - *The Age*, (David Syme and Associates), *The Herald and The Sun News Pictorial*, (The Herald And Weekly Times Ltd.) delivered news in its traditional format via the broadsheet tabloid. Daily news and editorials tended to bypass the *beat generation* which found that its views were not represented and never invited nor condoned by these papers - except when some sort of youth scandal was in the wind. *The Sydney Morning Herald* served the same purpose in that city as did other morning and evening newspapers in other capital cities around the nation. Each publisher had somewhat of a vested political interest in what he/she published and opposing views which could be considered by them as radical or derogatory were either suppressed, distorted or heavily editorialised. These were considered by the teens as 'old peoples' papers.



Go-Set's first office on the corner of St. Kilda Road and Charnwood Crescent, St. Kilda. The paper occupied the ground and first floors and several small buildings out the back.

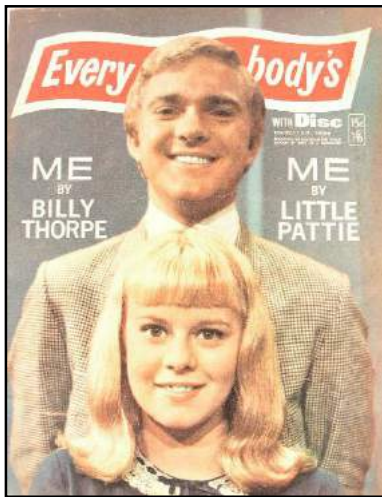


Likewise, the “glossies”, *Woman’s Day* and *Women’s Weekly* catered for the maturing female audience sometimes picking up on a selected youth story when it suited circulation purposes and increased sales. Only *People Magazine*, *Pix* and *Australasian Post* which were all a little more on the sensational side, catered in some way for the curiosity value of the new teen attitudes, fashions and trends but were still adult magazines just aimed

Melbourne’s *Pix* magazine which at times, only just avoided offending public decency with lurid photos and sensationalistic stories. (Author’s collection)

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at the voyeuristic curiosity in many adults, if they were willing to admit it. Those youngsters featured were not actually *their* children so it was worth a peep at these “teenagers gone wrong” . *People* and *Pix* appealed to similar



Everybody’s magazine was a pictorial and the first to feature the new breed of pop stars in what was essentially an adults’ magazine. It soon had its own teen-oriented insert – Disc Magazine. (Author’s collection)

readerships at the height of their popularity over the two decades of the ‘sixties and the ‘seventies and seemed keen to outdo each other in the covers, photos and stories they presented. They seemed to get more daring as time went by. Stories featured extra-marital affairs, stars and starlets and covers which moved from near nudity to total nudity (oh... but don’t show any pubic hair!) until the two magazines, which to all intents and purposes, were travelling in the same direction actually merged to become one in 1971.

Everybody’s Magazine was really the ultimate magazine for Australia’s popular culture throughout the pre-*Go-Set*, early ‘sixties because it covered the biggest stars of the period and wasn’t afraid to feature young Australian rock stars. It was published by the Packer organisation in Sydney but its circulation was national and in fact international, as it reached New Zealand readers. It did, however lean towards the Sydney scene. Kiwi musicians **Mike Rudd (Spectrum and Ariel)** and **Glyn Mason (Ariel, Chain, Copperwine, Stockley See & Mason)** have both spoken of the influence which *Everybody’s* had on New Zealanders in informing them of the swingin’ scene in Australia. Just to read about what was happening in Australia was enough to convince them to relocate across the Tasman Sea with their respective New Zealand Bands, **Chants R & B** and **Larry’s Rebels**.

Everybody’s was not effectively targeting the teen market as such, but aimed itself more towards the young adult profile and was a quality pictorial although at times it delved into the sort of stories that the lower quality tabloids liked to

feature. From about 1964, it incorporated **Disc** magazine – an insert specially dedicated to pop music and this was only really superseded when *Go-Set* came along. It covered everything from Australian lifestyle to views on current issues as well as fashion. Its format was colourful and bold and at times, it wasn’t afraid to feature the more insalubrious aspects of the new teen culture.

Possibly for the first time, Aussie rock and pop artists were featured – often on the cover. In 1967, **The Masters Apprentices** were presented with a trophy from *Everybody’s* as the “Most Original Band” for that year. *Everybody’s* was, like *Pix*, *People* and *Australasian Post* open to featuring the more liberalised attitudes towards sex. Towards the latter part of the ‘sixties, this magazine found a strong challenger in *Go-Set* which began to focus even closer on the teen readership market. By 1968, all eyes were on the Melbourne scene and *Everybody’s* succumbed to the punches delivered by its new challenger, ceasing publication in that year.

Universities were hotbeds of radicalism in the ‘sixties with Vietnam War draft resisters being sheltered on campus at Melbourne University. The twin scourges of the National Draft (“Conscription”) for healthy 20-year old males and the continuing conflict in Vietnam became explosive material at these establishments. Graduates who have attended Monash

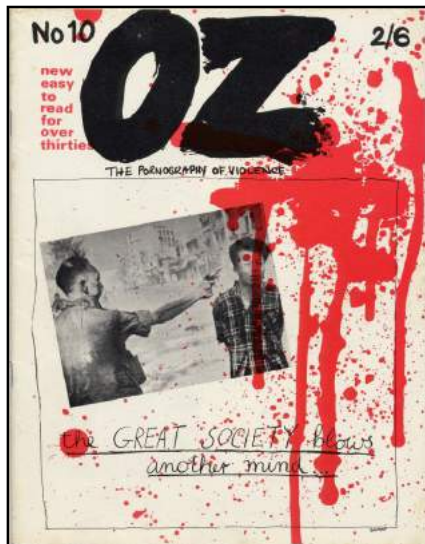


Go-Set occupied the buildings at the rear of 2 Charnwood Crescent and Colin Beard’s darkroom was here.

University would undoubtedly remember *Lot's Wife*, the campus newspaper emanating from the Student Union Building at Clayton. This student stronghold, in the 60's and 70's was THE place between lectures and tutorials for any long-haired, bearded male to hang out and meet chicks. *Lot's Wife*, in the sixties was a radical, student newspaper reflecting the more extreme political views of the students, many of whom dabbled in elements of active socialism. This campus newspaper, while pushing the boundaries of just what information dissemination was about at the time, also hooked into satire and ridicule, particularly directed at our Liberal politicians such

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as **Billy McMahon, John Gorton, Robert Menzies** and of course, Victorian Premier, **Henry Bolte**. *Lot's Wife* mirrored the more generally available alternate publications (but still a bit under the counter) such as *Oz Magazine* and from Sydney, *The Kings Cross Whisper* – chock full of biting, irreverent and rude satire and cutting-edge, politically motivated cartoons, all keen to poke fun at the Menzies/Holt/Gorton/McMahon federal Liberal regimes which seemed so inflexible and conservative at the time.



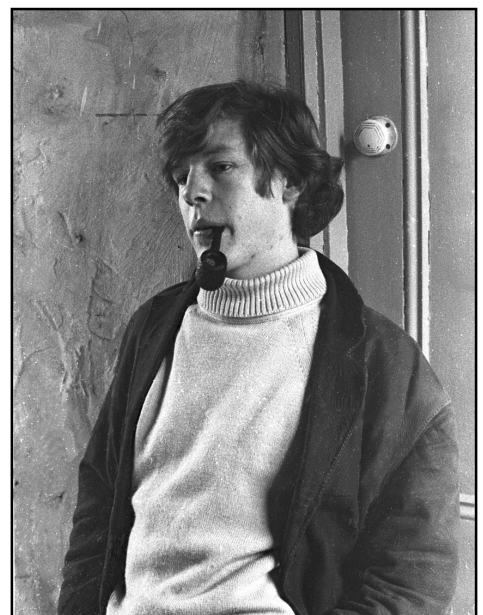
What you got with Oz magazine was strong political comment which, in its own way poked fun at a political system and the successive McMahon and Gorton Liberal Governments.

Oz Magazine, whose creators **Richard Neville, Richard Walsh** and **Martin Sharp** soon found themselves caught up in rather serious publishing obscenity charges, hit the newstands on April Fool's Day, 1963. Modelled after the student university papers, *Oz* poked fun in a most irreverent way at 'sixties Australian society and politics and its popularity instantly came under the ever watchful eyes of the Australian and British censors. In a challenging decade, *Oz* and its editors/creators found themselves caught up in two highly publicised obscenity trials for printing and distributing material which "offended public decency". Clearly, to the establishment they represented all that modern youth was – long-haired, freaky, marijuana-smoking, drop-out teenagers. Police raided offices and newsagents, confiscated issues of *Oz* and burnt them, just adding to the public interest and image of *Oz* as a "must-read" for the hip young renegades. Not merely by chance, the very sensationalised and public trials were intended to make the trio of Neville, Sharpe and Walsh, scapegoats in a society that still hadn't quite come to terms with the changing times. In two London trials, all three journalists were found guilty as charged and on the occasion of their second court appearance, received jail sentences starting on 23 September, 1964 for their part in "corrupting public morals".

It was into this climate that *Go-Set* Magazine was born – a love child from the coupling of new youth oriented journalism and the growing beat and progressive music scene. While not dabbling in pushing the bounds of public decency like other publications, it catered specifically for the teens in the lower age groups and focussed on just what the teenage girls wanted – stories and photos of their music heroes.

Tony Schauble and **Phillip Frazer**, editors of Monash University's *Lot's Wife* began with a germ of an idea based on a magazine-style format to deliver the goods to a music-starved Melbourne audience. Frazer was a member of Monash University's strong Leftist faction and brought this philosophy of socialism, rebellion and protest through to *Go-Set*. In a dimly lit meeting with **Peter Raphael** one night, late in 1965 at The Thumpin' Tum discotheque, they floated the idea to aspiring photographer, **Colin Beard** who wanted to be included.

The fledgling publication was originally christened with the name, *Go-Set Weekly-A-Go-Go* and the first edition came out on 5-6 February, 1966. The team moved into their first real office at 2 Charnwood Crescent, St. Kilda in April of that year. However, much of the early work had been done directly from Frazer's and Schauble's flat in Malvern, Raphael's house in Clifton Hill and Beard's house in Drummond Street, Carlton which he shared with friend, **Bill Robinson**.



Colin Beard set out on his first assignment to photograph **The Moods** who were being looked after by Raphael:

COLIN BEARD: "I was ... taking photographs wherever The Moods played, not only of the band on stage but of the fans, the suburban kids who filled the dance halls ...

Phillp Frazer, the founder and prime-mover of Go-Set. Taken at the beginning - 1966. (Courtesy of Colin Beard.)

"Come on, Tony and Phillip have a look at these," Peter insisted one day.

They were both thrilled with them, and we sat down and we worked out an idea. There would be a double page
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spread of photographs at dance halls, photographs of the bands and snapshots of the fans with their names underneath, 'seen at Ormond Hall', seen at Mordialloc Town Hall. It would be a regular feature called "The Scene - The Seen", did I want to do it? Of course I did. There was no money, Tony and Phillip could hardly feed themselves. But I didn't want money. I wanted to be a photographer." (Beard, unpublished biography, Chapter 13, P2.)



The Railway Parade North offices of Waverley Offset Printers in Glen Waverley where the first editions of Go-Set came hot off the presses. (Courtesy of Graeme Hattwell)

Beard's first real photographic assignment was for this very first *Go-Set* edition and he accompanied **Doug Panther** who was to interview touring stars, **Tom Jones** and **Herman's Hermits**. They made it to the stage door at The Palais, St Kilda and were actually welcomed in by the stars who were happy to have someone to chat with until show time. Beard had a 3am deadline to deliver his photos to the printers, **Waverley Offset Printers**, a deadline he was able to meet. Within a short

time, Beard found his first photos adorning the cover of the first *Go-Set* to be produced.

Waverley Offset Printers had previously published *Lot's Wife* for Frazer, using Webb offset printing techniques employed for their main paper, the south-eastern suburban *Waverley Gazette*. *Go-Set* was first printed by Waverley Offset at its small, but modern print works in Railway Parade, Glen Waverley and it remained this way until January, 1972 when printing was transferred to the new Waverley Offset factory in Geddes Street, Mulgrave. Waverley Offset Printers also held shares in *Go-Set* Pty Ltd and this business connection was to be significant down the track.

Those who were there with Schauble, (Editor) and Fraser, (Designer), Beard, (photographer) and Raphael, (advertising manager) when the magazine commenced in 1966 were: **Terry Cleary** (advertising sales), **Doug Panther** (writer), **Kestin "Honey" Lea** (everything- later fashion editor) and **Vera Kaas-Jaager** (photo assistant). **Ian 'Molly' Meldrum** arrived some five months into the magazine's existence and he was given his first writing job by Beard. **Lily Brett** had joined only a few months before Meldrum, who was to become *Go-Set's* most famous staffer. Such was the precarious nature of this venture that it was doubtful if the magazine would survive its first year; Raphael was initially convinced that it would last only two or three issues:

COLIN BEARD: "So many have written about *Go-Set* but very few people know what happened. The long hours, the moments of inspiration, the struggles against VANA who tried to kill it off,



Students from a local school watch as the Waverley Offset presses churn out the papers - c. 1968. They could be Go-Sets ready for distribution. (Courtesy of Graeme Hattwell)

trying to scratch for food, for film, for transport. For the first few months it was touch and go whether we would survive. Tony Schauble was the towering pillar of strength. His encouragement and unflinching will and energy kept us all going - often without sleep and food. It is sinful to rob him of due credit. He was the single most important ingredient in the survival and the success of *Go-Set*.

John Ford tried to keep a grip on the business side of things and he had a car - no one else did until Lily (Brett) came along." (Beard, op cit 27 February, 2006)

Go-Set was initially distributed to newsagents around the city and suburbs by Collins Distributors until Beard's flatmate **Bill Robinson** stepped in:

COLIN BEARD: "They (Collins) had the infrastructure, but little interest in a new player in the market place. It was delivered to the newsagents every Wednesday morning and left there, buried beneath a stack of assorted specialty magazines ...

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"Do you think Tony and Phillip would be interested in me handling the distribution of *Go-Set*?" Bill Robinson asked one night. "I have no capital, no established infrastructure but I have the (know) how." Tony and Phillip were overjoyed. It was a gamble, an unheard of proposition. Collins threatened to sue for breach of contract, but we knew it wasn't worth their while,...



Lily Brett, with Normie Rowe in France, 1966 (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

The first week was chaotic. Bill had got hold of a list of newsagencies from the Victorian Authorised Newsagencies Association, who had no idea what he wanted it for, and he had arranged a deal with a newly established taxi truck company called Aljon.

Shortly after midnight on that first Tuesday morning, students from Monash University arrived by the car load. The magazines followed hot from the presses an hour later and soon, all were frantically wrapping and labelling parcels of *Go-Sets* from lists provided by Bill and sorting them into delivery districts. By early afternoon it was finished, only a few piles left standing in a corner, in case of reorders. Sleeping bodies were littered all over the house, still in their underwear..." (Beard, unpublished biography, Chapter 14, P3)

Distribution was to cause deep problems, with VANA (the major newsagency group) putting undue pressure on its members not to sell *Go-Set*. Some newsagents caved in to VANA's pressure tactics through raw fear and some refused to be bullied by the organisation. In either case, they could not ignore the thirty-thousand units which were being sold and the thousands of teenagers who were asking for the magazine. Then in quick succession, the makeshift magazine found itself making staff changes – some optional, some necessary. Within a short time, **Doug Panther** had left, citing disagreements with the owners as his reasons. (To the police, he was also a "person of interest" in relation to not registering for National Service commitments). But a strikingly beautiful young, Jewish girl by the name of **Lily Brett** had arrived.

Ian McCausland whose poster and record cover designs were to gain him a high level of acclaim, came on board *Go-set* in 1968 as Art Director, following his win in the poster competition held by the magazine for a poster to promote **The Who/Small Faces** tour of that same year. For McCausland, it was a defining experience being in the same office as many whose brand of politics supported the leftist tendencies:

IAN McCAUSLAND: "There was a nice mix of people there. It was significant for me, because I'd never gone to university and I'd never had contact with the "Monash Uni. lefties" and there were a lot of those at *Go-Set*. I sort of changed and became vaguely political... over to their side. I was a northern suburbs boy and hadn't known anything else and for me to meet the Editor, Phillip Fraser who was a very intelligent guy...was a privilege." (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005.)

Go-Set cashed in on the desire of the kids to know



Damian Broderick (left) with the co-founder of *Go-Set*, Tony Schauble in the gardens of the house they shared with Colin Beard in Wellington Street, St. Kilda during 1966. Broderick wrote for *Go-Set* under a number of pseudonyms. (Courtesy of Colin Beard.)

more about their favourite pop stars, both local and overseas. Michael Edmunds who was there from 1967 to 1971 summed up the appeal of the magazine:

MICHAEL EDMUNDS: “Go-Set’s innovation was to take teenage culture seriously, and give teenagers 'their own newspaper' at a time when other newspapers catered to a middle-class conservatism. As I remember it, we lived in a world that viewed teenage ideas as, at best, immature and trivial, and, at worst, a 'clear and present

threat' to our parents' traditions and social values. In getting serious about teenage concerns, while seeking to express the enthusiasm, hedonism, and expectations of the young, as well as their emerging desire for a world without nuclear threats and Cold War one-upmanship, over time, Go-Set evolved a complex, though strong, editorial policy that couldn't help but differentiate it from its mainstream competitors.

In contrast to others (according to anecdotal evidence from former readers, that is: my wife and her friends), Go-Set had more authority, arguably because it was produced by young people for (in fact) younger people, without condescension, and without being patronising or manipulative. One of the great qualities of Go-Set, I think, was its editors' genuine attempts to understand and satisfy their market.

At the same time, though, since the market was very broad, covering a range of diverse tastes, levels of education, age groups, and depths of musical awareness, the content of the magazine had to reflect and cater to this diversity – which meant we had to provide promotional accessibility to almost anyone with, or even wanting, a following.” (Edmunds, op cit www.4.tpgi.com.au)

Go-Set was pushing into uncharted waters and much was experimental. Jim Keays describes the institution which, to the outside observer, seemingly looked ad hoc in nature and run with little or no backing:

JIM KEAYS: “Go-Set magazine, which we would read avidly in Adelaide, was a crazy, unorganised mess but it worked. It was the Bible of Australian music. Basically, it was the only one available, and everyone bought it. ... It was run on a shoestring and most of the employees were totally inexperienced. This was quite understandable, considering there'd been nothing like it before, so no experience was possible.” (Keays, 1999. P 51.)



On a couple of occasions, Go-Set celebrated its Pop Poll Awards by issuing compilation album – this one from 1971. (Author’s collection)

Jazz night every Monday!



Go-Set staffer and jet-setter Lily Brett with John Weider of The Animals about the time of the Monterey Festival in 1967. (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

At the outset, Go-Set reflected the music scene at the time. It was just after The Beatles hysteria – the “scream years” had settled down and a mixture of music could be experienced around town – jazz, folk and progressive rock. Go-Set in its first year, 1966 had columns within its pages to reflect the diversity of music emanating from the live venues – there was a “Folk Column” by Mike Coulihan, Blues by Chris Hector, and Jazz by Ross “le jelly roll” Laird as well as the best from the rock scene. Advertisements also showed that the change-over within the venues was happening too, with one, Harlem Jazz at the Caulfield Town Hall having The Red Onions and The Black Eagle Jazz Band playing in the lower area while upstairs – “Up In The Gods” offered, “... Real Candle Light Discotheque atmosphere with crumpets. Coffee and live non-stop folk music.” (Go-Set, 17 August, 1966). Even The Thumpin’ Tum – the rockinest of all discotheques was offering in 1966, a Modern

Some of the articles were made for light reading only and didn't attempt to explore the nitty-gritty of the bands music at all. In many cases, they just wanted to know how their idols lived – did they do “normal” things like everyone else? Take this segment from an interview with **Ross Hannaford** of **Daddy Cool** and **The Party Machine**:
Howard: *Do animals like you?*

Ross: *Yes, I've been having a lot of success with cats recently. I never got on with cats all my life 'till the last six months. It's just the people I come in contact with have all got cats, and they're real friendly. I mean really, really, friendly and you can play with them and stuff and do anything with them – I mean we've got a cat here that fetches sticks like a dog. It's a really nice cat,*
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really affectionate. I like children too. (Go-Set, 29 July, 1972)

Hmmm... riveting and incisive journalistic stuff! There is no doubt that the young female audience was the major sales target and the magazine was geared to interest and entice them. There were the editorial features about individual pop stars, the fashion and beauty columns, lots of photos, a big cover and the chance to write in – the letters to the editor columns. Within a short period of time, **Ian 'Molly' Meldrum** fresh from his days on *Kommotion*

was on board and churning out major stories (in his own fashion) as well as making news and appearing on the cover of *Go-Set* himself. Meldrum, it is certain made a significant contribution to the running of *Go-Set* and to the direction the paper was heading all throughout its existence. He seemed to be well suited to the often chaotic office atmosphere. Colleague Ian McCausland, Art Director from '69 onwards recalls:

IAN McCAUSLAND: “Oh ... he was great. He was such a hysterical element amongst the staff ... last-minute deadlines... but he always delivered. It was just like... done in dramatic style. He had a great rapport with people. He and Stan Rofe were great friends and they would bait each other. Ian had great contacts and he was always so enthusiastic about the whole scene. He could have been criticized for concentrating on one person, but that was the nature of selling the newspaper. *Go-Set* was huge at the time so he put all his efforts into that.” (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005)

One of the most popular inclusions in the magazine's pages over time was certainly **Normie Rowe**, a teen sensation (*Shakin' All Over*) who undoubtedly assisted *Go-Set* to sell around 40,000 copies per week at this time. Still relatively the same age as the readership of *Go-Set* – the girls couldn't get enough of him – literally - as he had his clothes torn off regularly whenever he appeared in public. A very young **Ed Nimmervoll**, who was intending to spend his working life carving out a career in architecture, like Meldrum had a burning passion for music and began collecting and closely studying the sales charts from around the nation. He had imported his own records before they became hits here and was

having overseas “pop” magazines such as *Billboard*, *Cashbox* and *Musical Express* flown direct by airmail about two or three months before they arrived at the local newsagents. On his journey into the city, he would drop off his chart at the *Go-Set* St. Kilda office:

ED NIMMERVOLL: “So I was getting all this information for myself and doing the chart for *Go-Set* and when I dropped each one in, I started to write little notes on the bottom. Maybe I was showing-off a bit, I don't really know, but they started printing this stuff at the bottom of my chart. They were things I was telling them and I was ahead of them, delivering some news that they didn't have in their publication. So they started putting my name on there. It was the chart, by Ed Nimmervoll and they'd put a comment on the bottom. So when you look at *Go-Set* in '67, that's what you see. In time, they became quite curious about me and wanted to meet me. Particularly Ian Meldrum because he was really into music. So he wanted to know about this strange person who was sending this stuff in.” (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005)

Some notable names wrote for *Go-Set* – **Prue Acton** (writer – 1966) who had her own fashion column, **Lily Brett**, (1966-68) reporter on the local music scene and **Sue Flett** who came up with her column “Beauty Notes” as well as



Go-Set's first photographer, Colin Beard, snapped while on duty at Monsalvat, near Eltham, 1966. (Courtesy of Colin Beard.)

launching the "Dear Lesley Pixie" personal help and advice column. "Beauty Notes" on August 17, 1966 gave advice on which perfume a girl should choose – concentrates, skin perfumes or toilet waters.

Ross Wilson's then wife, **Pat**, who had her own hit, *She's A Bop Girl* penned by her husband, also contributed during 1971-2. with the column "Mummy Cool" which took up from "Dear Lesley Pixie". Wilson found that her responses to young readers on sexual matters embroiled her in some controversy when the Melbourne *Truth* newspaper accused *Go-Set* of going too far. (From a scandal-rag like *Truth*, isn't this a case of the pot calling the kettle black?) Then there was *Go-Set's* "Postbox" and "Go-Gos and No-Nos" which gave the kids a chance to write in to pledge their undying love for a particular band or artist. Here's an example:

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G.G., Mentone: "No-Go to Melbourne's D.J.s for playing practically no R & B. Dozens of No-Go's to Normie Rowe for desecrating the name of Rhythm and Blues by purporting to be a singer of this type of music. Also, No-Gos to Merv Benton and Colin Cook for thinking they can sing. Go.Go's to Lynne Randell and Dinah Lee for being game enough to wear such "way out things"." (*Go-Set*, Wednesday 17 August, 1966).

But as well as these contributors and staffers making a significant impact on the direction that *Go-Set* was moving, the magazine itself and merely the experience of working in the *Go-Set* office in firstly, St Kilda, then Carlton, could have a profound effect of individuals. Art Director, McCausland remembers when accountant **Geoff Watson** joined the team in the middle of 1968:

IAN McCAUSLAND: "...they got in an accountant, Geoff Watson and Geoff had come straight from an accounting firm and he used to wear his suit in to work... clean shaven.. immaculate shirts. I remember watching, with fascination, the transition of Geoff. The first sign of change was that his sideboards got a bit longer, then the hair started to grow... missing out on a few regular haircuts... semblance of a moustache. In the end, Geoff Watson was the ultimate hippie. He used to wear caftans to work with wooden beads to go with his shoulder-length blond hair. It was just amazing!" (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005).

Several photographers were "employed" by *Go-Set* in a strange sort of arrangement which was typical of the way *Go-Set* was run. Right there at the beginning was **Colin Beard** who tenaciously patrolled the discotheques of the city and surrounds every Friday and Saturday night, with his camera, like some sort of night-stalker. His photographs appear in the pages up until 1968, when he and **Lily Brett** went overseas on assignment. The last time he worked for *Go-Set* was to photograph **The Monkees** tour in September, 1968. Unfortunately, most of the originals and negatives of the early photos that he shot, all but vanished when the magazine folded because *Go-Set* kept the negatives shot by most of the photographers:

COLIN BEARD: "So many great images I took during those early years have disappeared. Most of the original photos from that time remained in the *Go-Set* files and are most probably lost. So many lost. If I'd have known the outcomes I would have taken all my photographs with me when I left *Go-Set* in late 1968. Their photo files would have been left very sparse - that's why I didn't take everything. I trusted Philip Fraser to watch out for them. I did all the photographs in the first year of *Go-Set*. Was never paid, of course. Tony Schauble, Philip Fraser and I all shared a house together and were fed courtesy of the magazine. I think everyone else did get some form of salary." (Beard, email correspondence, 21 February, 2006)

Vera Kaas-Jaager was another early photographer whose pictures appear within the pages of *Go-Set* alongside those of **Colin Beard**, and **Jim Colbert** began snapping in the late 'sixties. **David Porter**, aka **Jacques L'Affrique** was represented with photos that he took in the early 'seventies and a number of full-page photo spreads actually credit him as the photographer. Likewise for **Philip Morris** who was Sydney-based and his photos appear in later editions of the mag. **Grant Mudford** also snapped the bands around Sydney. Kaas-Jaager was a young, aspiring photographer when **Colin Beard** first saw her :



An unusual performer in many ways, Wendy Saddington was one of a number of artists who turned her hand to writing for *Go-Set*. (Photographer: Vera Kaas-Jaager)

COLIN BEARD: "Vera tended to copy my style - she was a shy 17 year old when she came to us - but being shy, she was often intimidated by groups of over exuberant male rock'n'roll musos and allowed them to impose their silly photo ideas. My photos have a very distinctive style about them. For instance, unusual compositions of groups, strange portrait angles. Always well lit. Never would I have taken a photo of a group jumping about like monkeys - that was commonplace with PR shots (ie. Photos provided by management) - I hated it." (Beard, email correspondence, 27 February, 2006)

As far as story lines went, *Go-Set* was not opposed to "manufacturing" these to suit the readership as they possibly did with their 20 September, 1967 headline account of the "car crash" involving **The Loved Ones** lead

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singer **Gerry Humphrys**. Gerry lost his red Mercedes and the other car happened to be one borrowed from *Go-Set's* then editor! The subsequent story wound its way through Humphrys' life as it existed at that point - taking art lessons and sculpting and meditating at a "Love-In" - but not much about the car crash.



Colin Beard and Honey Lea getting up close and personal in 1966. Honey took on a number of roles at *Go-Set* including that of "fashion editor". (Courtesy of Colin Beard.)

To a teenage girl, there was absolutely no end to the love and adoration expressed for a male pop hero but there was also the possibility to tip heaps of water on those they didn't like. Because of the bias created to sell the magazine - male heroes for female fans - it really didn't do justice to a growing band of genuinely great female stars of the period - **Wendy Saddington, Liv Maessen, Lynne Randell, Dinah Lee** to name a few who only occasionally made the pages. Wendy actually went on later to *write* a column for *Go-Set* and Randell, (1967-1970) while stationed in Los Angeles in 1970-1, became *Go-Set's* American correspondent. The choice of Saddington as a demure staff writer may have seemed a curious move:

PAUL CULNANE: "Curiously, one of Wendy's side-gigs around 1969 was to write a column for the lovelorn in

Go-Set. Just imagine how incongruous, but delightful, that very concept seemed when wild Wendy first took on the mantle of "agony-aunt"! ...But remember, back then when the mainstream press and most TV reporters witnessed such a supposedly crazed witch (in their eyes) as Wendy Saddington, and reported her activities with scorn and derision, you might understand that such unwarranted but intense spotlight scrutiny always seemed to deflect Wendy back into her complex shell. Meanwhile, Chain went on to build a solid reputation as Australia's premier blues-rock band, while for a short time Wendy floundered, seemingly bewildered by all the attention her unique talents were garnering. But she pressed on." (Culnane in www.milesago.com, January 2001)

Greg Quill, a Sydney-based writer/musician who was to go on to form the country/rock band **The Dingoes** with **Broderick Smith** and **Kerryn Tolhurst**, joined in a writing capacity looking after editorial duties for New South Wales. He explains the reasons for getting involved with the magazine:

GREG QUILL: "Straight after I came out of university, I applied for a job. I had heard there was something going at *Go-Set*. I was not familiar at all with the magazine, but I imagined that if I had a career anywhere, it was in writing somewhere, because the only real skills I had were as a writer. And this seemed to provide a link between my writing ability and my interest in music - although it was pop music, and I had really no time for pop music. But anyway, I ended up getting the job as NSW features writer, and I met David Elfick; he was the managing editor there at the time, of the NSW edition, and got in the *Go-Set* fold and ... quickly [laughs] learned how to deal with celebrities.

Actually that was a very important element of training for what I do now. Because for the 15 or 16 years I've been working at the [Toronto] Star, I've been working in the Arts area - first as a music critic, then as a television critic, now as Senior Features Writer. I think I have an edge that other people don't, and that harks back to the *Go-Set* years, where at a very young age I was thrown into situations where I had to get real and affecting stories out of

celebrities, and to make contact with them on a real and human level. And I think that served me well.” (Quill, Interview with John Broughton, [www_milesago.com](http://www.milesago.com))

By the early ‘seventies, the “Dear Jandy” column dispensed advice and **Suzi Quatro** got a run in the pages. Staffer, **Ed Nimmervoll** remembers that the *Go-Set* receptionist at the time was a young girl named Jan. In 1972, Nimmervoll married and his wife, also named Jan spent a good deal of time at the *Go-Set* offices. This was at a period when the magazine had moved from its small and cramped offices in St. Kilda to more spacious premises in Drummond Street Carlton. So to avoid confusion around the place, the ladies became known respectively as, Jan “N” and Jan “D”. The latter name stuck and to all there, Jan “D” soon became “Jandy”. Like all those employed at

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Go-Set, she filled multiple roles at the organisational and writing levels. “Jandy” in her role as columnist, had to deal with some pretty bizarre stuff. How about this for an example!:

“Dear Jandy,

Who would possibly like that terrible group, Alice Cooper. For one, take ALICE. She can’t sing for nuts and SHE looks like a guy with make-up on. I don’t know HOW her first album “Billion Dollar Babies” got to number ONE – it’s hopeless. The SINGLE off that album, “School’s Out” is hopeless. I’m pretty sure that Alice Cooper is AUSTRALIA’S worst group.

Dianne.

JANDY ... You’ve got to be joking!! Sorry, but I’m speechless from still gaping in awe at this ridiculous letter.” (*Go-Set*, 28 July, 1973)

Jim Keays, glamorous frontman for **The Masters Apprentices** also contributed as an occasional reporter around town following the break-up of the ‘Masters. One such assignment took him to the Much More Ballroom in mid-winter, 1973 and he was less than impressed with the general scene there. He wasn’t to know at that time that the venue was nearing its end and although he was impressed with **MacKenzie Theory** and **Alta Mira**. The **Dingoes** seemed washed out and lifeless, according to Jim.

Terry Cleary, was actually hired to sell advertising space in *Go-Set* but this didn’t stop him doubling as a crystal-ball gazing psychic for the fortune-telling column – something which he obviously knew little or nothing about:



Appointed Art Director after his poster won a *Go-Set* competition in 1968 – Ian McCausland. (Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L’Affrique.)

ED NIMMERVOLL: “You remember all of those who worked at *Go-Set* in a way. There was a guy called Terry Cleary who was the son of a football legend – Jim Cleary who played with South Melbourne and he was the original ad rep. He was a larger-than-life character. He’d sell the ads and he’d also make up the horoscopes and if you look at the horoscopes, he was just being really stupid and having his revenge on people and sending signals to girls. It was really his own little diary in a horoscope.” (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005)

The major thrust of the write-in segments was to offer advice to teenage girls on their relationship problems – basically, how to catch a guy or how to let him go. Despite becoming a little more explicit as the years went on, the letters from the many lovelorn girls remained still almost plutonic in nature. (There was still an element of innocence about). It was interesting that the advice was usually given by writers and contributors with no counselling experience at all, however as the themes of the letters all had a thread common to adolescents of all eras, this posed few problems for the advisors. There were



Go-Set moved from St. Kilda to Drummond Street, Carlton in the early ‘seventies. The magazine was then run from this terrace house at number 17. Here it stayed until it was packed up and moved to Sydney.

also the odd competitions and give -aways too:

MICHAEL EDMUNDS: "One day, we went to a Sydney TV station with one of our readers, who'd won a night out with Johnny Farnham. I doubt it would happen now; but, when we found him then, he was in a small, cluttered dressing-room, hardly appropriate for the meeting of star and fan. Naturally, we improvised. Johnnie Ray was doing a segment on the same show, to promote his club tour. "Mr Ray," we said, knocking on his dressing-room door. "Would it be OK if we borrowed the back end of your huge and luxurious suite to take a few photos of John meeting the winner of *Go-Set's* 'go out to dinner with Johnny Farnham'

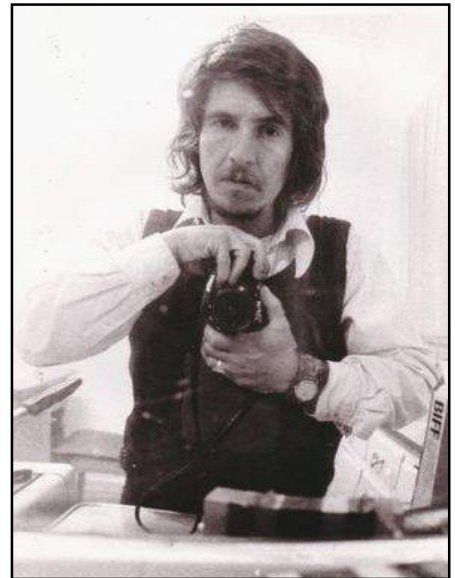
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competition?" "Sure," he said. So we did.

The pictures were magic and glamorous. We were happy. John was happy. Our winner was happy. The readers were happy; and Johnnie Ray was happy because he got a mention, with our thanks, in a magazine that catered for his fans' children -- All of which points me to another unique quality in *Go-Set's* approach: We always tried to maintain the artists' image, as they felt, and as our readers wanted to see them. (Edmunds, op cit, www.4.tpgi.com.au)

Go-Set brought some considerable clout to its already very influential magazine with the inclusions of **Stan Rofe** and **Ed Nimmervoll**, (as writer from 1966, then as Editor, 1972 - 73). "Stan the Man" lent his established credentials in the music business to the column, "Stan Rofe's Tonic" which brought a level of "insider information" and authority to the job of commenting on the music news – thus a new level of serious comment and criticism began to appear in the paper. Nimmervoll had worked for *Go-Set* from 1966 when he started dropping his "National Charts" into the letterbox at *Go-Set's* St. Kilda office on his way to his architecture course at R.M.I.T. in the city and after joining the team, moved on to feature articles. In 1972, when the publication was facing more major changes, he took over as editor.

He wrote the editorials which more than touched on the problems which beset the industry such as his 18 August, 1973 blast entitled, "Our records are too dear". By then, *Go-Set* had matured and sought to break away from the direction it had established for itself – a music magazine for the younger teenage girls. The all important *Go-Set* National Top 40 singles and Top 20 Album charts appeared at a time when when they were studied as carefully as the weekend footy results. Success for an artist on



Photographer David Porter captured many of the images which appeared in *Go-Set* in the early 'seventies. Courtesy of David Porter aka Jacques L'Affrique.)



David Porter mounted an exhibition of his photographs in Melbourne during 2004. He took time out to sip coffee in Lygon Street, Carlton. (Courtesy of Mike Rudd)

the charts meant continuing success in record sales and one fed off the other.

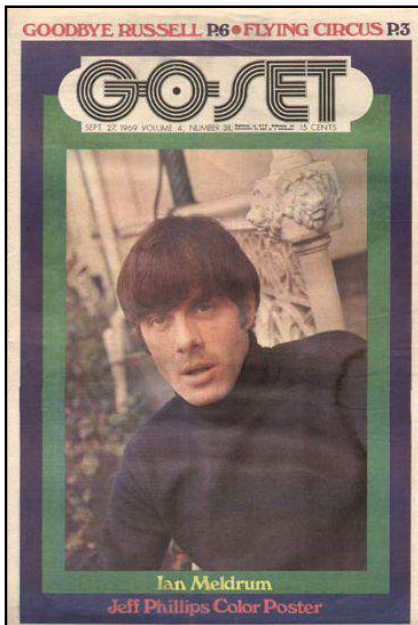
Around 1967, discotheques had blossomed in Melbourne as places for music-starved teens to go on a Friday or Saturday night to listen and groove to their rock and roll heroes. The musicians and singers appeared on stage in an atmosphere which was stimulating and exciting for many – this time for teenage boys, as well as girls. Discos were generally thought to be alcohol and drug free, but were often tight, dark, smoky, hot, sweaty places and sometimes reeked of burning incense and often pot smoke. They immediately drew criticism from parents who grew suspicious of the activities which their children could get caught up in, in these places. Frankly, some of them *were* decorated a little like New Orleans brothels - in a mixture of styles, but often predominately floral Art Nouveau with a touch of 'sixties Carnaby Street kitsch.

They could also get a little rough and potentially dangerous at times, as fights sometimes broke out inside as well as outside the venues. *Go-Set*, in its editorialising mindset found itself in a position to defend the venues, the organisers, the activities and the kids who read their magazine from what they saw as unnecessary suspicion and unwanted criticism from the police.

By the 'seventies, with a maturing readership, *Go-Set* felt the need to move on – with some external and internal influences creating the motivation for change. Some sort of upheaval at the magazine had to take place as many of

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the readers had now moved on to progressive rock and were highly critical of *Go-Set's* stance on the 'teen market and the directions music was taking. It still seemed Beatle-centric to many in an age where rock music had moved on and The T.F. Much Ballroom in Fitzroy reigned supreme as THE place to be in Melbourne. *Go-Set* for 20 March, 1974 featured "Go-Set Consumers Guide To The Beatles" yet nearly four years had passed since the great band's break up and music tastes had matured. Some saw *Go-Set* as now very much pitched to a middle-of-the-road readership.



From cadet writer to celebrity – 'Molly' makes the cover of the 27 September 1969 edition of *Go-Set*. – (Author's collection)

Rolling Stone magazine had entered the field in 1967 taking rock journalism to new heights – this was serious rock rather than frivolous pop and signified clearly that rock music, in all its forms and directions, was here to stay. Repercussions were felt in the *Go-Set* office as *Rolling Stone* created another benchmark for music in print. Eventually, *Go-Set's* stablemate – another spin-off magazine, *Revolution* morphed into *Australian Rolling Stone* concentrating on more serious discussion and journalism.

In its final and declining years, the influence that *Go-Set* had wielded in music circles in its earlier years was just not as strong as it had been, despite still featuring Australian artists and venues. Its decline as a teen-based newspaper was directly in proportion to the decline of the Melbourne city and suburban discotheques as clearly evidenced in the drop in advertisements – only Teaser and the Q Club were major advertisers in the pages of 1973's *Go-Sets*. In order to sell copies, headlines became more eye-catching with a hint of sensationalism. Take the 23 February, 1974 edition as an example. The front page headlines screamed: "**FARNHAM – CASSIDY CLASH**" conjuring up the possibility of some sort of fisticuffs between the visiting star, **David Cassidy** and our own **Johnny Farnham!** But alas, after you'd bought your copy and read a little further, you'd find that the article was about nothing more than a clash of concert dates of both stars for 10 March in Melbourne. By the way, it was all part of "Music For The People" and Farnham's gig was *free* while Cassidy's had a top price tag of \$3!

Costs dictated that many articles were not to be generic anymore, but taken from overseas publications and printed as they were. By late 1972, Waverley Offset Printers, which had always owned shares in *Go-Set* Pty Ltd, had gained full control of the magazine from Fraser in an effort to mop up spiralling debts and had installed its own man, **Gavin Disney** as the person in control. *Go-Set* had accumulated a substantial debt to Waverley Offset Printers quite early in its existence and despite channelling almost all of its profits back to its debtor, was never able to fully repay the debt. Waverley Offset placed **Piotr Olszewski** in as editor until it sold its interests to IPC Magazines. At this point, **Ed Nimmervoll**, now almost the sole surviving worker, was offered the job of editor:

ED NIMMERVOLL: "Music was changing and I was the person that seemed to have a grip on things because music was moving away from pop. *Go-Set* was originally a "pop paper" and it wanted to move with the times but didn't quite know how. So for a while we invented a four-page insert, called "Core" and I became its editor. So that while *Go-Set* had been started by university students – Phillip Frazer – who had worked on the publishing side of university papers – it now had run up a huge debt with the printer, so now the printer called in that debt. At this time, all those who were there at the start were gone – Frazer had bought *Rolling Stone* and began to build up this large publishing interest. Only Ian (Meldrum) and I were left and we were only interested in the music side, not the publishing. So the publisher took over the magazine, bought in a representative and that representative offered me the job as editor." (Nimmervoll, op cit, 23 September, 2005)

The final straw which was of great significance to the Melbourne scene was the eventual sale of *Go-Set* to Sungravure Press in 1974 and the shift to Sydney in a probable attempt to both shore up and fully nationalise the magazine. Sungravure was responsible for the distribution of the magazine in both states but it was still printed at Mulgrave by Waverley Offset Printing. Controlling decisions were now being made from the same office at 57-59 Regent Street, which created *Dolly Magazine*, and *Go-Set* was reduced to only two permanent staffers. This all really spelt the end for *Go-Set*. Lets face it, it had probably run its race before it was sold to Sydney interests. The times had moved on and now it was the moment for *Go-Set* to do the same. With the resignation of the last staff

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writer, **Michelle Williams**, in 1974, the decay was quite obviously complete and *Go-Set* had no choice but to go quietly, with what dignity it had left.

As a footnote, when the Drummond Street office had closed, occasional correspondent and writer, **Jim Keays** was there at the offices on the day that the order was given to "pack it all up". For a few days, it was a chaotic scene as the floors quickly became littered with files, paper, photos, documents and other items, all waiting to be assigned to the nearest council tip. Very little of what had made *Go-Set* such an Australian music industry icon was saved. Several of the lucky photographers who were there in the final weeks managed to rescue some of their work and Keays grabbed several files of Masters Apprentices' photos in order to preserve them. He remembers seeing much, if not all of the memorabilia, including many *Go-Set* Pop Poll awards just simply strewn across the first floor of the Drummond Street terrace awaiting disposal.

What then did this magazine add to the scene and what contribution did it make to the industry?:

MICHAEL EDMUNDS: "Four things, that speak for themselves -- and now that we don't have to use typewriters any more, we can bullet-point them, so you can decide their order of importance for yourself:

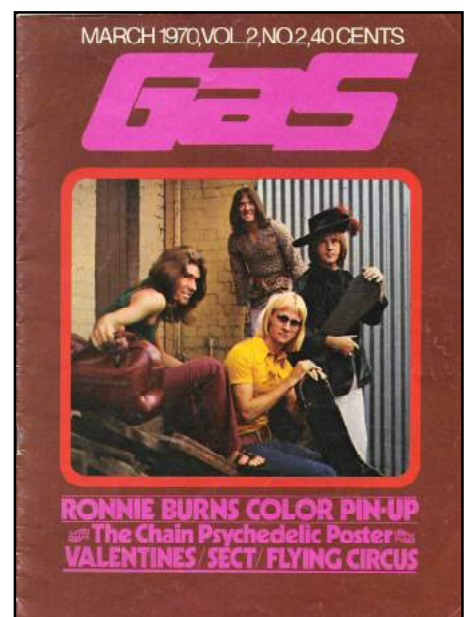
- ⊙ We gave our readers a sense of excitement, and something to look forward to each week.
- ⊙ We documented the world's, and especially Australia's, emerging youth culture until it reached its maturity in the early seventies.
- ⊙ We tried to disseminate the wealth of youthful idealism that was available and promote the innovative projects it automatically entailed.

And...

- ⊙ We gave young people as much information as we could about what was going on in their world, and interpreted it for them as objectively as we could, to help them develop informed opinions, and, by that, become more effective." (Edmunds, op cit, www.4.tpgi.com.au)

So.. in the beginning the editor created Go-Set Magazine and the editor looked down on the growing music sensation, saw that it was good and in the fullness of time, Go-Set begat GAS magazine.

Gas was launched on the scene in October, 1968 by *Go-Set*'s guru **Phillip Fraser** who installed highly successful poster artist and cartoonist **Ian McCausland** as its first editor. *Gas* evolved over its short life from the broadsheet newspaper-style format to more of a glossy pictorial - along the lines of the colourful British *Fabulous Magazine* - down to a smaller magazine. *Fabulous*, an imported fanzine was available at certain Australian newsagents and featured sleek photo shoots of the emerging parade of British stars. It had heaps of glossy, colour pictures of **The Beatles**, **The Rolling Stones**, **Herman's Hermits**, **The Dave Clark Five**, **The Yardbirds**, **The Pretty Things**, **Them**, **Cilla Black**, **Dusty Springfield**, **Gerry and The Pacemakers**, **Brian Poole and the Tremeloes** and **The Kinks** among a vast array of British Invasion stars whose popularity was soaring in Australia. I remember almost religiously picking up a copy of each new issue of *Fabulous* at a newsagent in Burwood Road, Hawthorn, opposite Swinburne College, as soon as it was released, when I was studying there at the time.



The short-lived spin-off from *Go-Set*, *Gas* magazine from March, 1970, with The Masters Apprentices on the cover - in colour. (Author's collection)

But, why another magazine by the *Go-Set* team? By 1968, the *Go-Set* readership had begun to mature and they were being strongly influenced by the new wave of Psychedelic music and fashion wafting out of San Francisco like some giant cloud of pot smoke drifting across the Pacific and *Go-Set* began to incorporate the readers' needs within its pages. But, there was a whole new target audience of young teens emerging like the original *Go-Set* readers had a few years earlier and they wanted more of the glossy posters to pin up on bedroom walls, the backs of doors and ceilings above their beds, much to the chagrin of their parents. The decision was made by *Go-Set* staff and management to create an entirely new publication to meet this perceived need, rather than increase *Go-Set* in size and print quality.

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America's **Monkees**, the made-for-TV band that became a bonafide pop sensation in its own right all around the world, had arrived on the scene and *Gas* picked up on the younger teen's infatuation with the band, its hits and its half-hour T.V series which began the phenomenon. The first edition of *Gas* coincided with their tour of Australia in late-1968 and featured loads of pin-ups. This inaugural edition was probably a pilot to test the waters before the magazine settled into some sort of a regular format. Eventually *Gas* became more stylish in presentation and established itself as a monthly publication – the original black and white format giving way to full colour. It was certainly more chatty and gossipy than the maturing *Go-Set* even though it shared staff regulars with its parent magazine. Meldrum, **Lily Brett**, **Wendy Saddington**, **Stan Rofe**, **Jean Gollan**, **Greg Quill**, **Michele O'Driscoll** and **David Efflick** shared the writing duties. It was printed in the standard offset method but, unlike its 'parent' newspaper was printed at **Southdown Press**, 32 Walsh Street, Melbourne, which was better set up to accommodate the colour printing process.



Hi Gas Groovers!
 How can so many
 goodies be crammed into
 one magazine?
 Sometimes WE even wonder!
 Ronnie Burns graces the
 middle pages in beautiful
 glossy color, the Sect talk
 about being happy,
 Johnny Farnham gives us a
 glimpse of his childhood days,
 and Wendy's fashion
 secrets are revealed once
 and for all, not forgetting
 the usual Competitions,
 quiz pages, and the
 Gas Dossier –
 See what I mean?
 Love,
 Ian
 xxxxx

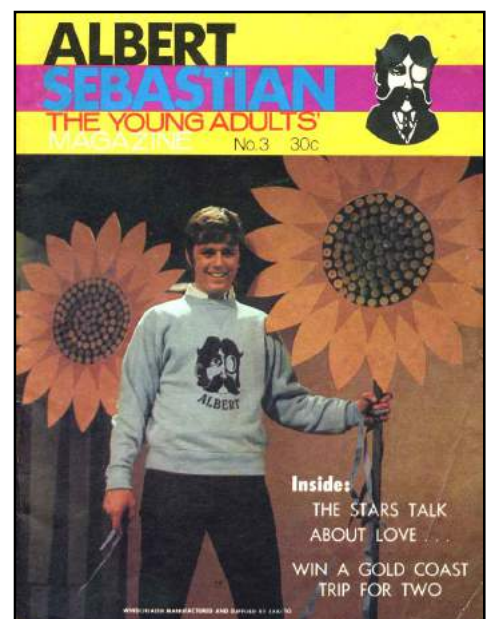
Ian McCausland's page one foreword to the March, 1970 edition of *Gas*.

Meldrum had taken over as editor from McCausland by 1969 and *Gas* became a smaller, possibly more serious magazine increasing its commitment to Australian bands and artists in response to the distinct and healthy local scene which began to emerge by the mid- to late-sixties. By February, 1971 however, *Gas* had run out of.... well.. *gas!* and had run its race, while its sibling publication, the floundering *Go-Set* lurched along until 1974, before heading to Sydney and eventual oblivion.

As a footnote, a potential rival magazine for *Go-Set* arose briefly in 1966/7 just around the same time as *Go-Set* was also setting out on the relatively untrodden pathway that was 'teenage journalism'. More a 'pretender to the throne' than a serious rival, the magazine was titled **Albert Sebastian**. It became a shooting star which burned out and disappeared from the scene just as rapidly as it had risen. This magazine has long been thought to have emanated from the city discotheque of the same name, however, according to photographer **Jim Colbert**, there was no connection at all between this magazine and Sebastians in Exhibition Street, operated by the Knight family. Yet the similarities in nomenclature are uncanny and there may have been a tenuous

connection back at the concept stage of this magazine which failed to materialise, leaving *Albert Sebastian* to go its own way.

Colbert, who eventually became an eminent photographer with *Go-Set* from 1967 onwards, remembers being approached by **Andrew Theophanous**, a young man from a Greek Cypriot migrant family, to take a few photographs for the proposed publication. Operating under the name "Andrew Charles", Theophanous, a Monash University Philosophy student, was one of the creators of the magazine which came out in quarto size; contrasting with *Go-Set* which was tabloid style and



Albert Sebastian – a short-lived early competitor to *Go-Set*. Unfortunately, it only lasted a few issues.

size. (Theophanous would eventually go on to become a long-serving Federal Labor, then Independent Member of Parliament from 1980 to 2001, but in a strange twist of fate, fell from grace after court investigations into his conduct as a MP in 1999. He is the brother of **Theo Theophanous**, also a politician and Victorian State Minister for Energy Industries and Resources in the Steve Bracks' Labor Government.)

At the start, **Andrew Theophanous** was joined by **Joseph Zayda** and **George Koumpan** in getting the magazine underway for what was a dazzling start, but would in reality be a very short run. Printed on the same presses at

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Waverley Offset Printers as *Go-Set*, it lasted a mere thirteen issues before it folded. Colbert recalls only being employed by the magazine for about three or four months before going over to *Go-Set* early in January, 1967. Many of the photos in the magazine were taken by Colbert, **Ric Hawkins** and **Geoff Davidson** with the latter being the main contributor. Colbert recalls that no one managed to get paid anything for their services and he doesn't remember seeing the magazine on the streets after he went to work at the *Go-Set* offices. (Colbert, email correspondence, 2 May, 2006). However, the magazine continued on until nearly Christmas, 1967 though it would seem that it attracted declining interest from the public.

What future the owners/publishers envisaged at the start for *Albert Sebastian* is not known, however, by the end of 1967 it had sunk into oblivion leaving *Go-Set* to emerge as the sole Melbourne authority on 'teen music, attitudes and trends for nearly a decade.

MELBOURNE MUSIC ON TELEVISION –

***Kommotion* – ATV 0, December, 1965 to late 1967.**

As conservative as Melbourne was in the 'sixties, television for young people was as progressive as anywhere in the world. Such programs as *Kommotion*, *Happening 70 and 71*, *The Go!! Show*, *Its All Happening* and *Uptight* presented young talent in its many forms. While the Sydney-produced shows like *Bandstand* with the clean-cut and forever smiling **Brian Henderson** were a little too clinical, sugary and middle-of-the-road for the tastes of many 'teenagers, Melbourne-produced youth music T.V. shows were a little more adventurous, presenting programmable rock and pop music on the screens, much of it in prime time. While Sydney came up with the less-than-hip **Allen Brothers** doing their rather dated cabaret-style pop and dance format, Melbourne launched the (almost) all-mime format *Kommotion* onto our screens in December, 1965. Never a clone of British and American pop shows like *Ready Steady Go* and *Shindig* or *American Bandstand* it aired in the prime-time slot for schoolies, 5.30 pm each weeknight – after school but



The original Channel O studios in Springvale Road, Nunawading where *Kommotion* and *The Go!! Show* were shot from 1965 onwards. The station's commitment to showing pop music on television was an important step forward.

before homework time. It was hosted by established 3UZ DJ, **Ken Sparkes** who insisted at the outset on having a real input into the music and talent selection of the show. Sparkes recalls that *Kommotion* was in fact, based on a Los Angeles "lip-synch" program called *The Lloyd Thaxton Show* which had commenced in 1962 on KCOP Channel 13 and eventually went national in the USA. Thaxton was a singer/guitarist who would lip-synch his own tracks on the show. The use of the term, "lip-synch" is important, because had the creators of *Kommotion* used that terminology instead of "miming", later problems with Actors' Equity in this country may have been minimised.

The key to the format was to present the new and vital beat music, rather than the sedate pre-rock crooner-style pop and the program probably can take a great deal of credit for thrusting beat and mod music into the public arena, thus benefiting many of the future Australian pop and rock idols of the mid- to late-'sixties. All this from a show where these artists didn't sing a note with their own voices!

The "Kommotion Kids", as they were known, formed a tight-knit troupe of performers, almost pulled directly from the streets and they were all fascinatingly *young*! Many went on to future career successes within the industry. A youthful **Ian Meldrum** sometimes



A TV Week poster of the second *Kommotion* cast taken on rooftop of the Willard King offices in Chapel St., Prahran. (Courtesy of Ken Sparkes)

looked a little overawed on screen in his first appearances before a TV camera, but he managed to seize his chance in the music world. Meldrum has credited the show with providing him with a vision for the future and it allowed him to see the inner workings of the television studio.

The parent company which produced the show was **Willard King** and the production prime-mover was Melbourne radio personality, **Lewis Bennett**. "Willard King" as a person didn't exist at all – Bennett selected the name because, "... it sounded strong and that was important" (Sparkes, author's correspondence, 2 May, 2006) The 271.

off-camera team also included, **David Joseph**, **John "Starmaker" Collins** and late **Jack "Mr. Showbiz" Neary**. Joseph, an advertising executive, had a great eye for talent and was at the time married to top Aussie singer **Robyn Alvarez**, from Sydney's *Bandstand* (*TV Week Logies Best Female singer 1964*). He also managed *Bandstand's* compare, **Brian Henderson**. Joseph however was the prime-mover in setting up the series and was keen to pick a youthful team, anchored by Sparkes, who always seemed more mature than the rest of the cast.

The first episode which went to air was actually the pilot for the series and Sparkes did more than just compare that first program:

KEN SPARKES: "The bases were loaded with talent and what a team to work with, (and) each person from the top down contributing. The feeling was electric as we went from audition to talent audition seeking the initial team.

The first show that went to air was actually the audition tape we recorded for the 0-10 Network. One memory that does stand out is that despite having recorded several discs, I mimed (hate the word) Tom Jones's "*Whats New Pussy Cat!*" I then decided to never mime anyone else's songs again and also never plugged any of my own discs on the show.



The cast of *Kommotion*, taken at the Adelaide studios. (Courtesy of Ken Sparkes)



Denise Drysdale and Ken Sparkes on the *Kommotion* set at Melbourne's Channel 0 studios. (Courtesy of Ken Sparkes)

In retrospect, *more fool me!* (Sparkes, op cit, 2 May, 2006)

Grant Rule, (later producer of *Countdown*), **Norman Willison**, **Denise Drysdale**, **Chantel Contouri** and the lovely **Maggie Stewart** who was later to become **Ronnie Burns'** wife all featured as either lip-synchers or Go-Go dancers. Ken Sparkes remembers some of the innovative team members:

KEN SPARKES: "**Sandy Turnbull** - one of the most delightful gals you could ever possibly meet. Sandy had already been part of the Channel Nine dancers and a person I will always remember because of her even temperament and great good looks. *Still waters run deep.*

Maggie Stewart - a standout from the start who oozed class with a wonderful devilish sense of humour.

The Fitzgerald Family -

Jillian Fitzgerald - (Lean and great dancer had so much drive and energy) now, what a ... pocket dynamite.

She was a trained dancer and her determination to give 110% was a delight to witness. She'd dance six TV shows and then dance all night at a disco, go straight to rehearsal and want to do it all again. The only thing she was scared of was getting her legs damaged or broken.

Jillian holds a special place in my heart.

Belinda Fitzgerald (Soft face and sultry)

Shaun Fitzgerald (youngest ever *Kommotion* Team member (who) may

have been 12 at the time)

Grant Rule - (Handsome - girls favourite) He was thought of as a handsome likeable young man. Who was to know that Grant would become one of Australia's top and most respected TV Producers/Directors and be the driving force behind the now legendary ABC TV show "Countdown." A true gentleman.

Alex Silbersher - (strong facial features)

Alex Kapell - (Boyish good looks) It was sad to see them go when *Kommotion* Team #1 was shattered. Both had great appeal and were solid workers.

Terry Sparks - (neat, dark-haired, clean cut) Successful business man - worked with Nyal Industries and last heard 272.

of in Real Estate, and another real gentleman.

Hayden Spencer - one of the true characters in the Team, solid worker and when he and Jillian Fitzgerald got together, what a routine ...

Lindsay Edwards - solid, dedicated performer - always on time and keen to succeed. Extremely likeable and intelligent conversationalist. Went to Tasmania and became a top TV presenter (TVT 6) and TV Week Logie winner four years in a row, 1968 to 1971.

David Bland - (great favourite with the girls and his shy, good looks hid a very talented person) A real quiet achiever who has one of Australia's *best ears* for music. (Sparkes, op cit, 2 May, 2006)

One regular who has since maintained a strong and dynamic presence on the music scene is **Denise Drysdale**. **Ken Sparkes** first met her at a Toorak discotheque:

KEN SPARKES: "I met her at Pinocchio's disco in Toorak (Carters Ave) through a dancer I was going out with. I saw Denise move and she knocked me out with her flowing black hair and flashing smiling eyes. I asked Denise for a dance and then suggested she join the *Kommotion* Team. Denise was young (about sixteen) dedicated and although very young, a seasoned trooper, having appeared on *The Graham Kennedy Show* and other television shows as a dancer." (Sparkes, op cit, 2 May, 2006.)

Drysdale and Contouri, (who originally came from Adelaide) became the dancing mainstays of the show. Contouri eventually took a side-step into acting and gained notoriety when she was sacked from *Uptight* for her statements about the dancers on that show not being sexy enough! She later gained some acting credibility with her appearances on the steamy, early soapie, *Number 96*. Denise, of course perfected the art of Go-Go dancing and at one time ran a school for dancers, who could graduate complete with a 'Denise Drysdale Diploma' upon successful completion of the course and find ample work around the venues and clubs. Like bands at the time, the dancers worked a number of places in one night, completing sets and then moving on to other clubs around town.



Sandy Edmunds belts out a tune with all the gusto of the original artist. (From *Go-Set*, 25 May, 1966, photographer unknown)



Ken Sparks in his days as a DJ with radio station, 3UZ - from a publicity photograph issued by the station.

The show did have guests such as Melbourne locals, **Normie Rowe**, **Bobby and Laurie** and **Lynne Randell** whose perky, short, bobbed hairstyle typified the Mod fashion which became such an important part of the format, however they too mimed their own songs. **Mike Rudd**, over from New Zealand with his band, **Chants R & B**, mimed their record, *I'm Your Witchdoctor* on *Kommotion*. Even the "house band" **The Strangers** had to be content with miming their own music and this was not really such an issue at the time and quite acceptable to the viewing public who saw the format as innovative and more importantly, it brought the current pop stars into the homes.

I remember being part of a select audience at the Channel 0 complex on 29 January, 1965 for a **Rolling Stones** Special recorded in the very complex where *Kommotion* would be launched later in that same year. We sat on tiered seats, were encouraged to scream and wave our hands, (but no whistling!) and watched as **The Rolling Stones** on their first tour, mimed a brace of their hits. It aired on 12 February and the footage still exists. A quick inspection will show that the guitars had no leads, there were no amps and Charlie's drumsticks stopped well short of their targets. The "wow factor" for us was in seeing them, being in their presence but not necessarily hearing them play live. In the pre-video clip age, *Kommotion* brought to life, the

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real sounds of real pop and rock music, even if the faces were not those of the original artists – it didn't seem to matter much. Occasionally, guest artists were given some sort of special privilege and were allowed to sing live – but to their own pre-recorded backing tape.

It's not certain if the producers intended it to happen, but the mime artists of *Kommotion* became pseudo pop stars in their own right and attracted a (mainly female) fan base of their own. The Team members actually lived together in one house at 29 Dalgety Street, St. Kilda which was owned by the producers of the show who also owned and ran the venues, Opus, 431 St Kilda Rd., Swinger at Coburg and Tom Katz at Sorrento. Tenants at Dalgety Street changed from time to time and visiting bands were also accommodated in this large boarding house. **Robert Bradshaw**, who looked after the road needs of **The Levi Smith's Clefs** when they toured, didn't look forward to school holidays because of the huge legion of girls on the loose for a number of weeks every year. He felt it was a rather unnerving experience to wake up and find eight to ten hysterical 'teenagers in the rooms because in those days, doors weren't locked at all. There could be another fifty screaming girls outside the front door at any given time. Amongst the variety of young boarders at The *Kommotion* House were other emerging pop luminaries such as Go-Setter, **Lilly Brett** and vocalist, **Ray Burgess**. **Ian Meldrum** also lived in the house before he eventually moved out to share quarters with his good mate, **Ronnie Burns** at Burns' mum's house. *Kommotion*, for Meldrum was a vital link for him and experience in front of a television camera:



Norman Willison on the *Kommotion* set. (Photographer unknown.)

IAN MELDRUM: " ... I worked for Go-Set and *Kommotion* which was a mime show started at about the same time in 1966. They had some hassles around September with the mimers and the producer asked if I'd like to do a

number on the show and I said no I wasn't interested but after a couple of weeks the whole cast left and I relented. I think I did a "Sam The Sham" number called "Little Red Riding Hood" and I stayed. The show helped me because I had some sort of identification with the national audience as a writer then. I was on *Kommotion* for about 18 months..." (Meldrum, interview with Dean Moriarty, *Planet*, 9 February, 1972, P.7).

Compare Sparkes witnessed the extraordinary efforts of choreographer **Bert Shaw** to pattern young Meldrum into some sort of rhythmic dancer:

KEN SPARKES: "Bert Shaw was the energy behind the dance movements and was deeply loved by us all. His energy knew no bounds and he inspired the Team to greater heights when they hit a lull.

"Step two three four, arrow one two, arms up throw them out, give it all you've got girl, show 'em the goods!"

Loved him!

Never once did I see Bert in a negative mood despite having to put movement into Ian Meldrum, who for all his raw ability, "clapped in waltz time when we played Rock-n'-Roll" but that only made us like Ian more.



Grant Rule with the *Kommotion* dancers – Denise Drysdale is on the left. (Photographer unknown)

Ian was a laugh a minute, especially when he did "Little Red Riding Hood" ...it took me all my time to control myself from falling off the host stool as he was only a matter of feet away and I got a live close up of his performance. A true crack up.

Ian Meldrum was the only one who could not remember his mark, one that he had to hold if he was on Mark 1 after finishing his number. He was the reason that we had to stop tape many a time as he walked straight into the corner camera with the long lens picking up the Host area. It was actually when he started to get the name Moll! (Sparkes, op cit, 2 May, 2006

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Kommotion was shot in a very small studio which was actually reserved for presenting the news. The fixed camera with the long lens was located in the right-hand corner and most shots of the host were from the waist up. Not all of the show was shot at Nunawading. **Ken Sparkes**, as well as comparing the show, was able to utilise his expertise in radio broadcasting to complete segments to be used in the show:

KEN SPARKES: "We became very innovative with camera angles and effects but where we shone was in the audio, most of it was pre-produced at The Greater 3UZ, 45 Bourke St. I mixed the basic show, complete with applause and the TV audio inserted the special guests and last minute changes. Worked well and had more impact. Well, to our minds it did.

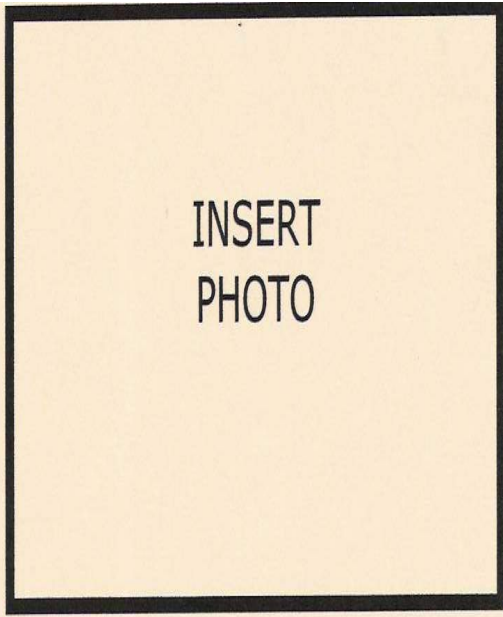
The early 7 am starts each Saturday at Nunawading studios made for many a speed record to the studios from SouthYarra. In those days the speed zones were not as restrictive and in real terms ATV0/10 was in the sticks! When we arrived we started to pump out music to get the Team warmed up as it was a long tough day." (Sparkes, op cit, 2 May, 2006)

In mid- 1966, *Kommotion's* existence was threatened by a mass walk-out of its most popular stars over a dispute with the show's producers,

Willard King, who countered by hiring new performers to take their place. Prompted by **David Joseph**, who was apparently negotiating to take the show to Channel 7 at the time, the only outcome of this drastic action was to fragment and damage the show:

KEN SPARKES: "The "walk out" was engineered by David who was doing a deal on the side with Channel 7. He started to "stop tape" and appeared to pick on certain members of the Team. David simply walked into the studio in the middle of a number and he became a real pest. This was not part of our regular routine as we had a *solid six show in one recording day* schedule. I was none the wiser until I was tipped off by folk in the Channel 7 group. David must have forgotten that I appeared on "Teen Time" (ATN 7) was National Host of "The Hi-Fi Club" (7 Network) performer on "The Johnny O'Keefe Show" (7 Network) commentator on "Bathurst Motor Races" (7 Network) and still mates with many Channel 7 folk.

I spoke to Lewis Bennett and John Collins and a plan was formulated to search for a new Team as by that time I had a fair idea of which Team members were "David Joseph's" chosen people. The "stop tape" routine came to an end when I finally confronted him during one of his *walk in's*. This was never witnessed by any of the Team or Crew. To get onto the Studio floor, David had to walk past my host set. So when I saw him move from the control room, I ambushed him in the corridor outside the studio



Jillian Fitzgerald currently works as a choreographer and dance instructor in suburban Melbourne.



The vibrant Denise Drysdale dancing on *Kommotion* - (From *Go-Set*, 25 May, 1966, photographer unknown)

and forced him into the wall. I did not touch him just moved my body in his direction and then said, "I know what you're up to and make another move and you will suffer the consequences."

I then went back to the show and he never came into the studio again, as the following week he was removed. What David also forgot was Lewis Bennett, Jack Neary & John Collins were very powerful in the executive circles.

Very sad indeed as he was extremely talented. Following this incident I never really saw David again and only met with his wife Robyn years later when I was a DJ in Los Angeles." (Sparkes, op cit, 2 May, 2006.

Stan Rofe, legendary DJ and *Go-Set* columnist made an initial assessment of the changeover period and the

installation of a whole new bunch of regulars:



Ken Sparkes with Melbourne band, The Cherokees and the Kommmotion dancers, probably from TV Times, c.1966. Photographer unknown.

also be remembered that *Kommmotion* performers never lip-synched any Australian artists!

The ban had a profound affect on **Ken Sparkes** who remained personally, a little bitter at the struggle which this action produced and has always felt deeply for the artists from *Kommmotion* whose careers may have been curtailed by the decision: "I tore up my membership and never rejoined the union." (Sparkes, op cit, 2 May, 2005)

So, backed into a corner, there was no effective room for the producers to manoeuvre by changing the format and no real chance that the show could be altered to suit any other framework – therefore, in late 1967, *Kommmotion* reluctantly ceased production. The "pop experiment", however had been successful!

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STAN ROFE: "I felt rather sad watching *Kommmotion* and felt a lot of old faces were missing, however the dancing, if anything, was of a higher standard than in the past, and the kids miming was more than presentable – with a little support from the viewers, I am sure the new *Kommmotion*, given enough time to settle in, and with your support for the cast now fronting the cameras, will be as big as ever" (*Go-Set*, Wednesday, 17 August, 1966)

Kommmotion continued on the screens for a while longer. But all was not well for the show's future. This time, miming, which had been the strength of the show, was to be under attack when in 1967, an on-screen ban placed on miming caused the show to eventually fold. Actors' Equity, the union which oversaw the welfare of its show biz members (all *Kommmotion* regulars were members of Actors' Equity) heavy-handedly stepped in, and in a pointless case of blind stupidity, put its own members out of work by a blundered declaration that what they did on screen was "acting". In stark contrast overseas, 'lip-synching' continued in both America and Britain always with no interference by unions in those countries. As well, no record companies or overseas artists, who really were the owners of the product, ever complained about miming on the popular show and in fact were all grateful for the "free" publicity

and exposure which the program gave them. It should



Ken Sparkes is involved now with motor racing and broadcasting with 2UE, Sydney. He frequently visits Melbourne and is the "voice-over man" for the TV Week Logies Presentation night.

The Go!! Show - August 1964 to August 1967.

The Go!! Show, which was truly live, had been a sort of stable-mate to *Kommotion* and with both airing on Melbourne T.V. screens in glorious black and white, it showed the strength in the 'teen pop industry. It pre-dated its stable-mate at Channel 0 by about 16 months, beginning on our screens in August 1964, following in the wake of **The Beatles** tour of Australia. Both teen shows demonstrated the commitment that ATV 0 had to teen programming which brought them the music and the faces they wanted to see, unlike the incipient *Bandstand* which served up something akin to what adults expected their children to watch.

The Go!! Show moved into the mid-'sixties at a faster pace and was prepared to present "real" local stars who sang their own hits. *The Go!! Show* stepped up a little from the "pop-Top 40" thrust of *Kommotion* and gave some of the up and coming beat and progressive rock bands a chance in front of a television camera. Unlike the *Kommotion* crew which numbered only about twenty or so youngsters, *The Go!! Show* presented over time, the cream of Melbourne's talent at a time when discotheque audiences were clambering for their heroes on stage. One supported the other – the kids could watch the singers and bands on *The Go!! Show* set when it aired on three nights per week, then catch a tram or train to the city to see them live on stage, (provided they were old enough to gain entry!)

Very deliberately based on Britain's *Ready, Steady Go!*, *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, and America's *Shindig* in particular, it employed the same type of set – a stage, with chairs and tables in the foreground giving it an illusion of being in a café. Those who appeared reads like a who's who of pop-dom in Melbourne in 1965: **Lynne Randell, Yvonne Barrett, Normie**



comedian who compared The Beatles Tour concerts in June, 1964. Somehow, he landed the role as first compare of *The Go!! Show*. (Publicity photo, photographer unknown)

Rowe, Billy Adams, The Loved Ones, The Mixtures, M.P.D.

Ltd, Marcie Jones, The Town Criers, Bobby and Laurie, Peter Doyle, Colin Cook, The Cherokees, The Groop, Merv Benton, Buddy England, Olivia Newton-John and Pat Carroll plus many more.

Not all acts were great and that was part of the almost-live format – some were brilliant, some were try-hards and some didn't quite cut it on TV at all. However, the program was current to the minute and strictly for Australian, and specifically Melbourne artists and audiences. Having said that, a select few touring singers managed to get a look in – one of these was **Eden Kane** who appeared on the show when he toured here. In an effort to appeal to a wider audience, *The Go!! Show* did from time to time, feature Sydney-based artists but those from interstate, such as the **Running Jumping Standing Still** and **The Purple Hearts** were bands which had made Melbourne their home either permanently or for an extended period.

The show was the concept of **DYT Productions** and its executive producer was **Julian Jover** with **Dennis Smith** as executive producer.



Ian "Turps" Turpie was a budding entertainer, although not a "pop star" in the true sense of the word. He later became known as a games-show host, but in 1964, emerged as host and compare for *The Go!! Show*. (Publicity photo, courtesy of Ian Turpie)

Godfrey Phillips directed the show, and **Bruce Rowland** acted as musical director. DYT consisted of well-known entertainer and harmonica player, **Horrie Dargie**, **Arthur Young** and **John Tillbrook**. Most early episodes were the full one-hour format. The first compare was **Alan Field**, the English comedian who had come to Australia with The Beatles and acted as compare at the concerts. Few now remember him at all.

However, after 20-odd episodes, **Ian Turpie**, who was managed at the time by Dargie, joined as compare/vocalist.

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'Turps' had already spent limited time in a hosting role in television and had hoped to be offered the compare's spot from the outset, considering he had appeared on the very first show and was known to the producers:

IAN TURPIE: "The annoying thing to me was that my management then was Horrie Dargie, and they started *The Go!! Show* and gave the compare's job to Field. I suppose that upset me a bit, but I hadn't done that sort of thing before. I have a vague memory that Alan Field developed a very bad facial rash... a sort of acne and whether that was the reason he left, I don't really know.

I personally think that because I'd done *Sing, Sing, Sing*, that Horrie in particular, thought I could do it. I don't know how much they were paying Alan Field but they gave me a hundred quid! So because I'd been doing *Sing, Sing, Sing*, I suppose I wasn't frightened of doing it. I wasn't really good at it but I thought I was then." (Turpie, author's interview, 11 May, 2006)

Although Turpie had taken over the comparing of **Johnny O'keefe's** *Sing, Sing, Sing* for it's last six

weeks after O'Keefe had suffered his much publicised

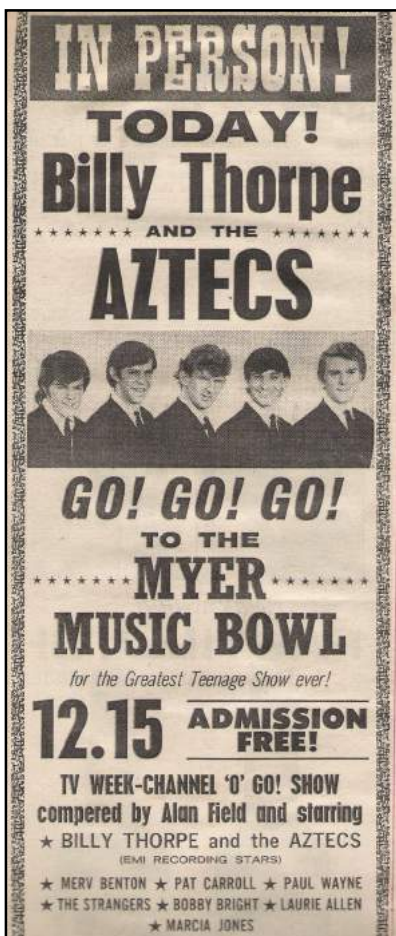


Johnny Chester by 1965, was an industry veteran, and became executive producer for *The Go!! Show's* first season. Publicity card from W & G Records. Photo – Fanfare Films)

nervous breakdown, he still looked a little wooden and uncomfortable in his delivery as he introduced segments which featured a mixture of current pop idols with established hits and those just starting off in the business locally. Rock legend, **Johnny Chester** acted as executive producer for this, the first series. The show also broke a number of songs which became eventual hits – **Bobby and Laurie's** *I Belong With You* made a huge and instant impact on the Melbourne public. *Go!!* used the live audience format which gave it its spontaneous and not-quite-fully-planned look. It was also meant to be current with advertisements (usually held towards the camera on a scrap of paper!) notifying the public of dances around town and special events of importance to local kids. The whole thing was somewhat spontaneous and the set used, appeared expansive, yet false:

IAN TURPIE: "The set changed week by week. Often there would be people sitting around tables – café-style ... it was a 'wandering' set with rooms in different places. But it couldn't be too complicated because the audience was only on one side – all 'teenyboppers' – all screaming. But more often than not, there'd be a stage – because you'd have bands like The Easybeats and you couldn't literally put them in a small room. So it would be all done in front of the audience with a vague idea of a set behind. Mind you, the sets weren't very expensive. But that was 'sixties television.'" (Turpie, op cit, 11 May, 2006)

At the height of *Go!!*'s popularity, the ATV 0 main studio's 300-seat tiered seating was fully booked out for the 39-week extension of the show after its initial 13-week run. One particular chocolate manufacturer found that after advertising on the show for a two-week period, it than actually had to ration out its supplies to Melbourne's milk bars and shops, such was the response to the



An ad in *The Sun* on Friday, 27 November, 1964 for *The Go!! Show* live at *The Myer Music Bowl*. (Courtesy of Graeme Eadie)

show. On 23 March, 1966, *The Go!! Show* went live again and attracted 85,000 screaming fans to The Myer Music Bowl who threw masses of streamers and presents on stage for their idols, over the heads of the sturdy line of policemen who stood shoulder to shoulder in front of the stage to stop any frantic fans from getting to the stage. A slightly out-of-date **Johnny O’Keefe** sang 278.

his signature tune, *Shout* to a hysterical reception, and **The Easybeats** on tour almost sparked a riot when it was their turn on stage. A fan launched a chain of stockings tied together which measured about 30 metres in length and this landed right at **Stevie Wright’s** feet. Riding a crest of popularity, **MPD Ltd** did their hits with **Mike Brady** out front and at the conclusion of their set, drummer **Danny Finlay** threw his drumsticks into the audience where there was an all-in melee from the fans trying to souvenir them. In all, this live performance mirrored exactly the sort of popularity the show had for a couple of short years.



The whole Turpie clan – Future *Go!! Show* compare, Ian Turpie with his five brothers, from left Noel, Colin, Paul, Keith & Alan appearing on *The Jimmy Hannan Show*, c.1964. (Courtesy of Ian Turpie)

Into 1966, Turpie handed the compare’s spot over to the ever-smiling **Johnny Young** who was also an establishing star, having plenty of chart success with a run of sticky-sweet poppy-tunes like *Cara-Lyn* and *Step Back*. Turpie’s decision was a wise one at that stage due to a dilemma based on the direction his career was heading:

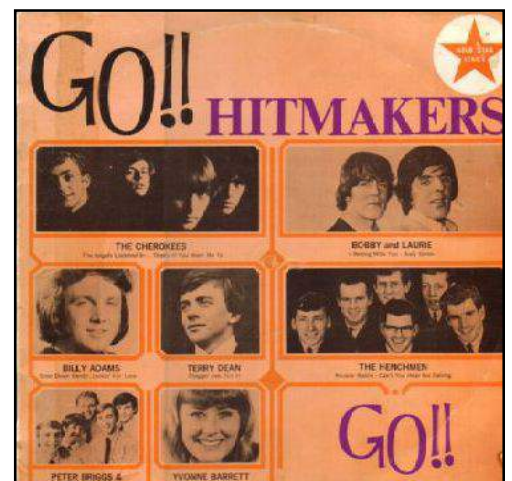
IAN TURPIE: “Because of my age... I was 21 and I was now doing a lot of stuff on Channel 7. I was literally on two opposing shows on two television channels at the same time, because I was doing *Time For Terry* with Terry O’Neill. In fact, the reason I left *The Go!! Show* was

because the Channel 0 people were saying I was becoming known as a Channel 7 personality... which I thought was a load of bullshit because if I did any pub or club gigs, I was billed as ‘The Compare of *The Go!! Show*.’ So I had the choice of staying with *The Go!! Show* or continue with Terry. And I really think ... by then I was 23... my future lay more with the ‘blue rinse set’ than it did with the kids. They used to run past me to Normie (Rowe) with their arms outstretched and screaming. It was quite sad. So I decided to leave.

I remember the last show I did; I sang, *It’s Not Unusual* (Tom Jones) ‘It’s not unusual to be fired by anyone’ which wasn’t the truth, I left. I saw the writing on the wall. I saw me becoming their resident... whatever ... and I thought I don’t want to be stuck there forever, doing whatever they want. I can imagine me doing ads or whatever comes up.” (Turpie, op cit, 11 may, 2006)

Johnny Young’s reign as compare was relatively short-lived but it gave him the opportunity to see the array of new talent. One of those new stars to appear on *The Go!! Show* was **Russell Morris**, fresh from his split with **Somebody’s Image**. He only made the one appearance:

RUSSELL MORRIS: “My first solo performance was the very last *Go!! Show* and I did *Hush* by myself. I went to Johnny Young for help and I said, ‘Johnny, I’m thinking of leaving the band. What do you think I should do?’ He virtually patted me on the head and said, ‘When you grow up and become a big solo artist like me, and become really, really good, I’ll give you some good advice. But now, my advice to you is *don’t* go out on your own, you can’t cut it.’ So I did *The Go!! Show* by myself and Johnny Young was watching ... and the crowd went berserk and Youngie.... dollar signs in his eyes ... going, *clink, clink, clink*. And when I got into the dressing room he was on to



A compilation LP of stars of *The Go!! Show*. (Author’s collection)

me straight away, 'I've got some songs I'd like you to hear.' And he played me some songs. Johnny denies this ... (but) he dismissed me and he virtually said, 'Mate, stay with the band, you're not good enough to go out on your own.' Youngie saw the potential to get his songs recorded so he approached me." (Morris, op cit, 22 May, 2006)

For three years, *The Go!! Show* made it possible to present a 'teen-based on-air music program and placed the ATV 279.

0 network which was in its first years of operation, at the forefront of the youth push for ratings. As the next generation of kids did a little later at the Rippon Lea studios of the ABC for *Countdown*, the 'sixties ravers lined up at the Springvale Road gates of ATV 0 to be part of the audience for the tapings – no other networks in



The Lincolns became The Rondells when they backed Bobbie and Laurie and other artists like Buddy England, Billy Adams and Lynne Randell. The band included the future Daddy Cool rhythm section – bass guitarist Wayne Duncan, (second from left) and Gary Young, (far right). (Photographer unknown)

Melbourne accepted the challenge to seriously take on pop music. For the third season in the first half of 1967, the show was reduced to 30-minute episodes and **The Strangers** continued to act as resident band, becoming the backing band to solo singers when needed.

As an off-shoot, DYT Promotions began to offer opportunities for many of the artists to record their songs and these were released on the GO!! label. Many of the earlier acts got a chance to cut a record or two and hits by **Bobby & Laurie, MPD Ltd, The Strangers, The Henchmen, The Cherokees, The Rondells** and **Billy Adams** were regularly performers on the show in a sort of cross-promotion. (And why wouldn't you if you produced both the show and the records!) The GO!! label began its decline at the same time that the show folded in mid-1967 and ceased to be an active producer of records from that time onwards.

The demise of *The Go!! Show* in 1967 and also that of its "sister" program *Kommotion*, may in fact be

linked with the move towards live rock in the city and suburbs, rather than any dissatisfaction or disinterest by the public in pop and rock music on their TV screens. Those original teenyboppers who championed both shows when they commenced back in 1964-5, by 1967 were probably old enough to gain full entry into Berties, The 'Tum, Sebastians, et al and maybe the lure of experiencing truly live rock rather than "virtual" live music in a studio, was becoming more of a priority and draw-card to them. Rock venues were definitely overflowing and the boom period had just begun in Melbourne. Although not there at the end of the Go!! Show's run, **Ian Turpie** believes that like all things transient, it had run its course:

IAN TURPIE: "It underwent a gentle transition into sort of... the Ross D. Wylie thing... *Uptight!* It gradually changed into that and it seemed to lose its appeal. It was just a phase everyone went through, I suppose. I think DYT Productions went under as a result of this. Arthur Young had died. John Tillbrook died. When it all flopped, and DYT folded *The Go!!* record label went" (Turpie, op cit, 11 May, 2006)

Sadly, as was an all too common story in the pre-videotape era, few of these early *Go!! Show* tapes have survived. According to **Ian Turpie**, when the 0/10 Network completed one of its numerous clean-outs following the demise of the show most, if not all of the original *Go!! Show* tapes were dumped into landfill close to the ATV 0, Nunawading studios – some 200 plus episodes. We can only speculate that they still lie there rotting away below the grass of the Burwood East Reserve which is close to the Burwood Highway and Springvale Road intersection. Some of the later material may have survived in part. However, *The Go!! Show*, like its companion program forged a place for rock and pop music on Melbourne television screens and can probably be credited in no small way to increasing interest in the discotheque and dance scene in this city.

Countdown - November 1974 to July, 1987.

Countdown definitely benefited from the experiences of these two pioneering pop programs. When, in 1974, the ABC, Melbourne decided to challenge Channel 0's stranglehold on the youth television market, they had a wealth of experience to draw from in Australian 'teen-oriented TV programs, all the way from *Bandstand*, *Six O'Clock Rock* (both from Sydney), *Kommotion*, *The Go!! Show*, as well as a wealth of British and American pop shows.

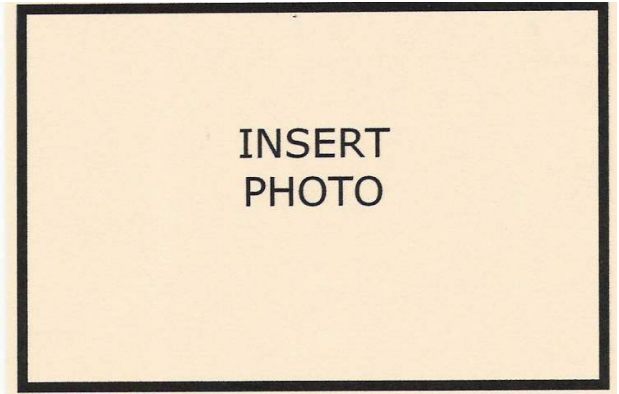
Countdown missed the beat generation and much of the disco period of progressive rock but it slotted in nicely with the drift towards bigger, brighter venues out there in the pub scene and cleverly picked up on the newer trends towards the brasher and louder bands which found their homes in the "beer barns" as well as the "glam rock", punk bands and artists of the late' seventies and early 'eighties. Therefore, in the context of this book *Countdown* was just commencing at Studio 31, Rippon Lea at a time when the major discos had been vanquished and banished by the pubs which now reaped the benefits of serving alcohol.

There was little or nothing that the discos, which had held the crowds within their doors prior to 1975, could now do to stop this trend from happening. *Countdown* when it commenced, understood just where the youth market was, and pitched itself, not at the maturing generation which was probably enjoying Saturday nights at places like The Matthew Flinders, The Village Green, The Croxton Park and The Whitehorse Inn, but at the emerging new 'teeny market of adolescents in search of new idols and bands, just like their older brothers and sisters did almost a decade earlier. *Countdown* filled this void for them every Saturday night in the 6 o'clock time slot. This program was different to its predecessors in that it was unashamedly "pop" music in its approach rather than being a vehicle for any style of local act to get up and "have a go". Like those shows before it, it could still claim to give "cutting-edge" music a forum on television.

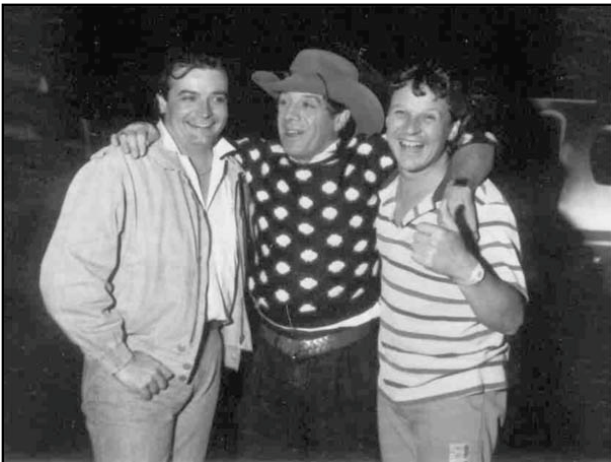
The artists were carefully chosen for their sex-appeal (if that's what it is) – to 12 and 13 year-old girls. Furthermore, *Countdown* "broke" many international acts to the world, not just to Australian audiences and this was thanks to "Molly's" globe-trotting activities and an instinctive feel

which he obviously had for what was going to be "the next best thing". In this way, he employed sheer intuition – or whatever you might like to call it – to know just what sort of music and pop star the average 'teen was going to love. A further factor in the *Countdown* equation was that the ABC was a national network and although the tapings were completed in Melbourne, the show was broadcast all over the continent, thus bringing together the 'teen audiences on a national basis. Whether it was truly "live" or not can be debated – maybe "semi-live" would be a better description as most bands sang live to pre-recorded backing tapes and few, if any actually played instruments, but nobody seemed to care too much about that – it *looked* live!

Originally, the concept for *Countdown* was an entirely different one to that which has become so identified with all that we remember the program by. The first series was in glorious black and white, was hosted by **John** (Johnny)



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In the car park after Countdown at the ABC's Rippon Lea studio – Gavin Wood, Ian Meldrum and Graeme "Shirley" Strachan. (Courtesy of Gavin Wood and Brenden Pearse.)

Farnham and was just a half-hour show at the intermediate time slot of five o'clock on Saturdays. Meldrum acted solely as "talent co-ordinator" at this stage. However, with the re-launch of the show the following year at the six o'clock Sunday timeslot, it coincided with the introduction of colour television and of all the existing programs on television at that stage, *Countdown*, along with the football replays from Channel 7, benefited enormously from this change – both were sensational in colour.



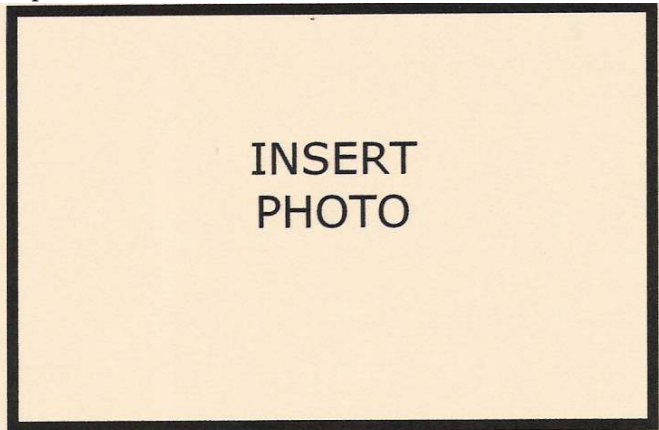
Gavin Wood, Countdown's "voice-over" announcer and "Molly" with a friendly Meter Maid. (Courtesy of Gavin Wood and Brendan Pearse)

The impact on the viewing public for both of these shows was truly stunning as both were seriously drab in black and white but stunningly vibrant and alive in colour. *Countdown* was set to usher in the "glam rock" period which threw up all the glitz that a colour set could cope with. When it premiered in November, 1974, it unleashed a whole new audience phenomenon on the TV world. The audience being made up of spirited 'teenagers who were often well-behaved on cue for the cameras, but on occasions it all got too much for them. There were many "live" segments when the audience was just too real – jumping on stage, dragging down pop singers and destroying clothes – just like a real pop concert. The ABC even employed "real" bouncers to ensure a semblance of tranquility was there.

Success for a band or singer on *Countdown* almost automatically guaranteed success in record sales. In the days when radio stations were still significant forces in sales of new material, *Countdown* now took over this role to a great extent, forcing radio stations to take their lead from television in a reversal of roles. "Molly's" Hitpicks were to be taken seriously if a radio station wanted to stay current and so too was the power generated by the use of videoclips or more specifically, promotional films supplied by record companies. In this, *Countdown* entered a whole new arena – the relationships the program and indeed, the ABC had with the record companies were on virgin ground. The companies and the *Countdown* team were both quick to pick up on the power these clips had in shaping sales and promotion. This was an important factor, because while videoclips were not new, *Countdown* made it an almost weekly ritual of throwing up on the screen a brand new band or artist. The way in which Swedish phenomenon, **Abba** was introduced to Australian audiences was

via the clips supplied by their European distribution and promotion teams and shown on *Countdown*, with the expected enthusiastic endorsement from Meldrum. If you got "Molly's" endorsement, you made it – if he didn't like you, forget it! While **Abba** was not big in America, they created the biggest storm in Australian music since **The Beatles** in 1964 and they could thank *Countdown* exclusively for that. Thanks to "Molly's" increasing acceptance with high profile international stars like **Rod Stewart, Elton John, Cindi Lauper, Madonna, Michael Jackson** through his jet-setting jaunts overseas, when they wanted to gain exposure in Australia, they came straight to him.

It goes without question that *Countdown* was unique and much of this was to do with the on screen antics of its host, co-creator and talent organiser, **Ian "Molly" Meldrum**. Often unrehearsed and seemingly unscripted, it emphasised "Molly's" stumbling and stuttering delivery – don't forget that this was truly "live" in the studio



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with a real audience of placard-waving 'teens. However these 'Molly-isms' were far from a "turn-off" and have come to epitomise the show. It's impossible to imagine Countdown without "Molly" just as it's impossible to think of Anthony without Cleopatra, Laurel without Hardy and Rogers without Hammerstein.

Meldrum was part of the early creative team at the ABC which involved **Michael Shrimpton**, **Grant Rule** and **Ted Emery**. When **Robbie Weeks**, who had worked at Channel 10 with Meldrum moved to the ABC, he met up with **Michael Shrimpton** who was head of Light Entertainment, (which meant music programs in general in ABC-282.

speak). On one fortuitous occasion, while having drinks at The Botanical Hotel in South Yarra, Meldrum happened to stroll in just to pick up a bottle of Whisky. Weeks is reported to have said that this man was the one he needed to meet his bosses' requests for someone to lead a team to take the ABC into territory that was previously owned by Channel 10 – youth audiences. As time went by, Meldrum heard nothing until two weeks later when a meeting was organised and the whole project which was to become *Countdown* was thrashed out.

The degree to which *Countdown* influenced the music scene in Australia rather than just reflecting it, is vast no matter which direction you look in. It is not stretching the point to say that a number of Aussie bands and artists of the late 'seventies owe their entire careers to Meldrum and *Countdown*. Then there was the gigantic level of exposure given to overseas artists, some of whom have their entire hit catalogue and status as a rock star to thank *Countdown* for. Because of this, their appearances on *Countdown* were regular, and many from the 'eighties, so-called "new romantic movement" - stars such as **Kate Bush** and **Culture Club** with **Boy George**, clamored to get on to the show. The effect which the show had on record sales and overall dynamics within the industry is immeasurable. Indisputably, it was a national show, so exposure for an artist, band or record company on just one episode was almost enough to guarantee huge sales the following Monday at any of Brash's many record stores.

The story of *Countdown* extends beyond 1975, but it is appropriate that we leave it here. The impact of pop music on the general public through the medium of television cannot be underestimated. From the early days of *Bandstand* through to the current trend towards shows like *Video Hits* and *MTV*, it has created another dimension for music that would not have necessarily been there. Television and video had, and still have an enormous part to play in the direction in which music is heading. At each point in time throughout the rock 'n roll era, each program, in whatever format they were produced in – *Bandstand*, *Six O'Clock Rock*, *Kommotion*, *The Go!! Show*, *GTK*, *Happening '71*- all clearly reflected the wants and needs of the youth audience of that particular time – beat music, progressive rock, pop, punk, glam rock, rap, R & B, etc. What they gave us was the visual images to match with the music that we were hearing on record. The two – sight and sound - have matched each other since and without those pioneering TV programs, it is difficult to see music having the dimension that it now has.

THE VENUES:

Let those who were there have their say...

"When I fell in love with rock in the late '60s and began catching buses across town to see groups, the hottest places in town were The Catcher, The Thumping Tum, Berties and Sebastians, Opus,... and The Biting Eye". (Stephen Cummings, The Age, 18 February, 2002.)

"On stage, at any of the city discos, it was very loud and way too hot and bright because of the stage lights but, while I was up there, I felt like one of the Gods and it was always a lot of fun, even when the band sometimes wasn't as tight as it could have been. I really did enjoy being up there! My feelings about being on stage have become somewhat jaded these days but, back then, it was a very special place to be, a place where one could weave the magic of moving a mass of people just by playing them a good rock song and thereby briefly set one apart from, and above, the general public. I think the lyrics from the Spencer Davis song, 'I'm A Man', put it very well: "So I got to keep my image, while suspended on a throne, that looks out upon a kingdom, filled with people all unknown" and I guess there's no better way of summing up the way I felt about being on stage at the Tum, Catcher, Sebo's, Berties, and the others, when I was a brash, young guitar player with far too big an ego back in the sixties." (Harry Tarasinski – Harper's Bazaar – op cit, 1 November, 2004.)

"There really was a period there, especially during the late 'sixties and early 'seventies that was incredibly creative worldwide. It was probably the first time that people of the same generation all came together with the same sort of beliefs and philosophies and in a way, with their tastes in music too. I think Melbourne musicians have always been hard-working. They have all had to pay their dues in some way. ... a band really had to sweat... to give it all to come across in those days." (Ian McCausland – op cit, 4 November, 2005)

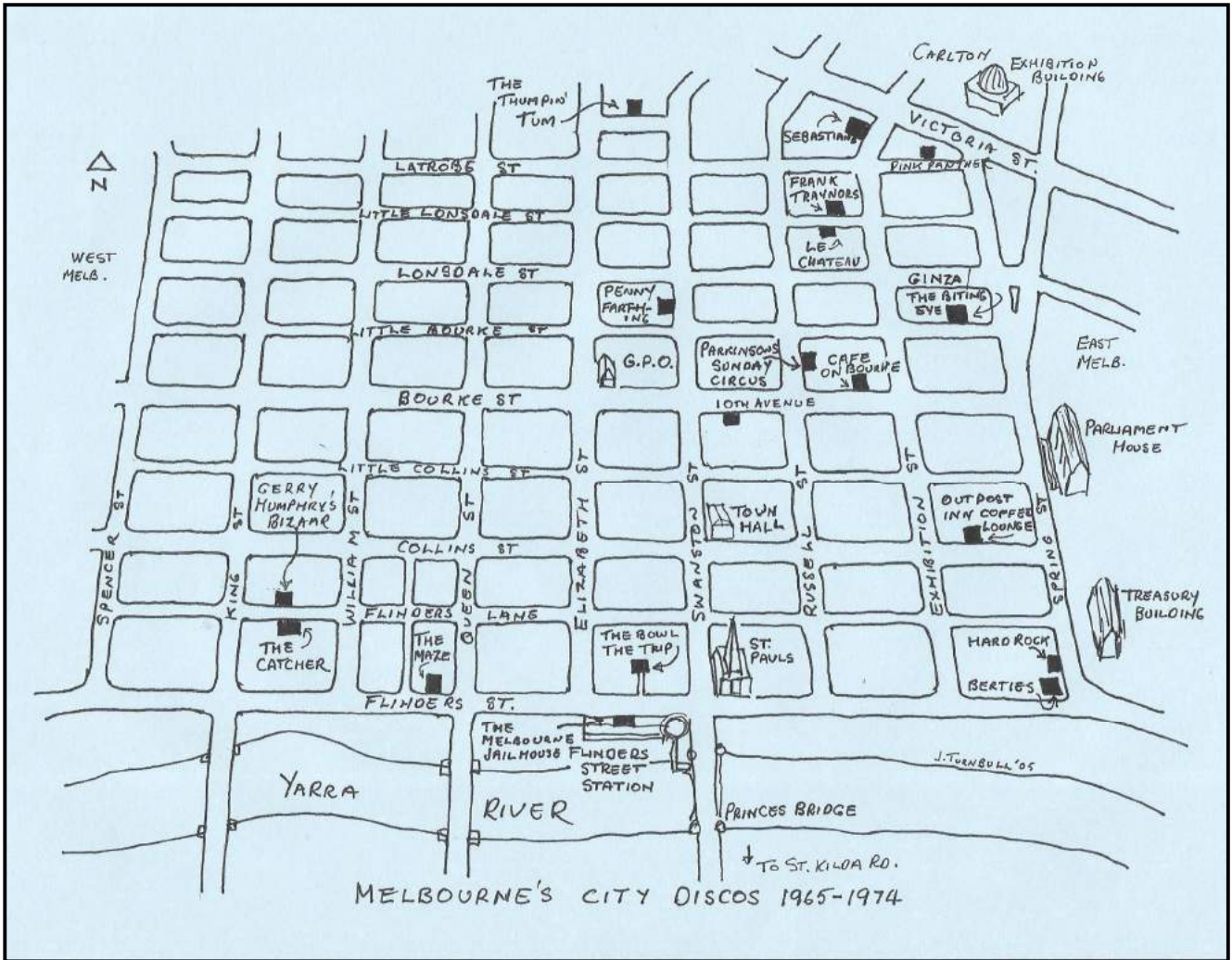
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The locations of the major city discos:

"The La-De-Da's first went to Sydney & played Ward Austin's Jungle. We soon were told that Melbourne was the music centre of Australia, so naturally after we'd done a short Sydney tour, we went back home (New Zealand) for a "Welcome Home" tour to save up enough cash to go back to where it was "really" happening... Melbourne! (Kevin Borich, The La De Das - email interview, 9 February, 2005)

"They were dingy little places... upstairs... or downstairs into a basement ... it wasn't as glamorous as we had thought. At the same time it was still exciting because you knew that The Thumpin' Tum or The Biting Eye and other venues were where you had to play and get recognized. And it was where bands were breaking out of that scene and you just knew that the places were great ... but they didn't look that great. Melbourne had that feeling at the time which I didn't get until I went to London with The Masters' in 1970, where you could go to a place which was just vibrating with excitement ... as Melbourne was in 1965 or 1966." (Jim Keays – op cit, 8 March 2006)

"There was the Thumpin'Tum, Berties and Sebastians and then others started spinning off from these. They catered more for the Bohemian-type audience... the Bohemian kids, because the term "hippie" hadn't been invented then. And really, these kids wanted something different to your local dance hall. These kids were forming the basis of the group that became hippies. So they set the benchmark (for clubs) and The 'Tum catered for the more Bohemian kids... the kinda kids that in the next couple of years started smoking pot. Then you go right down to the bottom of the line to The Catcher, full of the pill-popping kids – kids on Speed." (Gary Young, Daddy Cool - op cit, 3 October, 2005)



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1. BERTIES.

Located: 1 Spring Street, Melbourne.

Operated: From c. 1966 to c. 1973 by the Knight Family

Became: VICTORIA AND ALBERT after 1970

Today: The SAI Building, cnr Flinders and Spring Streets.



was THE place for 2 or 3 years and is
 mes Thompson, correspondence, 10

Berties, without doubt was *the* most sumptuous and lavish disco in the city region and was operated and managed by **Anthony Knight** and his wife, Beverley as a full-time venue unlike the T.F. Much Ballroom in Fitzroy which only became a disco once every

four or five weeks. Therefore at Berties, patrons could gain entry on weeknights as well as weekends. Once it opened, its "sister" establishment Sebastians suffered a little as the up-market crowd which loved the lavishness of the period, re-located downtown to Berties:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: " The image I wanted... it had to be different to Sebastians. I wasn't doing it because I loved the music or the party atmosphere. I could see that Sebastians had a rawer edge to it and I used to watch the fathers drop their daughters off and I thought if there is a place that's very respectable looking, I'll get all those terribly nice girls from Armidale and Eaglemont ... Balwyn. Which we did when we started ... and that's how it was pitched, which is why we had a lot more security there than we probably had at Sebastians. We tried to be a lot more careful with alcohol and drugs." (Knight, author's in terview, 5 October, 2006.)

The bands played in the tightly packed basement which was quite a small room and on most occasions it was difficult to see the band performing unless you were in the crush towards the front. In fact, Berties was a three storey building which was demolished some time ago to build the Shell Building (now SAI Building). At entry level many patrons would have phoned for a taxi using the full-sized 'phone box in the foyer – in the days before mobile phones were even thought of – landlines only!

Berties looked south-east down the hill, over the Jolimont railway yards and the Fitzroy Gardens towards the M.C.G. and the Yarra River; not that patrons went there for the view! Berties was at the height of its popularity in the late 'sixties before the more theatrical venues like the T.F. Much Ballroom, Fitzroy or Opus at Ormond Hall tapped into the multi-performance evenings which became popular. Like all other city discos, the best acts of the period played there. **Anthony Knight**, who had already created Sebastians had wanted to lease a building which would suit the needs of his clients:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: "...we decided to open one at the other end of the city, so we looked around with an agent and he came up with The Public School's Club, so we took that. We didn't have to do a lot with it, just cut holes in the floor to open it up because it was all separate floors so we put this huge staircase in. So it was five levels... the top floor was an old squash court which we planned to turn into an entertainment stage ... like a theatre more that a sitting down with tables thing. ...we had the basement downstairs and the ground floor which was the entrance and it went off on the side. The entrance had a wonderful old cedar telephone box which had come from the lobby at Parliament House. Then the next floor up was a restaurant/coffee lounge and the next floor was like a cabaret

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thing.. it had a stage. There were three staircases at the back ... concrete... the building had been an old private hotel and had been turned into a club was gutted and it had fire-rated ceilings. That's why we took the building because by this stage, we were aware of all these terrible regulations. We leased it at first and then decided to buy



Former owner of both Berties and Sebastians, Anthony Knight runs an art gallery in Mornington.

it later. It was actually owned by the Crown Estate so Prince Charles actually owned the building!!!!... you know the Duchy of Cornwall or something like that. You could imagine it was a real surprise to discover that! (laughs) We could have called it *Prince Charles Arthur George*... but we didn't know that at the time! (Knight, author's interview, 5 October, 2006.)

Kerri Hooker, a keen patron remembers the building. She went regularly on Friday nights for about four years:

KERRI HOOKER: "It was always very dimly lit and it looked very elegant with the wallpaper and old style furnishings but I suppose that it looked really grotty in the daylight. The bands played in the basement area which was extremely dark and I think had 2 staircases. One was close to the bands' area and you got a really good view from there. There was also a very dark alcove near the back where couples used to disappear for a while. The entry foyer, cloak room and toilets were on the ground floor and

the next floor up was basically a bar area - except for the no alcohol bit. The next floor up was like a dining room with lots of tables and chairs and you could buy food and coffee etc. there. There was also a smaller stage area and

quite often they had a singer or band perform there. (That's where Daddy Cool performed for the first time). At the top was an area that was locked up and reported to be Tony Knight's home but I don't know if that was true or not. It could have just been a store room for all I know. The whole building always seemed to be very crowded and dark." (Hooker, email interview, 20 November, 2004)

Knight didn't in fact, live at 1 Spring Street but at that time had a house in Hawthorn – it just may have seemed that way because he was usually present there – night and day. However, like his vision for Sebastians, he had also carefully planned the way he wanted the building to look:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: " So we had the basement downstairs and the ground floor which was the entrance and it went off on the side. The entrance had a wonderful old cedar telephone box which had come from the lobby at Parliament House. Then the next floor up was a restaurant/coffee lounge and the next floor was like a cabaret thing.. it had a stage.

I used to be on the door ... to make sure that I was getting the money. I had an office just inside the door. I had to pay everybody, so I had to see that there was cash. I had to work out the next week... the bands and staff. Then I just used to move through the building. I realized very early in the piece that if you're terribly nice to people, then you could just have a night where you could have everyone coming in for free. There were some I'd let in for free, so I'd stand at the door. I knew what time they be there ... they certainly wouldn't be there for the beginning. They'd be there at the peak and that's when they'd expect to come in and then they'd go.

For furniture, we used this Jacobean sort of stuff which was cheaper then, you know, all that English oak. In the end, the squash court was literally packed with furniture, so we had to go up to this public balcony sort of viewing place. We went through auction houses for years.

So I ran Berties and Michael was still bringing the bands in then I had my sister-in-law Julie (Stephens) running it... she was a bit more involved at a grass-roots level. She was really with the "in crowd" at the time with people like Gary Spry. (Knight, author's interview, 5 October, 2006.)

The popularity of all the city (and suburban) discotheques must not be underestimated in the time period when they offered the best bands around – young people would come out in droves to hear the hits live and their see heroes on stage. **Jill Braithwaite**, with her two sisters worked at Berties in various capacities in the late 'sixties and when she wasn't actually on duty, she would still stay on, just to hear the bands. She recalls that prior to opening, on many nights a queue of people would form right down Flinders Street, past the Herald-Sun building – and all

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this to get into a venue which didn't serve liquor! Add into the equation Victoria's early closing laws and it's a testament to the drawing power of music.

An article in *The Daily Planet* by "Raploch the available light-man" stated the obvious at a **Pirana** gig at Berties in late 1971, where they followed up gigantic sets by **Carson** and **Highway**: "Although their late start cost them a "fine" and they were forced to stop playing at 1.03 because of Victoria's idiotic "Sunday Observance Act", the audience were left completely suspended when Jim's drum solo was cut short. "Suspended" in that they were all waiting for this incredible solo *and* music to be completed, and "suspended" in that they'll certainly be wanting to hear them again" (*The Daily Planet*, 29 December, 1971)

A young **Billy Pinnell**, who was working in radio at that point at 3KZ, doing copy for on- air great "**Stan The Man**" **Rofe** and working in the station's record library, spent much of his time at night at the discos, particularly Berties. Pinnell was just like many other 'teenagers; in awe of the stars whose records he listened to at home. The thrill was getting "up close and personal" with the greats of the business:



In the early days of Go-Set Berties advertisements regularly featured.

Thorpie, in his book, *Most People I Know* (Think That I'm Crazy), described Berties:

BILLY THORPE: "(It) had once been the home of the Public Schoolboys' Club. It was run by Tony Knight, the son of a very successful catering family. A handsome flamboyant character who sat at the front door four nights a week dressed to the nines in velvet and lace, Tony embodied the elegance of the "Mod" Edwardian style that had become so popular in Carnaby Street in the late '60s. Bertie's (sic) is without doubt the best live music club Australia has ever had, Unlike the Whiskey, which was Australia's most successful licenced club, Bertie's (sic) -- like all Melbourne venues except the pubs -- didn't sell alcohol. Bertie's (sic) was all about local live music and people came in droves simply because of the bands and the vibe." (Thorpe, 1998, P132.)

Thorpie also recalls that playing a two-hour set at Berties starting from 7.30 was just the commencement of his evening. He went on stage at Sebastians at 10pm, then on to the Thumpin' Tum to do two 45-minute sets starting at midnight and finishing up the night at The Catcher playing from 3.30 onwards. Most other bands and musicians booked at this time also caught up in the rotational game of "musical venues":

BARRY HARVEY: "Berties was a fabulous gig to play at - we always had a good time playing there. On Friday and Saturday nights, we would play the first half of the night at Berties while Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs were 288.

doing Sebastians, then each band would swap over and the Aztecs would do Berties late and Chain would do Sebastians late. The chap who ran Berties didn't like us much because we wore jeans and T shirts and were usually smoking dope in the band room. The Knight brothers who ran Berties and Sebastians were so different as people. But I loved both." (Harvey op cit, 18 October, 2004.)

Not as well known as Thorpie and **The Aztecs** or **Chain** was **Bazaar**, a local band with a reasonable following and a residency at The Catcher. They were also caught up in the hectic rounds of the discos which included Berties:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "A typical Friday or Saturday night, for example, would go something like this: Bazaar would appear at Sebastian's as the opening band and play a set of approximately 30 minutes, or so. We would then pack up and go to Berties and prepare ourselves for a performance there of about the same length of time and then repeat that procedure at the Tum, and so on. Each venue would have something in the order of 4 to 6

BILLY PINNELL: "Small, dimly lit and you could get quite close to the musicians. That's what I found quite exciting - to get quite close to these musicians whose music I listened to at home or as part of my radio work. You could really feel the music in such closeness. That era of watching those bands in close proximity was so, very exciting for me. I remember seeing Procession and a band, I think they were called Bulldog which Mick Rodgers might have had at the time and a band called Lotus from Sydney. They only had one single called "Lotus One" when I remember seeing them at Berties and they were just fantastic." (Pinnell, op cit, 19 September, 2005)

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bands appearing every night and each band played a fairly standard 30-minute set, as I remember it." (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

Many lavish occasions come to mind at Berties and some are possibly best forgotten. Daryl Cotton would no doubt like to erase from the record, memories of the Zoot gala reception on 3 September, 1968. It has seemed to haunt the band throughout its performing life and beyond.

The "Think Pink" campaign for Zoot was launched at Berties but eventually became a millstone around their necks. A ritual burning of the pink outfits was done by Ross D. Wylie live on his television program. (Photographer and source unknown)



Darryl Cotton has long since left his pink image behind.

The all-pink publicity affair organized to celebrate the arrival of Zoot from Adelaide where they had already gained a strong fan base, saw Knight and his manager Wayne DeGruchy decorate the disco entirely in pink for the occasion. DeGruchy's interests also extended to managing Zoot which had as its members Cotton, "Beeb" Birtles and Rick Springfield. On this night, everything – and I mean everything – was pink. The suits, the flowers, the guitars – all pink - and even Cotton's unfortunate Afgan hound was dyed pink for the night!

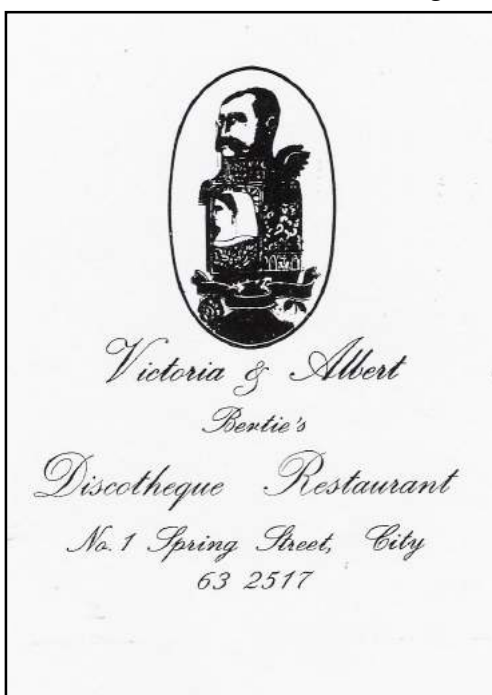
The slogan "Think Pink" worked for a while for Zoot. The band then went on to Hoadley's Battle of the Sounds which engendered an ongoing rivalry with fellow Adelaide band, The Masters Apprentices. So successful was the Berties' launch that Zoot found themselves typecast in pink clothes throughout their career, much to their embarrassment. Eventually, they had had enough and a ritual exorcism by burning the dreaded pink suits on T.V. on the Channel O pop program Uptight was organized. Assisted on camera by Ross D. Wylie, this public show designed to nullify the Berties celebration, seemed the only way for the boys to rid themselves of the pink millstone around their necks.

Adelaide's The Twilights, headed up by Glenn Shorrock and Terry Britten was a popular act at Berties and a 1968 T.V.

special was shot inside this venue and featured The Twilights in a rather experimental piece of television for the time. Called *Once Upon A Twilight* a single, half-hour pilot was shot. It was meant to be the first in an anticipated series based on the zany antics of firstly, The Beatles

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movies and then, The Monkees' TV series. It never progressed beyond this single episode. Executive Producer Bill Mathias and Director Brian Kavanagh brought in actress and local personality Mary Hardy and Ronnie Burns to



bolster up the acting stakes, but unfortunately, it suffered from a very poor script and some rather forgettable "acting" from Glenn Shorrock and the rest of The Twilights. Recording was done by David MacKay for Armstrong's Studios.

Maybe it was better for this pilot to have disappeared almost without trace as had it proceeded to a series, it would have been a total disaster. It captured nothing of The Monkees hit series. The Ford Motor Company which intended to bankroll the production quickly pulled the pin on any further sponsorship and fortunately, all involved in the production went on to much better things. One redeeming factor however, was that the "office" scenes were actually shot on location in the sumptuous foyer of Berties Discotheque.

There were other "special occasions". In 1968, Lynne Randell had her 18th birthday party at Berties in the Special Events area on the top floor which was managed by Beverley Stephens, before she became Mrs. Tony Knight. The lavish event was organised by Carole West,

Randell's manager and that evening visiting star, **Brian Poole (The Tremelos)** did a set on stage for Lynne. **James Thompson** with his mates, **Terry and Phil Beschi**, fellow immigrants from West Ham, London, gravitated to Berties and had been there for the opening night. At Lynne's bash, they were flattered when Ms. West made the suggestion to them that they had the look of a pop group and should do something about it! Inspired by this meeting, they actually *did* form a band, calling themselves **The Plum** and although they managed a few gigs at Sebastians, they only did one date at Berties. Without achieving major success, **The Plum** (which had Derek Pellicci, later of **The Little River Band** on drums) rehearsed at Berties but got gigs in the cool suburban mod spots like Piccadilly in Ringwood, Penthouse in Ormond or the Q Club.

The degree of elegance which Beverley and Anthony Knight wished to convey to the public was evident even on their neatly understated invitations. (Courtesy of James Thompson)

Thompson does remember the night he joined **Brian Cadd, Don Mudie** and **Russell Morris** on stage at Berties for a great rendition of *Every Little Bit Hurts*.

Berties was fortunate to have visits from some of the top touring stars who would enjoy the chance to get up and jam with local musicians on their "off nights". Legendary **Deep Purple** guitarist, **Richie Blackmore** was one touring star who just wandered in and found himself on stage at Berties. For the final Sunbury festival in 1975, promoters signed **Deep Purple** as the headlining act. A few acts prior to **Deep Purple** that weekend was **The La De Das** with **Kevin Borich**. Whilst walking backstage, Borich's attention was captured by a technician tuning a battery of Blackmore's guitars and after engaging in a quick conversation with the man, found out that Blackmore was most impressed with what he had seen of Borich on stage. Borich passed on to Blackmore that he was playing at Berties the following Tuesday night and invited Blackmore to join him on stage. The Englishman took up the invitation and this jam took place to a relatively select audience on what were basically considered "musicians nights" – not necessarily open to the general public.

In common with all such venues, Berties had its security staff – "bouncers" – and more often than not, these men were faced with unpredictable and threatening situations. Staff in these situations were often varied in their temperament and in the way they dealt with unruly patrons – each had his own set way of dealing with potential trouble.

Now a South Yarra Osteopath, young Londoner, **James Thompson** remembers a number of cool staff there – **Paul Sumner, Ian Mouser, Adrian Andrews** and manager De Gruchy as well as well-known bouncers, **Frank Romano, David Smith, John De Blanc** and **Bob Jones**.

The security staff at this time had to create a tough exterior as a deterrent to likely trouble-makers, but Berties staff, in the main were a fair and reasonable bunch:

KERRI HOOKER: "Ivan the bouncer at Berties had a reputation for being very tough and mean. He probably enjoyed having that type of image and it probably also deterred some potential trouble makers. However, he was

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always very pleasant and friendly to my friends and I. ... always extremely nice to me. Each night when I left he would go out into the street and call a taxi for me and make sure I got in safely. One night I even got stranded in there without any money due to a mix-up and he actually lent me the money for the taxi fare !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Of course I repaid him the next week. On his breaks he would come up to the floor where the tables were and sit and drink his coffee with my friends and me. Another bouncer there called Joe liked to show off his strength by doing push-ups

on his fingertips - usually with a girl seated on his back." (Hooker, op cit, 20 November, 2004)

As well as holding down day jobs, **James Thompson**, Terry and Phil managed to secure nighttime jobs at Berties in various capacities:

JAMES THOMPSON: "We worked at Berties six nights a week from 7.30 pm to 3 am, although early in the week it was relatively quiet. We had to wear these ridiculous wrap around, neck-to-knees red aprons which we tried hard not to have threaten our "cool demeanor" while we served up cokes, fantas, milk shakes and toasted sandwiches – we'll forget about the disgusting coffee! Every so often during our stints at washing up cups, plates



and glasses we would start up a hot percussion jam on sinks and anything else in reach – sometimes that bar was really humming!!

We alternated in the cloakroom which was great because you could shed the red apron and also play some great music over the P.A. in between the live bands. I annoyed the Hell out of The Groove when I played an English version of their latest single, *What Is Soul* – well, it was better!" (Thompson, op cit, 10 January, 2005).

All discos played records in the breaks between bands while the stage was set up. Berties sound system was particularly effective but not to the liking of one correspondent who wrote in *The Daily Planet*:

"I wish Berties wouldn't play their music in the breaks so loud. I like to use the breaks to get around and talk to people, but it's virtually impossible, because of the music blasting even louder than the bands and there's nowhere you can go to get away from it. Just a thought, Mr. Knight." (The

Daily Planet, 20 October, 1971.)

The Plum boys managed to chat up girls, get invites to the best parties around town and rub shoulders with celebrities such as **Ian Meldrum**, **Lilly Brett** and **Helen Hooper** – all from *Go-Set*. On one occasion Thompson remembers dancer, **Antonio Rodriguez** arriving with sexy American jazz singer, **Eartha Kitt**. James and his mate Terry managed to get to dance with the American star on the basement dance floor while still wearing their red, wrap around kitchen aprons!

Sydney guitarist **Ross Ward** first came to Melbourne in 1969 as a 15 year-old with **The Flying Circus** to fill in on bass guitar for his brother, Warren who was unwell at the time. He remembers the building on a return visit the following year:

ROSS WARD: "Later on in '71 & '72, we played Berties quite a bit in a band called Cinnamon, on our then-frequent trips from Sydney down to Melbourne. It had one of the worst load-ins around at the time, with two very tight downward stairwells off a back lane, and I can remember all the members of Blackfeather struggling and getting stuck with the saloon-size piano that they used to cart around!! The venue itself was three stories, with a ground level coffee shop, a first floor dance room and lounge, where they played records. The band room was down-stairs in what really was a basement, which held about 100 people, at a shoulder to shoulder pinch! It was a great sounding room, being small and concrete. The guy who booked us in there was the very well-known and much-respected Bill Joseph." (Ward, email interview, 19 July, 2004)

There was one particular character that frequented Berties:

ROSS WARD: "... one guy in particular whose name was "Boris", was supposedly a 'Dark Wizard', who did
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indeed look very much like 'Gandalf', (From *The Lord Of The Rings*) but dressed in black, and with jet-black hair and giant handle-bar moustache, and he seemed to live in the dressing room at Berties. He carried a small clay chillum, and his head was surrounded by a permanent blue haze of smoke. He once passed the chillum to me, and when I looked at it with a certain amount of intrepidation, he gave me a big fatherly and toothless grin, and said "Panama Red, Maaan!" While Sydney also had some good pockets for live music, you could work much harder in Melbourne, and so much of it was in those great discos!!" (Ward, op cit, 19 July 2004)

Berties was also a favourite of **Ross Wilson** who played there with **The Party Machine**:

ROSS WILSON: "Berties I liked a lot, because it was the brother-establishment of Sebastians run by The Knight family and partly by Michael Browning, I think who became AC/DC's manager. It was a little bit larger than Sebastians... I never liked playing at Sebastians because it was small and the stage was in a bad spot... right down the back, whereas Berties had two stages, one in the basement and one up on the top floor. Daddy Cool started playing up there but we still had to lug our friggin' amps upstairs. Luckily, we had a roadie. So, I liked Berties. None of these places were licensed but everybody seemed to have fun there." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

A regular at Berties, **Kerri Hooker** discussed the friendships that were made there. Many have lasted the decades:

KERRI HOOKER: "I met my husband there and he had become friends with Tony who worked in the cloak room. Tony was best man at our wedding and is still a close friend to this day. My friend Vicki ...and I were friends from school but we met several other girls there who she is still in close contact with. I don't know if you would be able to form lasting friendships meeting at night clubs these days. Tony also remains in close contact with another former patron who he also met there. There was a waitress who worked upstairs and I think that she may have joined the Hari Krishnas or something". (Hooker, op cit, 20 November, 2004).

Owners **Anthony** and **Beverley Knight** were nearly always there and presented the image they wanted to promote of the disco to those who arrived:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: " I used to be on the door ... to make sure that I was getting the money. I had an office just inside the door. I had to pay everybody, so I had to see that there was cash. I had to work out the next week... the bands and staff. Then I just used to move through the building. I realized very early in the piece that if you're terribly nice to people, then you could just have a night where you could have everyone coming in for free. There were some I'd let in for free, so I'd stand at the door. I knew what time they be there ... they certainly wouldn't be there for the beginning. They'd be there at the peak and that's when they'd expect to come in and then they'd go." (Knight, author's interview, 5 October, 2006.)

Patrons remembered that particularly in the earlier years, the couple presented a friendly face for the "in-crowd" and ordinary youngsters alike:

KERRI HOOKER: "Quite often Tony Knight and Beverley were standing behind the front desk smiling and greeting the patrons. Always dressed in fabulous clothes and looking great. After I'd been going there for a while they often surprised me by telling the staff not to charge me for entry." (Hooker, op cit, 20 November, 2004).

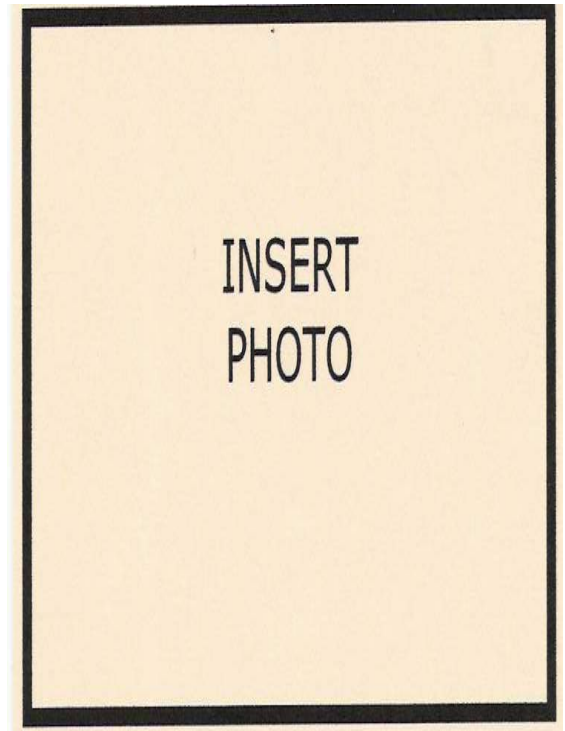
Like all of the discos, suspicion about the activities which went on behind the doors fuelled the public's curiosity and concern about the affects that the possible presence of drugs and perhaps even illegal alcohol which could be smuggled into the disco was causing to the young people there. That there was alcohol brought in on occasions was certain, and police from time to time would make their presence felt, even though they weren't necessarily "raiding" the place. If called for some other reason, they would still complete a "random check" for booze:

KERRI HOOKER: "One night when we were sitting upstairs a singer by the name of Leo De Castro became a little
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unusual in his behaviour and was escorted out by the police and we never saw him there again. The police used to come through and check for alcohol in those days. Many guys used to bring in flasks containing booze and add it to their cokes etc. One night we were sitting at a table with the guys adding to their drinks when the police walked in. One guy grabbed his bottle and held it under the table. However, he hadn't put the cap on and it was pouring down my leg and foot. It's very hard to look innocent under police scrutiny and it also smelt really strong. I expected to get kicked out at any minute. But we got away with it and had a good laugh later" (Hooker, op cit, 20 November, 2004)

Police certainly had a specific interest in Berties and this led to many "visits":

ANTHONY KNIGHT: "But we were raided... endlessly raided by the police. In that basement there was a band room behind the stage. In the corner, there was a false wall. Now, what was behind the false wall was the lift shaft that used to go up. There was a gap above the wall and this exhaust fan... huge thing this was. It was used to clear the building and if you stood outside at night, the fumes that came out would knock you over. You'd just get high standing there. So when we demolished that thing at the back, it was filled up, within inches of the top with.. you



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name it... Bourbon bottles, syringes, ends of joints and stuff...which had all gone over the wall when we were raided.

The raids were amazing because the police would ring and say, "we've had a bomb scare". So I'd think, 'oh yeah?'. We had a public address system that over-rode everything and I'd go down there and say, "We have a bomb scare, would you all kindly leave the building. You'll have to go outside. You can all come back in. We'll give you passouts". And they wouldn't go! When they did leave, they'd stand right in the doorway, so if a bomb had gone off, the whole front of the building would've collapsed on top of them. The police used to come and they couldn't move them ... them there was the person who kept lighting fires everywhere..."(Knight, author's interview, 5 October, 2006.)

The discos were not all about music – the social scene was part of the experience of many youngsters. The Thumpin' Tum was known to have played an Australian Rules Football match. "Barbed Wires" from *Go-Set* in 1969, mooted a possible world football (soccer) challenge between a "Berties All-Stars" side and a team to be arranged by **Terry Britten** and **Glenn Shorrock** of **The Twilights**. The Berties team boasted musicians/superstars of the pitch, **Alan Tarney**, (**James Taylor Move**) **Terry Becchi**, **Phil Becchi** and **James Thompson** (all from **The Plum**), **Nook**, **Viv** and **Larry** (from **Larry's Rebels**), **Gary Sweetmen** (**Iguana**). and **Mick Rogers** and **Trevor Griffin** (**Procession**) – all English-born. It would seem that Britten and Shorrock were too busy to take up the challenge because the match, scheduled for a Sunday didn't take place although there were social cricket matches played around the same time.

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2. SEBASTIANS.

Located: 355 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, west side between Latrobe and Victoria Streets.

Operated: From July, 1966 to c.1973, managed by Phillip Knight and Michael Browning

Became: Was PRINCE ALBERT GEORGE SEBASTIAN II, THE CARLTON CLUB after 1970, TEAZER.

Today: Original building intact – ground floor tenants – office space and showroom.

"Sebastians ... I remember that everybody who worked there looked incredibly groovy – girls - bouffant hair and guys - long sideburns used to be the thing of the day. Only a little stage, I remember and a little dance floor, but it was very much an image venue – very posey..." (Jeff Duff, op cit, 17 June, 2006)

In the mid-sixties, **Anthony Knight**, his brother **Phillip** and his schoolboy mate, **Michael Browning** took a very bold step and opened possibly Melbourne's first discotheque in Beaconsfield Parade, St. Kilda at the height of the



The three-storey building that once was Sebastian's Discotheque still remains at the top end of Exhibition Street.

discotheques and young people, so it sounded like an interesting thing and that's how it really started. People used to say to me, what is a discotheque?. I'd say... gosh.. I think it involved young people having a good time and a lot of contemporary music. It caused an awful lot of trouble with the police because of the noise, but it was obviously very successful. So we thought it would be nice to get a building in the city and do it there." (Knight, op cit, 5 October, 2006)

With the Knight Brothers and Browning all initially involved, **Albert George Sebastian II**, the new premises was located right at the top end of Exhibition Street just a short distance from the Carlton Gardens and The Exhibition Building:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: "We all were there, Phillip, Michael and myself. We picked this spot at the top end of the city, opposite the gardens where there was nobody living – we thought! So we took the building... we later bought it .. but we leased it first. We made it like a club in the sense of bits of old furniture and dark walls. We had lots of Victorian and Edwardian furniture .. very nice... but then it was just stuff you bought at auction. It wasn't all that cheap. I created the décor because I've always been quite good at creating an interior that people liked being in ... I don't know why that is.. but the restaurants we've had, .. the function centres were much the same. And as the

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furniture broke, we put it in the store house at the back. I think we mucked around with the building for about three months before we opened." (Knight, op cit, 5 October, 2006)

Almost instantly, it became an elite meeting place for the 'in-crowd' and quickly became known as just, Sebastian's ("Sebos" to the regulars). In floor space, it was somewhere about one-third the size of its distant neighbour The Thumpin' Tum, just to the west. The three-story late Victorian building which once housed Sebastian's is still relatively intact today, although renovated to suit the current tenants and no apparent trace of its previous existence as a disco remains. The

disco era in London. Known as **Sebastian's Penthouse** it operated in a block of flats owned by the Knights' father. It instantly achieved a degree of early success because within a short time, Knight and Browning had moved to the city precinct:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: "Sebastian's Penthouse was in St. Kilda at 349, Beaconsfield Parade and it was on the third floor of a block of flats which my father owned. It was a stupid apartment to rent because it had one bathroom, two bedrooms and all this open space. Michael (Browning) and my brother Phillip came up with this idea of doing a club-type thing. It had recorded music in the beginning and then bands came but they were there only for a short period of live music.

When it became a discotheque, there was a report in the paper about this French craze for

SEBASTIANS
All admissions subject to availability. Through The Offices Of
 51-0972 **CONSOLIDATED ROCK** 51-0211

Friday 2 July **CLEVES**
DOUG. PARKINSON

Saturday 3 July **CARSON**
HEALING FORCE
CLEVES

Friday 9 July **DOUG. PARKINSON**
GALADRIEL (Sydney)

Saturday 10 July **LANGFORD LEVER**
BLUES BAND
GALADRIEL
CHAIN

Friday 16 July **HEALING FORCE**
TAMAN SHUD

Saturday 17 July **Co. CAINE**
BILLY THORPE
WILD CHERRIES

355 EXHIBITION ST

building maintains much of its original exterior character and it was built originally as a shop on footpath level with two dwelling levels above. As a discotheque, it had very limited capacity and would probably hold a maximum of about two hundred-plus punters on a crowded evening. This did little to dent the enthusiasm of the regulars, even though on a jam-packed night it was impossible to sit down during band and dance breaks. Early advertising created just the impact that Anthony and Phillip Knight and Michael Browning had hoped for:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: "...we put all these posters around the city. Michael did a lot of that ... like "Albert George Sebastian is coming!"... and it got into the papers.... What on earth is that!. When we opened it, on the first night, the queue went all around the block to Russell Street and all the police had to do was follow the queue! There was so much noise with all these people.

Then we discovered that the Royal Tennis Club had this caretaker who lived within feet of where we were and there was a boardinghouse behind us It looked like an old factory, but there were two terrace houses. There was an old woman there and on the first night, she came around and she was shattered! There were no planning codes on those days and we didn't think we had to do anything. The only category it could have come under was a café.. but it was nothing like a café. So we eventually rented all the rooms in the boardinghouse and the woman let them to deaf people. I think we eventually had to double-glaze the doors because of the noise. It was horrendous coming out of there. When the authorities started catching up with us, they wanted to know what it was... we weren't doing anything wrong...but there were no regulations to cover it. (Sir) Arthur Rylah visited it once (you know... "I wouldn't let my daughter go there") and he looked like something out of an American gangster movie... all with hats and a great squad of these grey politicians came in.

A flyer for Sebastians - July, 1966.

Then we discovered apposite was The Princess Mary Club and there were thousands of girls staying there! So we had an instant supply of patrons who attracted males. (Knight, op cit, 5 October, 2006)

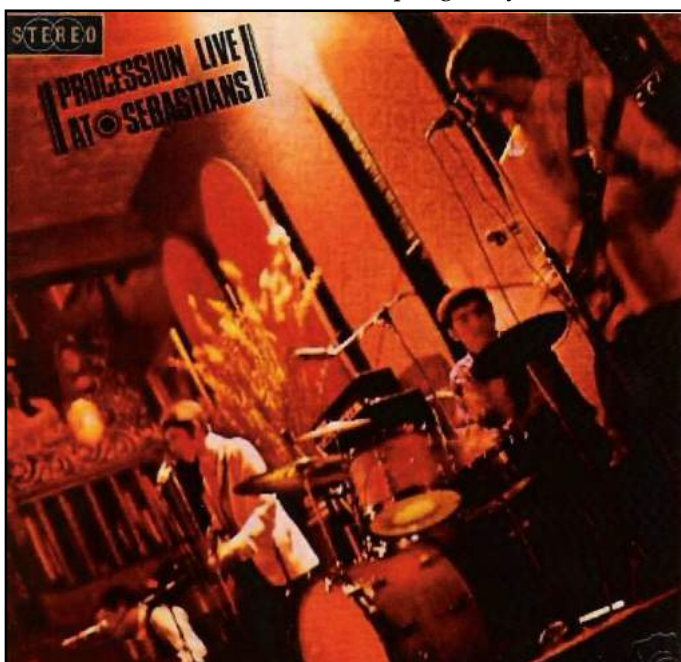
Ross Ward played there as a stand-in bass player for **The Flying Circus** on an early trip to Melbourne:

ROSS WARD: "I recall it being all at ground/street level downstairs, fairly oblong shape, with the stage being a hole-in-the-far-wall type arrangement, which faced back out on to the street thru the front door, although you were virtually standing at the same height as the punters, and you were very exposed. I remember two yobbo/sharpie lookin' dudes who had their faces right in Doug Rowe's, tryin' to stare him down all through the set. He just kept his eyes closed during every song, tryin' to ignore them! The place had a loft/ chill out area up-stairs where you could see the stage and dance floor from, although the total club would have been really full at 250, so it wasn't that big, and very dimly lit. They also used to do some lunch and day-time arvo gigs on the weekends, in addition to opening (almost) 7 nights a week, with up to two and three bands per night on some nights." (Ward, op cit, 19 July, 2004).

Mick Hamilton probably saw the inside of Sebastians as much as any other musician in the three years that he played with **The Moods** and **The Vibrants** at a point when Sebastians had reached the zenith of its popularity as a discotheque. The era threw up a number of pop-orientated bands and both **The Moods** and **The Vibrants** held their

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small core of fans which turned up regularly to see these bands. His impressions, like most others, is just how small



the place was, particularly on the lower (band) level. He was to spend a good deal of his spare time upstairs:

MICK HAMILTON: "Sebastians was quite small from my memory and I've got video of the Moods playing at Sebastians. The dance floor was chock-a-block with people. Once again, they had big vases with dried flower arrangements, which to look back at now is quite amazing because you wouldn't think to put this stuff in a young persons' venue. It was probably the coolest of the cool for some time... Lily Brett had her birthday party there. If you wanted to have a function with the best people in town, you'd have it at Sebastians. From my point of view, I'd be downstairs playing in the bandroom and during the

breaks, I'd be up on the second floor. And even on your night off if there was a band you really wanted to see, you'd be on the second floor. So the punters would be downstairs with the band on the bottom floor and the musos would disappear upstairs. They had a coffee shop and lots of couches and armchairs." (Hamilton, author's interview, 2 December, 2005)

Ross Wilson, played Sebastians many times and he too found the size of the ground floor area just a little too cosy on a busy night:

ROSS WILSON: "I wasn't as relaxed playing there at Sebastians... it just wasn't as comfortable a room ... if you packed the joint out ... there could only be a few people deep before you got to the back. We broke out of the T. F. Much Ballroom scene then, out of necessity, playing all these other places including Berties, but it was much better playing at Cathedral Hall because there was much more room." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004).

Barry Harvey, Chain drummer found the sound at Sebastians to his liking:

BARRY HARVEY: "Sebastians was my favourite gig between the two places (Berties and Sebastians), only because of the sound. The stage at Sebastians had a much better sound than Berties. The vibe in that place was fantastic. All the bands used to come in and jam with us there: the guys from Spectrum, Aztecs, Company Caine, Wendy Saddington, Doug Parkinson's band. Sebastians had a much freer atmosphere and the manager didn't mind all the

The first ever live album - Procession, recorded at Sebastians in 1968.

jam sessions that went on there till 5am. The crowds that we used to pull in there were around 3,000 to 4,000 all up on the weekends.

The place just had a magic vibe about it and the people who went there added to that vibe." (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Terry Murphy didn't get to Sebastians too often, preferring either Garrison or The Thumpin' Tum. As with most patrons, music was his passion, providing that the music was being played at a tolerable decibel level:

TERRY MURPHY: "...bands played on the ground floor. The band that sticks out here was Redhouse. Now, I like loud music but they were FUCKING LOUD! They hurt my ears and they actually sounded better out in the street than in the venue. Only went there a few times." (Murphy, op cit, 31 October, 2004)

Disco goer, **Kerri Hooker** spent a good deal of time at her favourite spot, Berties but remembers making the trek uptown to Sebastians on a few occasions and making the comparison between the two places as many did. She had a preference for Berties, but however, she remembers Sebos:

KERRI HOOKER: "The building was very old and dark inside and on several different levels. There was an old rickety staircase out the back which was also used. Looking back now it was probably quite dangerous but I still remember sitting out on the stairs when it became too hot inside. I don't really remember any specific bands there except for Iguana. However most of the bands went from one venue to the other during the night. I didn't go there as often because it didn't have as much atmosphere as Berties." (Hooker, op cit, 20 November, 2004).

Judy McCarthy (O'Meara) became a regular at The Thumpin' Tum in the late 'sixties when the discos were

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furiously pumping on the weekend and she only occasionally ventured to other spots around town. As a worker at The 'Tum, she benefited by free entry into other places when she could by-pass the queue of people waiting to get in, at the wink of an eye from the bouncers who knew the majority of the employees of other discos. Most of the time Judy spent at Sebastians was to see a particular band that was playing there and which may not be playing The 'Tum. She was quick to pick out a select area at Sebastians on the second floor where the "in" crowd were always hanging out. Seated constantly at a particular table, this group was always composed of the "beautiful people" who attended most discos and were keen to be seen around town. For those who 'dressed down' somewhat, Sebastians, with its upmarket dress standard could be a little intimidating and uncomfortable if a person didn't seem to fit in well:

Anthony Knight: "Helen Hooper was in that crowd too, she was one of Lily Brett's friends. Now the real in crowd were, Ronald Rockman of the Rockman family who married Ruth Rich, a friend of Helen Hooper who all used to hang out together. They went from place, to place, to place, every night of their lives and they'd end up at Pinocchio's.

They were always slightly older than the average patron at these places. The waitresses upstairs all knew them because they came at a certain time. There had to be



that one table cleared that they all sat down at. They all tried to outdo each other with their gold cigarette lighters and they all had those gold Dunhills. They all drove Porsches and double-parked out the front. The bouncers used to keep their eyes on them. They'd be there for about three-quarters of an hour ... they never paid for anything, but they attracted people. I remember the first night Beverley came and she had on what looked like a Channel outfit with more buttons than I'd ever seen on any outfit in my life, and she didn't really talk to anybody. She had that blond hair and I knew she was Julie's sister and Julie was more outgoing. She was a friend of Rockman and that group and they all came together. Then she came again and eventually we got together." (Knight, op cit, 5 October, 2006)

Neale Johns, who was performing there after the final break up of his band, **Blackfeather** recalls one night playing with a hybrid band made up of **Blackfeather** and **Flake** members, when Sebo's "beautiful people" were sent scurrying for safety. Earlier in the same evening Johns had played at a notorious, suburban skinhead venue which he seems to remember as being out Box Hill way, possibly the Town Hall. The band had been offered something which was probably LSD at one point during the afternoon and by the time they reached the Box Hill gig, it had well and truly kicked in. Sporting their long, flowing hair, they calmly entered through the front doors of the venue rather than unload through the customary back door. This could have been something akin to suicide. They proceeded to walk right through the middle of the crowd:

NEALE JOHNS: "...they sort of peeled apart! To cut a long story short, when we got on stage the stuff was really starting to work and I was flabbergasted by the look of these people. I made some sort of comment about why they all had these *stupid haircuts!* Now, you've got 2000 skinheads in a room and you're goin':... "Why do you dickheads all look like that?" The crazy thing was, we got out of there alive which everyone was amazed by... and the crowd loved it anyway.

When we got to Sebastians... no word of a lie... about 30 of them turned up there! All Hell broke loose inside... the bouncers had no idea what to do. Everyone ran up to the next level from downstairs to get away. These skinheads actually came in and sat on the floor and waited for us to start playing, because they were so blown away that someone would make a comment like that about them...so he must be all right – he's got ego too!" (Johns, op cit, 24 November, 2004).

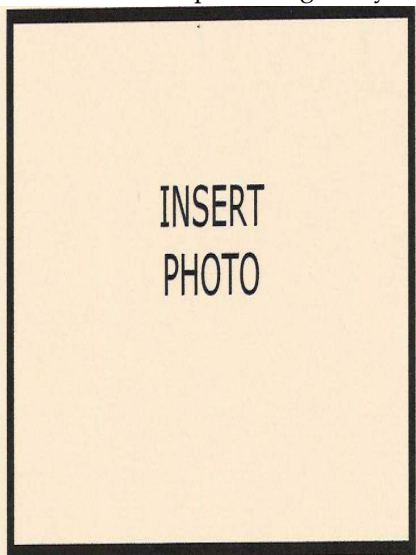
Sebastians provided the venue for Australia's first "live" album to be recorded in Stereo, *Procession Live At Sebastians*. **Procession** had come from **Normie Rowe's** backing band, **The Playboys**. With **Roger Savage** and **Bill Armstrong** of Armstrong Studios in the driver's seat, it was recorded on Wednesday, 3 April 1968 to a live audience packed into the ground floor disco area. **Procession** at this time was a four-piece comprising, **Mick Rogers** (vocals and lead guitar), **Trevor Griffin** (organ), **Brian Peacock** on bass and drummer, **Craig Collinge**; and they had made their live debut at Sebastians on 17 December, 1967 as a self-sufficient band after breaking away from Rowe.

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Like many bands of the time, they had wanted to make their own mark on the scene and their preferred line of attack was not progressive rock, but more jazz influenced pop material with psychedelic touches which attracted a fair share of initial media interest. Sebastian's owner/manager **Anthony Knight**, who championed the band, was gushing in his praise for the accomplishments of **Procession** and their future in the industry:

ANTHONY KNIGHT: "My personal involvement with **Procession** began just six months ago when I was associated with presenting their first Australian performance. Having heard them in rehearsal, I was impressed with their musicianship and originality, but was greatly concerned that they were too advanced for the general public. I needn't have worried, in six months they have established themselves as leaders in the contemporary music field. It is most rewarding for all of us associated with **Procession's** early days, to see them so highly respected and so widely accepted by audiences & musicians alike. It's pointless for me to discuss the individual tracks on this album - I believe they speak for themselves and demonstrate conclusively why this group is so enormously popular at Sebastian's. It only remains for me to say how honoured we are that **Procession** chose Sebastian's for recording this magnificent album." (Knight, liner notes to *Procession Live At Sebastians*.)

Despite this glowing endorsement, this album was not a great success and **Procession** eventually took the chance to make their mark in Britain, which



like many before and after, was not the major career shift and leap to stardom that they thought it would be.

A number of international touring artists who found themselves in Melbourne for concert dates would make appearances at local discos and dances on their "nights off" and Sebastians, as well as Berties managed to attract its fair share of stars up onto their stages. In early March, 1972, British blues star, **John Mayall** and his band toured Australia with locals, **Carson, Tamam Shud and Company Caine** as support acts at the major cities' concerts. The sellout Melbourne concerts were at Festival Hall on 2 and 9 March and at the beginning of the tour before heading off on the road, Mayall, his band and members of **Carson**, took to the Sebastians' stage for what was essentially a "closed jam".

Broderick Smith, then lead singer and harp player with **Carson** was impressed with Mayall's guitarist, Freddie Robinson who had played with a number of harmonica greats over a long period. At Sebastians, Smith joined him on stage with other **Carson** and Mayall band members. A little overawed at first by being on stage with such a great blues guitarist, Smith just followed along with Robinson's lead until he felt free enough to play feed lines back and forth with Robinson as the jam progressed:

xxxxx
BRODERICK SMITH: "We were rehearsing for the tour and Mike Gudinski brought John, Freddy and Keef Hartley, the drummer down for a meeting and a bit of a jam to christen the beginning of the tour. John Mayall didn't appear to be impressed and was a bit standoffish but Freddy and Keef were more down to earth. I was in awe of Freddy because he'd played with Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Ray Charles and so on. They were quite gracious when I think back on it. I remember Mike asking John what he thought of us and he basically said 'there's a million bands like them!' ". (Smith, email correspondence, 21 September, 2005)

Adrian Rawlins was well-known around the discos and worked the crowds on many occasions, often leaving the punters stunned and confused at the same time by what his performance brought to them. A poet and raconteur, he was MC on various occasions and 'part of the furniture' for a time at Sebastians. As well, he took his often outrageous and bizarre antics to the festivals such as Sunbury '72 where, in tandem with **Ian "The Wizard" Channell**, he almost convinced the masses that 'The Wizard' could actually fly! Rawlins was known for his uncontrollable laughing fits and one night at Sebastians:

BOB JONES: "I remember that Adrian Rawlins and 'The Wizard' were very funny when they would MC some nights there. I remember one night Adrian had a laughing fit. He said, '... the band's going to take a half hour break now' then went up into the cloak room, laid on the floor and started laughing! And he laughed for forty-five minutes without stopping! But what was hilarious about this was that it was infectious ... after about ten minutes, we started giggling and by the time that the forty-five minutes was up, everybody in the place was walking around with tears streaming down their cheeks." (Jones op cit, 15 August 2005).

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3. THE THUMPIN' TUM.

Located: 50 Little Latrobe Street, Melbourne, north side between Elizabeth and Swanston Streets.

Operated: Opened, 2 October, 1965 by Ken Moate/Ron Eden then run by David Flint from April, 1967, Warwick Ford and Max Ouzas.

Became: MOTHER TUM, July 1971, then THE THUMPIN' TUM again. Closed - 19 December, 1971

Today: Residential apartment block.

***"But the thing I remember about The Thumpin' Tum was it was a really good place to play at acoustically, because it had an old wooden floor, (it used to be a warehouse or something) and the umbrellas hanging from the roof, which was the most famous feature about it. But those umbrellas hanging upside down and these old wooden floors used to create this great sound for electric bands to play in. You could always get a good sound in that place."* (Gary Young, op cit, 4 October, 2005)**

***"It had the best vibe of all the Melbourne gigs, I don't know why but when you played there you always played really well. The Thumpin' Tum had everything, great sound, great stage, great people and you had to play good there or you weren't asked back"* (Barry Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004)**

The Thumping Tum was for a few years from the mid- to the late- 'sixties, Melbourne's premier club/discotheque and the absolute place to be and be seen – the place for great music and a great time. It was THE first to be established in the city as the focus changed away from suburban dance halls. It was opened and originally operated



Little Latrobe Street today, looking east, with the site of The 'Tum centre left – the residential building with the balconies.

by **Ken Moate** and **Ron Eden** with a third business partner, **Vin Fitzgerald** who put up the 800 pounds necessary to secure the lease on the Little Latrobe Street building which had been a shop run by an engineering company, selling second-hand engineering equipment. **Ron Eden** put in a further 500 pounds of his money for paint, decorations and furniture. He then set about rummaging through Op-shops and Police and Railway auctions for any items, furnishings, pictures etc to re-decorate the old factory. After the departure of Eden, **David Flint** then ran the disco for most of its existence until **Warwick Ford**, from Sydney took over in its declining years.

Judy McCarthy (O'Meara) found The 'Tum at the age of fourteen and remembers that Eden was responsible for creating the layout and the general ambience of the place while Moate was the business man of the partnership. Flint was

around in the early days and after Eden moved on, Flint, with his wife, Jan began to run the venue. **Ken Moate** stayed on and was responsible for opening up the upstairs coffee lounge. **Judy McCarthy** worked in there as well:

JUDY McCARTHY: "Initially, Ken ran it and I worked with him, later I was in charge of it. Now, The 'Tum operated on three floors. The downstairs stayed the same ... the next floor served sandwiches, soft drinks and coffee and David had an office/entertaining area on the third floor. We also ran the light show from the coffee lounge and this was fun. Usually Ken, our creative element, was in charge of lights but I managed to have my

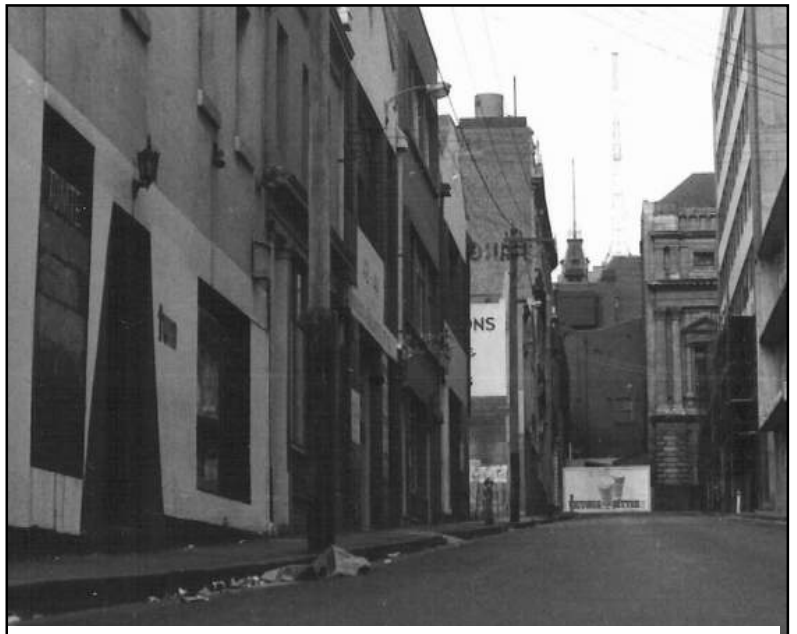
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turns. We could make coloured lights in a slide machine flicker in time to the music and we could spotlight important people on the dance floor. Naturally Ken spotted me and I returned the favour whenever we were dancing!" (McCarthy, op cit, 19 November, 2004).

David and Jan Flint then ran The 'Tum until Warrick Ford, who came down from Sydney bought it and became The 'Tum's third owner. Ford had little to do with Flint and says that he:

WARWICK FORD: "... only knew Dave Flint briefly as I took the Tum over. We had different styles, I was the brash bloke from Sydney as against the urbane Melbournite. He did have a most delightful girlfriend tho'. That's about all I can tell you regarding David, but he was neat, tidy and precise and I was ' fuck it, we'll do it this way'." (Ford, email interview, 13 October, 2004)

From the eighteen months he spent there, regular "Tummy" Harley Parker has given a detailed description of The Thumping Tum up until its closure in 1972. It was located at the very top end of the city just around the corner from The City Baths and on the opposite side of Swanston Street. Situated at 50 Little Latrobe Street, it was an older-style bluestone building,



Little Latrobe Street back in 1971 with the 'Tum' doors left. (Courtesy of Harley Parker.)

possibly built as a warehouse/merchants store in late Victorian times, but having a variety of usages since then. There was a stage set against the back wall on the ground floor near a rear access door where bands and roadies could gain easy entrance from the bluestone cobbled alley at the rear of the building. The stage was not particularly large and neither was the dance floor, however it was bigger than most other venues and roughly twice the size of Sebastians. To get to the second floor, the stairs from the foyer at the left of the building would take you up one flight. This floor housed the coffee bar and was the social meeting and talking area – also the place for folk singers. On the top floor was "the attic" which was set aside for staff and office space. The décor was typical of many pop music venues – Victorian Art Nouveau mixed with 'seventies prints matched with lots of pictures and cameos of long dead Victorian and Edwardian "relatives" in gilt frames.



Upstairs at The 'Tum showing the "chill out" sitting area. Note the flock wallpaper and turn-of-the-century décor. (Courtesy of Harley Parker.)

symbolism of his vision:

RON EDEN: "The idea of the up-turned 'brollies was to make a statement that young people were having their lives turned upside down. A whole new movement was coming in... a rock 'n roll freedom. It was symbolizing that the old forms of protection, like mum and dad and even the ideal of having a steady job and security were

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changing. And also the 'brollies were a symbol of a spaceship to take people who wanted to move on to a different culture or to experiment with new things... just jump in the brollyship!" (Eden, interview 17 January, 2005).



Cliff Nash, long-term "bouncer" who looked after the rear entrance with his framed first-day 'Tum poster.

It was as mentioned previously, like most city discotheques and clubs, rather small. In fact it was:

ROSS WILSON: "...tiny. An old garage in Little Latrobe. It's not there now but it was there for a long time... just sitting there with all the old décor and stuff. Umbrellas hanging from the roof... There was that thing where people would decorate clubs with old furniture... it was old divans." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Harley Parker remembers the large John and Yoko picture which sat on the wall behind the folk singers and the dried flower arrangements. The wafting smell of incense burning was also very strong. Records were played on the P.A. system in between breaks in the live music as the patrons moved around the building and upstairs.

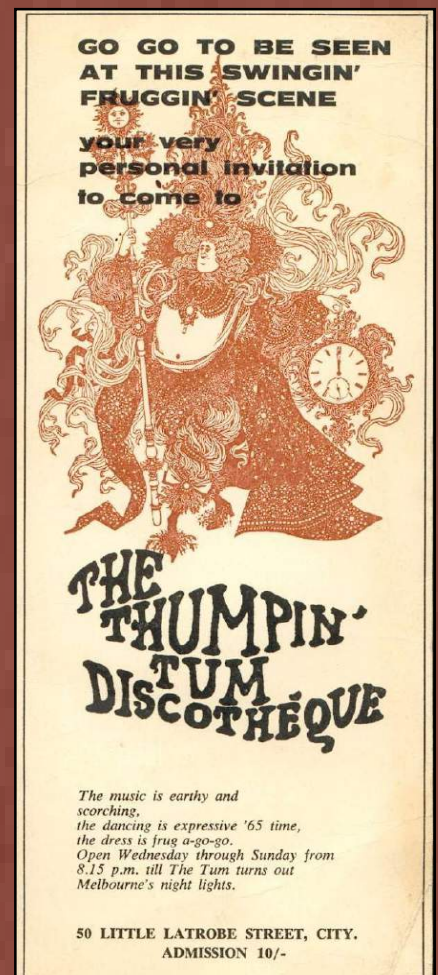
Jim Keays has fond memories of his gigs there with **The Masters Apprentices** and recalls that a really good performance there could make or break a band:

JIM KEAYS: "Our first gig at The Tum was sensational. I remember going there to see all the umbrellas upside down on the roof and thinking that it was really cool. Today, I guess it would be called an "alternate venue" ... sort of Bohemian, where new alternative bands could exist and that's exactly what it was. When we arrived,

we were actually quite different. At the time we were quite progressive while most of the other Melbourne bands and Sydney bands which had come to Melbourne had the old look... the early Rolling Stones, Pretty Things and we came along with the mod look which was like... the Small Faces, Kinks, Who look and we were quite alternative and new wave, if you like, so we fitted right into The 'Tum.." (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006).

Harry Tarasinski, guitarist with Bazaar describes The Tum:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "Like most of the city discos, the Tum's decor varied depending on which room you were in. As you entered from the street, you passed into a sort of foyer area, as I recall, that contained antique-looking furniture for people to sit and relax with a coke, or whatever. I don't recall what the upstairs section looked like but that was where the refreshments were sold so there would have been benches and stuff up there. The walls were all a very dark grey throughout the place, to the best of my recollection - they certainly were in the main dance room where the bands played. As you entered this room from the foyer, the stage was directly ahead, the toilets to the right of it and behind it, to the left, was the old loading bay door where the bands loaded in and out. I can't remember any artwork on the walls but there may have been a psychedelic motif of some sort done in an iridescent colour. The floor was concrete and was mostly always packed with dancing punters. The view from (the) stage was somewhat limited because we had lights shining in our eyes and the dance floor area was kept relatively dark so we only really saw the people who were dancing closest to the stage, clearly and this was the case in most of the city discos." (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)





Playful employees and guests at The Tum – all photos courtesy of Cliff Nash.



Upstairs at the Thumpin' Tum - 2...



The darkish coloured paint on the walls was given a further paint job throughout, several years later by long-time employee, **Cliff Nash** – those who visited the venue in the middle years will remember the change. Likewise Eden’s symbolic upside-down umbrellas which caused so much comment and which most patrons will fondly remember,



Ken Moate (left) Jan Flint and bouncer and last owner of The 'Tum, Max Ouzas (right). (Courtesy of Jim Colbert - Photo Archives)

were also removed from the ceiling due to the potential for fire should someone flick a cigarette butt up there.

Harley Parker was a regular at The ‘Tum over an eighteen month period around 1971 where it became a regular weekend and weekday hangout for him:

HARLEY PARKER: “There was the smell. Most of the early aromas I didn’t recognize. I wasn’t smoking anything then, so I only guessed what it was. There were lots of oily smells... just in corners and dark rooms because there were a lot of those. You had to walk past the couches sometimes with your eyes straight ahead and there were often three or four guys and girls and they were often not just kissing! So you had to be discrete otherwise someone would smash your face in. That was going on in the shadows. As you came down the stairs, you went past these two sort of ...alcoves where these couches were as you went into the stage area. You came down from upstairs where it was quite light with coffee tables and it looked like a bar, but without the booze. Up there it

was just a coffee bar and there was a cigarette machine and a *Go-Set* picture of John Lennon and Yoko. Lots of celebs had parties or maybe love-ins there, but the main public didn’t see or hear that. People like Issy Dy would turn up and you’d never see him watching the band because he’d go straight upstairs.” (Parker, author’s interview, 7 December, 2005)

At the end of the night when the music had finished and very few wanted to go home, movies were shown:

HARLEY PARKER: “For these nights people brought in some blankets, maybe sleeping bags and cushions to put on the floor while watching movies when all the bands had finished. I remember seeing *Bonnie & Clyde*, *2001*, *A Space Odyssey*. They were very popular times with the concrete dance floor being packed with bodies, laying on the cushions.” (Parker, op cit, 7 December, 2005)

Another regular at the ‘Tum from 1969 until its closure remembers the movie nights:

TERRY MURPHY: “Ahhhhhh... the movie nights ..my favourite was *Cup Eve*. After the bands finished they would throw down cushions from upstairs for you to sit on and I can remember seeing the *Time Machine* with Rod Taylor there. Then upstairs for breakfast after the movie ... crumpets with honey.” (Murphy, email interview, 31 October, 2004).

When **Ian “Fingers” Ferguson** was playing with his early band **The Moods** in 1966/7, like many musicians, he couldn’t keep away from the place, even on his nights off:

IAN FERGUSON: “I can remember going to the Thumpin’ Tum one night when I wasn’t working and the original

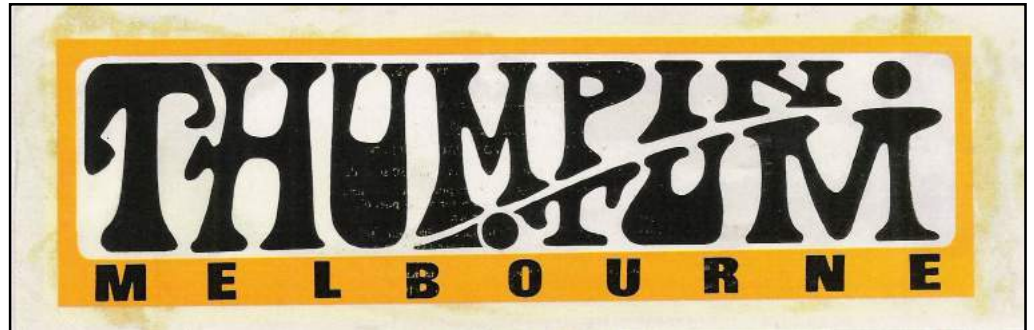


The bluestone cobbled lane at the rear of the buildings – this was the musicians entrance and the lane was the scene of many “unusual” activities.

Mixtures were playing. ...Probably had John Creech on drums and Laurie Arthur as the guitarist and the bass player was Rod DeClerck and I remember him sitting back on the couch there, lighting his farts! It was the first time I'd seen that done – the funniest thing I'd seen at that place. So there were a lot of characters in the band too.

Berties or Sebastians were the classy places and The 'Tum was a bit Bohemian – Sunday nights they used to show films there. I remember one night seeing Marlon Brando in *Mutiny On The Bounty*...great ideas. They used to serve up light snacks like toasted ham and cheese sandwiches maybe, a small bowl of chips. But it was great. These places were set up so that people could watch the band and listen to the music. Not like today where nightclubs are just set up to serve booze and make money. (Ferguson, op cit, 23 July, 2005)

Many aspects of this place could be experimental – including the lighting. The flashing strobe-lighting was



The early Thumpin' Tum bumper sticker – author's collection

beginning to make its way into clubs and must have been an amazing feeling to experience it for the first time. The audience however would not be thinking about the problems it caused for musicians including "Tweed" Harris keyboard player with **The Groove**, The Hoadley's Battle of The Sounds winner:

ROD STONE: "I can remember going there and it was possibly the first job The Groove ever did. I didn't have an amplifier. This would have been in 1967, when I arrived back from England. The Groove was formed in the winter months. This was the first place that I'd ever seen a strobe light. I thought it was incredible because they would turn all the other lights off and there was almost this slow-motion look as you walked around. Tweed Harris, our organist had a lot of trouble because the negative -type effect would take place on his keyboard and all his white keys would look black and his black keys would turn white! So when we played there he used to take a candle on a candlestick and leave it on the end of the organ so he could see what he was playing. (Stone, op cit, 27 October, 2005)

Mike Rudd, who played The Tum a number of times recalls the certain type of patron who went there. Melbourne, in the early 'seventies generated a particular indigenous look – The Sharpie style – youngsters whose dress style and Mullet hair – short top and sides, long at the back marked them out. In contrast, Mods were an imported bunch, taking their style from such band as **Rod Stewart's Faces**. The two were at either end of the scale and often made a point of not tolerating each other's presence when they crossed paths. There probably was a third group which seemed to make their home at The Tum:

MIKE RUDD: "...when I arrived in Melbourne it was very much The Mods and The Sharpies... and we were petrified. We'd read all about the Mods and Sharpies battles... but there was a third group and they were very underated, The Stylists ...and The Thumpin' Tum was a Stylist venue. They were very much a halfway house between the Sharpies and The Mods. They had short hair on the sides but long hair at the back – a mullet. They used to be very cool about dancing – very minimal dancing." (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

After a few months of sneaking out of her bedroom window to check out the mid-'sixties jazz dances and coffee shops, fourteen-year-old **Judy McCarthy** subsequently earned herself a whole year of penance at a Brigadine Convent school to "straighten her out" once her parents found out just where she was going at night. If this was meant to cure her and her friend Christine of sneaking out of their bedroom windows, it just increased their desire to see and hear what was happening around this exciting town at that time. Eventually, their paths led them to The 'Tum:

JUDY MCCARTHY: "Leaving was simple; say "goodnight" to the oldies, head off to bed, wait a decent amount of time and out the window we would go. We had heard about The Thumpin' Tum in the city and it sounded like a really cool spot. It was the first disco in Melbourne and was obviously the only place to be. So one night we hitched a ride with a truck driver to The 'Tum.

Blown away! In through the front door to a laid-back rectangular area with squashy, old sofas, wonderful old statues and an ambience we had never experienced in clubs. Down a small passage, cloakroom and DJ area to the left was a dance floor with a stage directly in front, tables and chairs at edges and the much vaunted umbrellas hanging from the roof. 2am and it was all happening, no live music but the small crowd was to die for. The structural haircuts we had only seen in English magazines, impeccable clothing of the androgynous nature and dance steps we little Go-go girls had never witnessed. (It took a week in front of our bedroom mirrors to even half conquer that dance)." (McCarthy, op cit 19 November, 2004)



Participants in the famous footy match between The 'Tum and Brockhoff's Biscuits employees at a Burwood east reserve – date unknown. (Courtesy of Cliff Nash)

Speaking of "cool dancing", **Warwick Ford**, who took over ownership of The 'Tum from Flint late in its existence, recalls that after coming down from Sydney, he was rather shocked at the first Melbourne winter which he had to endure and particularly indoors at the venue where it could be quite cold, especially on the concrete floors. Not a real problem for those of us who were native Melburnians:

WARWICK FORD: "Having never experienced a winter in Victoria I was devastated at the cold in the Tum, so I bought an orchard heater, they stand about 6' tall and are fired up with kero, makes a kind of roaring noise similar to a jet, when hot it glows red. Well, I stuck this thing at the bottom of the stairs so the heat not only warmed the entrance and dance floor but the upstairs was quite cosy... success! The attendance went up by at least 30% and they stayed longer (but) if the police, council or fire authorities ever saw that heater I would have been dead." (Ford, op cit, 13 October, 2004).

Publicity for most other venues as well as the Tum was usually by means of advertisements mostly in *Go-Set* in short single column-style. *Go-Set*, being the industry's main paper at the time, had a wide circulation amongst the

target audience – the older teens and twenties. There were also the posters which were stuck on hoardings, telegraph poles and walls around town:

WARWICK FORD: "...we did a number of posters during my tenure, mostly when there was something special, like Cup Eve, Friday 13th, Easter or an exclusive such as Jeff St John and Wendy Saddington when they played for a week only at the Tum, ...got them done really cheap... free admittance for the printer and his girlfriend and a few dollars, one of the Tum tribe stuck them up around Melbourne, although I am suspicious as I never saw them." (Ford, op cit, 13 October, 2004)

Ross Wilson both played there and went along as a regular punter on his off-nights just to check out the music and the other bands, and like a number of other patrons, particularly remembers the great vibes created by **Max Merritt and the Meteors**:

ROSS WILSON: "The Thumpin' Tum was like.. "action central" for us. ...we played there regularly and even when we didn't play there we'd go there and check out other bands. A band would come to town and play exclusively at a place for a week... you'd go down and see Jeff St John and the Id and Max Merritt who was like our all-time favourite. We thought they were just amazing musicians... Bob Birtles... just a fantastic sax player and Stewie (Speer) on drums and also Python Lee Jackson. So it was an education to go there and see these guys from other towns and we'd say, "Gee.. how do we get that good?" We'd play there on say... Thursday when not as many people went there. It was great though that we had a place to play and that we were hanging out with the movers and shakers. The Tum was probably the most influential of the places... we spent so much time there. They had all kinds of stuff there... and they had a DJ booth so you were constantly hearing crazy music that you mightn't hear anywhere else in the breaks. So I'd go and find out what it was and go out and buy it.

Someone gave me Speed one night at The Thumpin' Tum and I kept on running off the stage and back to get

water 'cos I was so dry I couldn't sing. (laughs) It was my only experience with it and I never repeated it again." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004).

A well-documented incident at The Thumpin' Tum in December, 1966 landed **Andy James** of **The Missing Links** and **The Running Jumping Standing Still** in hospital from a serious brain haemorrhage suffered while on stage during the RJSS's hi-octane cover version of **Tina Turner's** *River Deep, Mountain High*. James was known to drink heavily around this time and was also taking pep pills – Methedrine and Dexedrine - which in the early 'sixties were not considered dangerous or even placed in the category of "drug-taking". They were virtually available over the counter at the chemist to treat anxiety and sleep deprivation. Most bands used them to balance the often gruelling touring and performing schedule which was expected of them at the time. One version was commonly named "Purple Hearts" after the American war decoration, (and adopted by **Mick Hadley** and **Lobby Loyde** around 1964 as their band name). It was not until much later that these and other stimulents were placed on the banned list. On this particular night it all caught up with James as he went full on – no stopping him. Although, according to Anderson, he was not affected on this occasion by substances or alcohol and he had been having headaches for some time. He hit the floor clutching his head in total agony and was to spend a month recovering from his ordeal in hospital.

ANDY ANDERSON: "Thinking back, I felt safe there, (at The Tum) safe to experiment, and personally safe. I was one for getting into scrapes. It was at the Tum though that I had a subarrachnoid haemorrhage during *River Deep Mountain High* and nearly blew my brain out. Never been the same since." (Anderson, op cit, 3 October, 2004)

Music fan, **Brendan Mitchell** who was around fifteen at the time has his favourites from The 'Tum days:

BRENDAN MITCHELL: "I remember the Tum as a small building ... just down from Swanston St. It may have been an old factory or even derelict as a lot of the venues were in those days. Cheap rents, I suppose. The two bands I remember seeing there where The Purple Hearts and Running Jumping Standing Still. The Purple Hearts had an almost mythical presence to me. They had appeared on TV a couple of times but other than that not much was known about them, by me anyway. They had a hit with a song "I played it real cool, but lord I was a fool for droppin' out of school" ...can't remember the actual title. They seemed to appeal to the older, cool crowd (at this time I was about 14-15 and in awe of these people). Running Jumping Standing Still was a band I first saw at the Tum. This night I saw them I was very impressed. They closed the show with The Who's *My Generation*, a big hit at the time, and smashed up a cheap nylon string guitar at the end ala The Who. Still, it was very impressive. Not long after this, my brother got the Who's first LP and I thought the songs were very familiar---they were. I had heard RJSS do them all! (Mitchell, op cit, 1 November, 2004.)

Perth/Brisbane/Sydney band, **Chain** played The Tum on numerous occasions. **Barry 'Lil Goose' Harvey**, **Chain** drummer has fond memories of playing there, particularly when the band members could gather on Tuesday nights. His acclaim for **Max Merritt** is just as generous as **Ross Wilson's**:

BARRY HARVEY: "Now we come to the gig of gigs, The Thumpin' Tum. We practically lived there, myself and Big Goose anyway. I think a precedent was set in place by them having Muso's night on a Tuesday night and no cover charge and the host band was Max Merritt and the Meteors, who was considered the muso's band. Well, they were so good, world class. I got to know Stewie Speers through the 'Tum. You could be guaranteed that every Tuesday night the place would be packed with muso's who had come to groove on, learn from and just have a ball because of that band. They were the best band in Melbourne at the time.. I remember a night they use to have called the Acid Truth, where it was a competitive thing, to which band played the best. It was a great challenge. (Harvey,



Further familiar faces from the one and only footy match. (Courtesy of Cliff Nash)

op cit, 19 October, 2004).

Ian "Fingers" Ferguson played here many times over the years including with the bands that he played bass for, **The Moods**, **Running Jumping Standing Still** and Adelaide band, **Y?4**. His early impressions were of something



Playing it up for the camera – Daddy Cool's Ross Hannaford in the cobblestoned lane at the rear of the venue. (Courtesy of Colin Beard)

different to the suburban venues where he had been playing. The Bohemian atmosphere of The 'Tum was something vitally different for him:

IAN FERGUSON: "The Thumpin' Tum – from about '66, The Moods played there quite a lot and we would be called one of the resident bands. I remember having to hitch a ride home after gigs because I didn't have a licence. The van wasn't working – the vans never worked and back in those days you could catch an old tramways bus all the way out to Mont Albert. The gigs at The 'Tum were great because it was a great time in Melbourne when everybody was doing something different.

When I started playing, most places I played at were like, school halls, dance halls but when it came to The 'Tum, that was different – they'd like have three bands on in a night. There would be one band on from 8 'til 10ish and another from 10.30 'til midnight, then a main band for the last hour. I remember later with Carson, we'd do a number of gigs in one night maybe Ringwood Town Hall first then to St. Johns in Canterbury on the way and then on to 'The Tum, Berties or Sebastians" (Ferguson, op cit, 23 July, 2005)

There were many characters that remain in the memories of those who were at The Tum during its lifetime. Of the colourful patrons there was: **Billy "the Baker"** who reportedly had a hole the size of a golf ball in his temple, probably from a car accident and **Doris**, known to all as "**Wallflower**". It appears that Doris, who had black hair and wore heavy eye make-up became known around the place because she apparently had no "boobs" to speak of. However, as other girls noted

when in the ladies rest room, Doris strapped them down with a silk scarf! Doris is fondly remembered by many as "super cool", the exact image of the "dolly-bird" and dated, then married **Richard Tyler**, who was to make quite a name for himself in fashion design overseas. Doris was reported to have later worked with **Rod Stewart**:

JIM KEAYS: "Richard Tyler and Doris were there. Doris was always at The 'Tum. She was a stalwart of The 'Tum and Richard Tyler is now one of the leading fashion designers in the world! Doris was certainly a personality in those days. She was a little bit of a sounding board for people... you would go and if she thought you were cool, then you *were* cool! Richard in fact, made all my "Boy From The Stars" outfits that I wore at Sunbury '75. (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)

Lily Brett, in her job as *Go-Set* reporter was often around. She was remembered as gracious, large, but beautiful as she floated through the dance scene in exquisite black dresses. **Judy** and **Jillian Fitzgerald** who were dancers from *Kommotion* were often seen there and Judy Anne dated **Andy James** from **The Running Jumping Standing Still** for some time. There was also **Adrienne Russell** who performed with **Issy Dy** as a duo for a short time in 1967:

JUDY MCCARTHY: "She and I were friendly for a while and we did *Blind Date* together. We were both the date to be chosen and neither of us went out with the lucky guy we selected. I well remember Adrienne signalling me from the audience the number of the guy to choose. Suffice to say, we had very different tastes in men and I was horrified when he appeared 'round the screen. Still, I think Adrienne was being tricky and did it on purpose!" (McCarthy, op cit, 19 December, 2004)

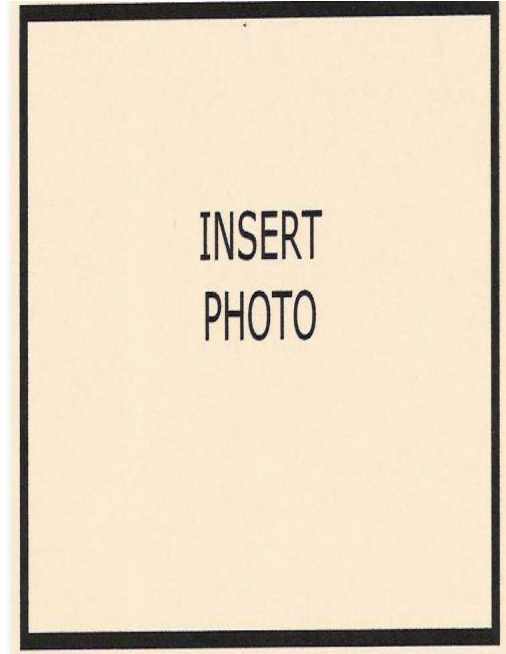
Zaiga and **Tamara** were two particularly stunning Latvian girls at The 'Tum and for a while, Tamara and **Max Merritt** dated. The 'Tum girls were often a tight-knit bunch who hung out together, sometimes fought and bitched, carefully checked out each other's outfits and even borrowed each other's boyfriends. Of the men, there was "**Broken-nose Jim**", a builder's labourer from Essendon, "**Maltese Charlie**" from the Housing Commission flats in Coburg and "**Smiling Kenny**" who was reputed to have stolen more cars than anyone else in a single year! The

Tum's second owner/manager, **Warwick Ford** also remembers several staff members and helpers:

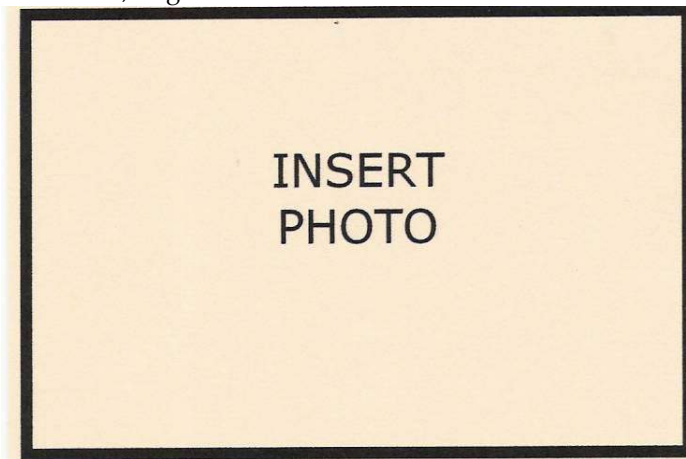
WARWICK FORD: "Rose Marcic the cleaner, and general dogsbody was a fantastic and loyal girl. She not only cleaned up the place but ran the 'bar' as well. Jackie McBride and Annie did the cloakroom and helped out on the door when necessary. Jackie became a close friend and supporter through the tough times. Max Ouzas... bouncer, was really good at his job, never caused any trouble and handled the unruly really well. He eventually took over after I left.... He loved his job.... (Ford, op cit, 13 October, 2004)

Judy McCarthy was typical of a number of 'teenagers growing up in a big, wide world where the music was all new and experimental. She was keen to break away from the constraints of parents at the time and was also fully determined to do so. Rebellion was the keyword. In her last year of school in 1965, she would sneak out of her bedroom window and (illegally) visit the 'Tum. She remembers the music there being exciting, fresh and very raw – for a young girl, it was THE place to be. Within a short time, she was working around the venue five to six nights a week at the same time as she was completing her teacher training by day. This meant that she probably slept on Monday nights only! She graduated to the cloakroom, where she could make up to ten quid each weekend. However, she didn't have to pay to get in to The 'Tum and she and her friends could also gain free entry to other discos, sometimes at lunchtimes when they would dash around during work breaks. Given responsibilities at The 'Tum by first owners Moate and Eden, she soaked up the atmosphere:

JUDY McCARTHY: "Money was a problem to me as a schoolgirl and it was not long before I had free entry because I cleaned up around the drink machines. This mainly meant collecting up plastic cups that patrons dropped on the floor! I graduated to the cloakroom, (formerly run by Anne and Bernice Goss) and was in charge of playing the music in band breaks. I also was allowed to keep the cloakroom fee, so I began to make some money there. David and Jan Flint took over The Tum and opened the upstairs as a coffee lounge and I then worked up in that area for some years. My first serious boyfriend was with Blues, Rags and Hollers so the Adelaide bands became my friends" (McCarthy, op cit, 31 October, 2004.)



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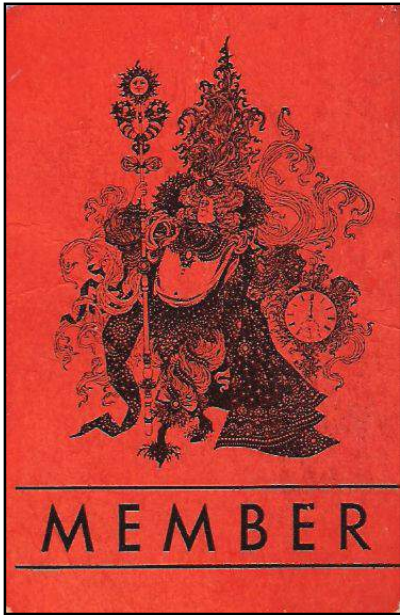
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She also remembers frequenting the Greek Club in the Latrobe Street district because this place was popular with disco staff and band members after The Tum and other venues closed down for the night. It had few frills and could be downright dirty. It was here that Judy remembers learning how the pool cue could be used as a weapon and the many ways in which a broken bottle could be employed to cause damage. The Greek Club was where the musos could hang out relatively anonymously as no one paid any attention to the well-known rock stars relaxing there. It was:

JUDY McCARTHY: "...upstairs and open all night, many of us would gather there for plates of chips, coffee and the excitement of viewing a rough crowd playing pool. There was no music at The Greek Club, in fact, I think it probably existed for crims

and the black market, but it became an "in" place after 3 am on many mornings" (McCarthy, op cit, 31 October, 2004.)

At a time when bouncers or “security staff” needed to have little or no training, some bouncers, was a major source of concern. Unfortunately, the brutality which did occur after dark added to the reputation of venues like the Tum as being places of violence, full of danger for the unwary patron. While many report that inside The ‘Tum was



Just the ticket! Keith Glass' membership card for 1968. (Courtesy of Keith Glass)

probably a far less violent place than for example, The Catcher, Little Latrobe Street could hold many dangers. Bouncers at that stage could be particularly brutal – but not all were tarred with this one brush. Many thrived on being involved in fights and some even looked for opportunities to start a fracas. It was the way of life for some of these “security” people and it was their main sport:

WARWICK FORD: “Leo Young the other bouncer, was nice guy if you were his friend, bloody dangerous if you weren't He caused more fights than anyone else and I was shit scared of him. I think Max was as well and in hindsight, I should have gotten rid of him from day one. To this day cannot understand why Dave Flint had him nor why he never gave us any warning about him. I saw him mercilessly beat the shit out of countless people for no or little reason, as he was a Victorian champion boxer. He brought the boxing thugs with him, most of whom were banned from the Tum, but that didn't stop them from hanging around outside and harassing anyone they didn't like the look of. On several occasions, I ran out into the street to drag an unfortunate being inside to stop the bashing. On one occasion these shits were taking running kicks at a victim's head whilst I dragged him up the street to get him inside! It was unbelievable but this is some of the reputation the Tum had which was undeserved. The police did fuck-all about our complaints and we were stuck 'tween the rock and the hard place. I have employed countless bouncers in my time but I have never met (one like him) before - I think he was either sadistic or

a psychopath, I just couldn't figure him out.” (Ford, op cit, 13 October, 2004)

However, others stand out as being of better stock and temperament. There was the cheerful “**Big Bob**” Noble, a fairly large and jovial bouncer who developed a blood clot after a car accident and died a couple of years later at the age of 34, while working on his mother's farm in Gippsland. Another story has it that he died in Melbourne's northern suburbs.

Many would remember **John Bennett** who was occasionally on the door and who reputedly kept a pistol in a drawer inside The ‘Tum. He and a few other regulars were known to (allegedly!) engage in some target practice in the back alley at times. The alley may also have been the scene on a number of occasions for some rather daring motor bike antics. The challenge was to ride at high speed down the alley towards the bluestone wall at the end and brake at the last minute.

Then, there were other staff members whose kindness is remembered by patrons and musicians alike:

HARRY TARASINSKI: “Cliff Nash is the bouncer I recall! Yes, Cliffy was (and, no doubt, still is) a really nice bloke. I got on extremely well with him, probably more so than any of the other bouncers I met, and I always had a lot of time for him. He was, I'm sure, the most professional of all of them and I suppose that's what made him stand out from the rest in my memory.” (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

However, of all those employees and helpers, one remains in the memory of owner/manager Ford for all the wrong reasons, because of any number of incidents which took place at The Tum:

WARWICK FORD: “ Now I'm remembering things, like the time a white Holden Ute pulled up outside and the passenger got out and laid a rifle over the roof of the car and screamed for Leo (Young). We all scrambled inside and I could hear several gunshots and he then took off - another Leo victim wanting his revenge. I think this was a poor bastard that Leo punched unconscious the week before. The scenario was: Leo's brother said to Leo that there is a guy outside that said he can beat you, (all bullshit of course). Leo went out and was chatting to him when suddenly wham!! again and again punching him through the window of the car - Leo's brother thought this was a great joke.

Why didn't I fire him? I tried to get Max to do it but he was scared of Leo and now maybe you can understand why? Whew!, think I need a cup of tea, a Bex and a good lie down. Oh ...and in response to all of this I put the

biggest brightest spotlight that money could buy up on the roof to deter the boxing morons but all that did was give them a better look at their victims.

There was the time when someone got in through the office window over the roof and robbed us of all the nights takings. I think it was Max who chased someone, but they got away in the dark. No insurance.” (Ford, op cit, 13 October, 2004)

Ford has a vague memory of the night one employee’s wife came to the ‘Tum looking for him – with a loaded gun!

Terry Murphy, a frequent ‘Tum music fan doesn’t believe that violence was the normal occurrence there although he remembers a mysterious door in the D.J. booth on the second floor of The ‘Tum which may have been an escape route should some skirmish break out downstairs:

TERRY MURPHY: “...one of the bouncers was a famous boxer whose name escapes me for the moment. The atmosphere was friendly; people just came for the music and revelled in it. The only disturbance I do recall (was when) we were sitting upstairs having a drink and we had always wondered about this door above the seat in the booth in the corner, when it opened and out came a few bodies in great haste as there was a disturbance downstairs which was quickly terminated.

There were always the odd idiots driving past and making a general pest of themselves, but inside was generally quiet.” (Murphy, op cit, 31 October, 2004)

However, **Harry Tarasinski** who played at both The ‘Tum and The Catcher with his band, **Harper’s Bazaar**, has a slightly different perspective of the level of violence and crowd action:

HARRY TARASINSKI: “As for the crowd... again, the Tum and Catcher were similar in that regard although I do remember the Tum being the more violent of the two in terms of the number of fights that occurred there, not that they were all that frequent. Personally, I attribute this to ... the main bouncer at the Tum and (he) never, as best as I can recall, worked at Catcher... In any case, quite a few of fights that did take place at the Tum happened in the street but they certainly had their genesis inside the place. In fact, I’d venture to say that the Tum was probably the most violence-prone of all the city discos but, as I said, it’s not like there was a fight breaking out every five minutes, or anything.” (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

These impressions prove that whether or not particular discos were violent or dangerous places was definitely in the “eye of the beholder”. Possibly it may be due to the fact that punters and musicians may have had different patterns of attendance. It may have also depended on the particular nights that people attended (ie Saturdays) or even whether attendance was regularly late in the night – it was possible to see more “action” as the evenings wore on. The bands though were what the fans came for at The ‘Tum. Most young patrons were there for the music and the sheer excitement of what was coming from the stage:

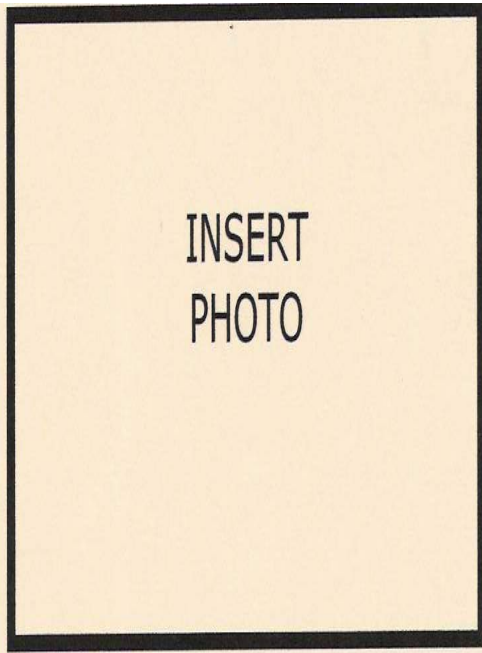
TERRY MURPHY: “The bands that stand out in my memory are Chain, pre Matt Taylor, then of course with him, Spectrum - fantastic band, Max Merritt, Wendy Saddington who sang with Chain at times and seemed quite friendly with Stewie Speers too. Billy Thorpe with Lobby Loyde on guitar... they were hot then. I first saw Blackfeather there and was blown away with John Robinson. His version of “God Save the Queen” was awesome. He was Australia’s answer to Hendrix ...Carson, Jeff Crozier and his Indian Magic Show, Company Caine, Cam-Pact, Levi Smith’s Clefs. These are a few of the bands I remember.” (Murphy, op cit, 31 October, 2004).

Judy McCarthy also has fond memories of the musos and bands which made the disco their home, particularly the interstate groups – **The Masters Apprentices, The Purple Hearts, Blues Rags and Hollers, The Valentines and The La De Das**. The dance floor, being close to the stage allowed an intimacy with the bands for the audience who, at times was showered with the sweat from the musicians on stage:



A ‘Tum poster for 1971 as the great venue was nearing it’s end. Warrick Ford was the new owner at this stage. (Author’s collection)

JUDY McCARTHY: "The music was great, often raw and uninhibited, the acoustics of the building allowed the sound to reverbrate and echo in a way that was from the (later) bigger and more barnlike discos and pubs. The Melbourne crowd had definite preferences. The place would be incredibly crowed for a couple of hours then a second different crowd would arrive later for a different band performing." (McCarthy, op cit, 19 November, 2004)



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Russell Morris as lead singer with **Somebody's Image** was riding the charts with his hit, *Hush* and thought that, as a regular, he had just about seen everything but one particular night, he witnessed one particular band which certainly raised the bar so far as performances go:

RUSSELL MORRIS: "I used to go to The Thumpin' Tum all the time with my friends from Somebody's Image – Les Gough and Eric Cairns. We would go there every weekend... rain, hail or shine. It was a great little club... really lovely... run by David Flint who is still a good friend. We really liked hanging out there because you would see the cream of the new bands. I remember one night when we were there and there was supposed to be a new band which was to appear. Now, we thought we were pretty hot ... we were a young band ... and we were all full of ourselves.

This new band was supposed to arrive and there was an announcement that their truck had broken down and they were going to be half an hour late. So we hung on for half an hour and then an hour went by and we said, 'Damn this! We're going to go.' So we turned to leave and as we left, one of them came in with his drums so we said, 'Oh great, they're here, let's wait.' So they brought in all their stuff and set it up and they played.... And our jaws hit the ground and we decided maybe we weren't so good after all. This band happened

to be The Twilights!!! We could not believe it. They did all these Beatles songs and we were just shocked. I could not believe how a band could sound so good. To us, it was a real scary eye-opener." (Morris, op cit, 22 may, 2006)

Some gigs stand out in memory for reasons other than just the music. One particular night, one eye-catching wood-nymph performance stood out for other reasons:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "The one that really sticks out is playing on stage at the Tum after a set by Wendy Saddington and watching her and her three girlfriends get completely naked in the middle of the dance floor. I don't know why they did it; it was probably just a spur of the moment thing, but I wasn't going to start complaining about it and neither was anyone else. I'd like to think they were inspired by Bazaar's rendition of *Gloria* and maybe they were. Wendy was wearing a cow skin vest, of all things, on stage and it somehow found its way into my hands after a friend of mine grabbed it from amongst the other items of clothing on the floor when no-one was looking, which wasn't hard given that everyone's attention, like mine, was focused on one spot only! Anyway, she must have wondered why she couldn't find it when they all got dressed again but I had that vest for many years. I don't know what eventually became of it but I suspect my wife probably threw it out when all the fur started falling off. (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004).

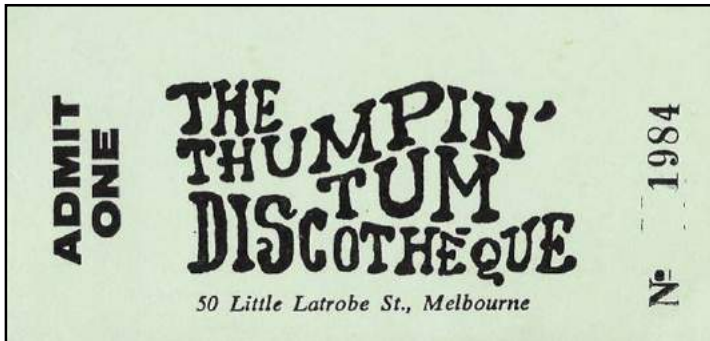
Harley Parker tells the story of almost being in the wrong place at the wrong time on one particular night when he took his camera into The 'Tum. The result was his onlt encounter with Wendy:

HARLEY PARKER: "It was always very difficult changing film in the dark there and this time, there was a break between Jeff St John and the next band. He had to be wheeled around and out in the lane at the back, you'd see him doing "wheelies" and when he'd had enough, Wendy Saddington would often push him around.

I really don't know whether they'd been drinking or whether they were stoned, or both, but they were having a merry old time. This one time, I just had the camera on the floor and I was trying to change the film in the dark in there. I was the only one on the floor ... everyone had gone upstairs during the break and next minute, this wheelchair comes in from the laneway and Wendy just looks at me and says, "GET OUT OF THE FUCKING ROAD!!!!!!" She wasn't moving from her line and she only missed me by inches. This was the only conversation I

ever had with Wendy Saddington!" (Parker, op cit, 7 December, 2005).

Not all the action took place in, at or surrounding the 'Tum. The Oxford Hotel was a favourite watering hole for both staff and patrons and was within easy walking distance of Little Latrobe Street. The 'Tum tribe became a rather close knit community at times and they shared a large number of experiences and memories in a social setting, but... a football match? Yes some, though not that many may remember an Aussie Rules game that was



organised by regular, **Leo Tuttleby** and played between The Oxford Hotel and Brockhoff's Biscuits staff at an oval in Burwood. Leo was a biscuitmaker at Brockie's Burwood plant in Huntingdale Road and therefore, had a foot in both camps. The Oxford team of course, was made up primarily of Tummies - regulars who were able to safely pull on a boot. The reason that many may not remember the match is easily explained - most, if not all players and officials had trained long and hard on a solid diet of amber fluid and were in peak condition on the day

of the match having consumed large amounts of the health drink before, (probably) during and after the game.

Alcohol wasn't the only available stimulant and as at most venues, drugs began to appear - they were scarce at first - but gradually began to become more available. The early drugs were marijuana and stimulants, in the form of amphetamines - "uppers and downers", most of which could be easily obtained legally over the counter at the local chemist. It was all very innocent at that stage because the pull to get that extra strength to stay awake to enjoy the disco experience was so strong. They would allow those who used them to dance non-stop until 3 am and then be wide awake to attend the after-parties with the musicians when they came off stage. **Judy McCarthy's** story is typical on many young 'teens who tried these stimulants:

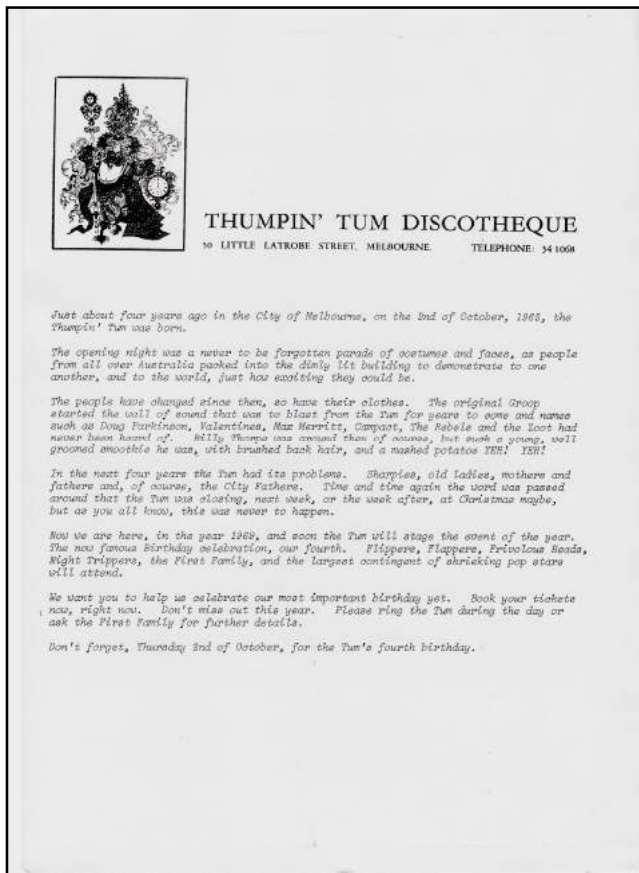
JUDY MCCARTHY: "... we loved speed in any form. Naturally. We were short on sleep and all wanted to look like Twiggy. One of The Loved Ones introduced me to speed, a purple heart, so pretty to look at and so effective when swallowed. Three of us would obtain a prescription for 100 meth or dex pills, easy and legal in those days, and share them. Did we argue over the last pill left! Later, powdered speed arrived from Sydney. This we would mix with something edible or in a soft drink, snorting was a habit unknown to us back then. Duramine pills also were a popular currency at one stage.

At one time, two roadies who had been crashing at (my) South Yarra flat for a couple of days left a suitcase when they went back to Sydney for a week or two. We opened it and found it to be full of marijuana, a drug we knew nothing about, except some people paid money for it. After a girly discussion, I took some to the 'Tum with me and offered a carefully chosen musician a smoke. We went out into the back alley, from which bands loaded their gear in and out of The 'Tum, and I had to do some fudging because I had no idea what to do with the grass. He rolled a joint professionally and we shared it. As I did not smoke then, dizziness was my main effect but I must have got a bit stoned because I told him we had heaps and asked him what price to charge for an amount. Naturally he gave me a very cheap idea and, for a time, the music scene abounded in ridiculously low priced smoking dope. When the roadies returned they were appalled at discovering half the dope gone but they could do little. We thought they had forgotten it or didn't want it, they obviously, had planted it in what they thought was a very safe place!" (McCarthy, op cit, 19 November, 2004).

Adelaide's **Masters Apprentices** first played The 'Tum in mid- 1966 and, while staying in a rain-sodden caravan park in Sunshine, set off in their car to check out the city discos which they'd heard so much about. They found The 'Tum rather an unpretentious building when they were expecting something like a Las Vegas nightclub. However for this first line up of this now legendary band, the experience of playing there was of great importance and **Jim Keays**, lead singer knew it was a significant move in his career. Their mod way of dressing caught on with the crowd.

After a number of band changes, the so-called classic line -up of Keays, **Colin Burgess** on drums, ex-**Running Jumping Standing Still** guitarist, **Doug Ford** and bassist **Glenn Wheatley** from **Bay City Union** played there early in 1968 at the very beginning of their collaboration. The band had not quite gelled together at that stage:

GLENN WHEATLEY: "My first job with the Masters was an all-night gig at the Thumpin' Tum. We had four days to build up a repertoire and on the night we only had enough songs to last about one and a half sets. "We'll be OK", Doug said reassuringly. "We'll just have an extended jam session for the rest of the night". I felt reasonably confident until I faced the packed disco, and I found myself as nervous as at my first performance with The Bay City Union. For a first night, we did remarkably well." (Wheatley, 1999, P 27)



The benefits of membership – a personal letter reminding you of The 'Tum's fourth birthday bash – Thursday 2 October, 1969.

Michael Gudinski had relented a little on his artist ban and the place was still jumping. Much to Ford's bemusement, after the courts had put him through the proverbial wringer, the building's owner gave the place to Max Ouzas, who became the last owner from May, 1971, and reduced his rent by \$100 in the process!

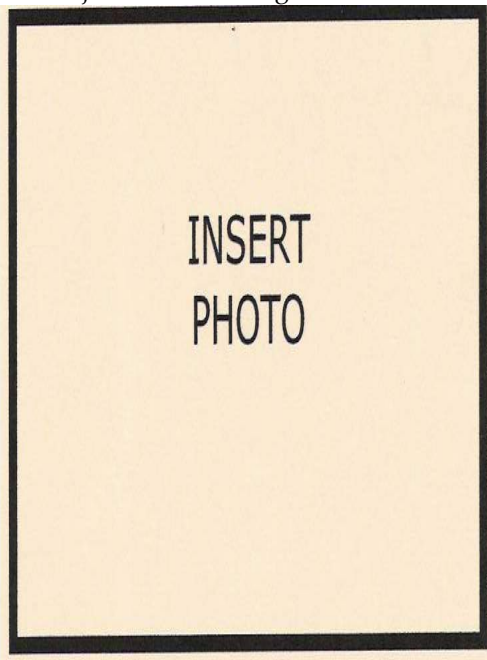
Closed for a month between May and June 1971, Ouzas again opened up the dance floor. He tried several ideas to get the crowds streaming back through the doors but it was all just temporary:

HARLEY PARKER: "Towards the end of The 'Tum, they had fancy dress nights. ... (they) were more like a fund-raising night – not for making money but to try to get people in there. Because when Warrick Ford had closed it and Max Ouzas had taken over, he hadn't got the crowds back again mainly because his style was a bit more suited to places like Berties where they had bands like Zoot and the people would wear flares. So the regulars started dropping off and whereas six months before you'd have 200 people packed in there, now he'd be struggling to get 50 there. So even if they had Chain, Spectrum or Carson, there just wasn't the crowds there. So he started having these alcohol nights and I think he got a BYO Licence... like a temporary licence for the night.

He had as number of these, maybe one per month and his aim was just to get crowds in. And it worked... they did come and he even got celebrities there. The fancy dress was just the theme for the night." (Harley Parker, op cit, 7 December, 2005)

However, it was not going to be long before The 'Tum closed forever. On Sunday 19 December, 1971, the scheduled program headed up by Lobby Loyde's Wild Cherries went ahead as usual, with crowds still flocking in.

However, after only about two hours of music, it all came to a halt leaving many patrons bemused. It was obvious that all was not well. Maybe it was just a temporary closure for redecorating? Not so. Although advertising for the following week continued, none of these sessions eventuated. It was all over! There was no grand closing gig, no fanfare just a final closing of the doors:



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HARLEY PARKER: "I actually found out after it had closed down. The final days were no different to any other days really. The final day was one of their Sunday afternoon sessions where they had Daffiduck, Carson and a few other bands and they used to start in the afternoon and then they'd have a break for an hour before the night session. Sunday was usually a pretty low day and there weren't many people there, but as a young kid, I had nothing else to do... anything to get out of my parents house more than anything else...

This day, it finished about six o'clock and we were out the front as usual as they were locking up and Maz Ouzas, Paul Jones and two girls were driving past in their car and waving to us! They tooted the car horn and drove down towards Elizabeth Street! We couldn't figure out what was going on.

I didn't find out 'til the following week... Someone told me the following weekend that it wasn't open, so we went to Sebastians. The talk was that The 'Tum had closed the last weekend and that's when I realized that it was all over and we had been there for the end! No official notification, they just shut the doors and it was all over!

Strange, in the last few weeks it got to the stage where Lobby Loyde would be playing to just four of us watching. It just died. By this time the pubs were coming in... it was a changing scene." (Parker, op cit, 7 December, 2005)

As a footnote to the whole 'Tum story - just before the building was to demolished to build a block of residential apartments, ex-musician Tarasinski, now older and wiser, took a little trip down memory lane.. well, in fact it was Little Latrobe Street to be exact. The original building was, in the intervening period between The 'Tum closing and its demolition, used as a women's refuge, but had been lying vacant and derelict for quite a while. He couldn't resist the possibility for one last look:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "...about four or five years ago, or maybe a bit more, I found myself in the vicinity of the old Tum so I decided to go and take a look at it. I discovered that I could gain access to the inside from the rear lane so, when I saw that no-one was around, I went in to do some reminiscing. It was quite a mess in there, given that the place had obviously been derelict for a long time, but, to my utter amazement, the stage was still there! Naturally, I couldn't resist climbing up there for a nostalgic look around and I don't mind admitting that the experience brought a tear to my eye but I thought it was a fitting tribute to a place that I'll always remember with great fondness. Not long after my little sojourn down memory lane, the building was gutted and turned into apartments, or something, so the original Tum is now gone for ever." (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

4. THE CATCHER.

Located: 461 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, south side between King and William Streets.

Operated: from 27 October, 1966 by Graham Geddes

Became: TRAFFIK - 21 July, 1969

Today: Fernwood Womens' Gym.

"... if you were a genuine Rock freak, like me, and preferred your music loud and heavy with a big 'bottom end', The Catcher... (was)... the place to be. The Catcher, was to me, electric! As soon as you walked into the place, that beautiful, fat bottom end from the band would send a ripple of excitement through you and you just had to get closer to hear it all. " (Harry Tarasinski – Harper's Bazaar – op cit, 1 November, 2004.)

"It was a huge, cavernous space. There was no atmosphere ... well, there was atmosphere ... it was the atmosphere of impending doom!" (Mick Hamilton, The Vibrants – op cit, 2 December, 2005)

"I liked The Catcher. We opened The Catcher. Graeme Geddes who ran it let all these pigs run through the place – live animals ... all these little porkers ... he'd let them go and they'd run through the crowd. He'd even sit up on stage with us while we were playing and he'd sit in this chair and watch all this stuff going down. It was a great place – the good thing about it was that it went so late – 4 or 5 in the morning, you'd be finishing at The Catcher." (Russell Smith – The Ram Jam Big Band – author's Interview, 28 March, 2006)

The Catcher was established in Flinders Lane, towards the south-western side of town in the older, less accessible warehouse district, and it quickly gained a rather harsh reputation for the "heavy" content of its music, its clientele



Nothing remains of the old Catcher in Flinders lane today. A new building has been erected on the site of the warehouse, (derelict when Graham Geddes opened it in 1966). The Fernwood Gym now exists on the site.

(many of them sharpies) – and its security staff! After a period under the name The Catcher, it closed and reopened as Traffik, somewhere during 1971. Shortly afterwards, it reverted back to its original name before closing not long after.

Many will remember entering The Catcher and finding to their left, a small wire-fronted cage where the ticket lady took the entry fee, probably 75c to \$1.50. Part of its drawing power was that it stayed open until around dawn and the patrons could get themselves something to eat as well. Like The Thumping Tum, The Catcher gave the patrons more for their entry fee than just music and dancing. Like The 'Tum the decorator style was truly unique. The Catcher however had beds and bedsprings hanging from the ceiling not

unlike The 'Tum's upside-down umbrellas. When Sydney-based **Paul Close** came to Melbourne briefly he visited some of the discos but only one left a lasting impression:

PAUL CLOSE: "I must admit I do have a strong memory of only the The Catcher back in the late ' 60's when I was down there (to Melbourne) hanging with some mates of mine called Heart n Soul. We went to The Catcher one

night and I couldn't believe the place! It had iron framed beds hanging from the ceiling, I remember that much, and the other main draw was the great music of Max Merritt and The Meteors." (Close, email correspondence, 22 July, 2004)

It was owned and managed throughout its existence by former school teacher **Graham Geddes**, probably one of Melbourne's most unusual characters in an era when flamboyant and outrageous individuals contrasted sharply with the relative conservatism of this city. He stood out from the crowd because of the way he always dressed – huge, black, US Army greatcoat with turned up collar, bowler hat and stub cigar – a truly intimidating and imposing figure to many.



Bob Jones established his reputation at The Catcher. He personally looked after "security arrangements" for Geddes, but it was necessary to behave in and around the premises or risk swift (and often brutal) action. (Courtesy of Geoff Grant.)

As much a part of the Catcher scene as Geddes, was martial-artist and bouncer, **Bob Jones**. Jones and his team set about handling security at The Catcher after an initial discussion with Geddes. Jones, who had, for some time found himself on the wrong side of the law and spiralling downwards towards a career in crime, begun to make a name for himself and his mates around Melbourne suburban dances and venues looking after potential trouble makers for the managers. A karate expert, his name was whispered to Geddes in the months before Christmas, 1965:

BOB JONES: "... he was going to open the most controversial nightclub, or discotheque in the world. He asked me if I could visit the following Saturday. ... he wanted to talk to me about running the entire security for his new venture. ... Without a licence, (The Catcher would, in time become famous as an unlicensed BYO venue), Geddes' newest and biggest discotheque (all of three storeys) was going to open at 8 pm and rock till 5am with all the biggest bands. True to his word Graham Geddes made his Catcher and Bob Jones' bouncers household names." (Jones, op cit 2001, P88).

The Catcher was almost singularly responsible for cementing **Bob Jones'** reputation in the industry as a bouncer – for better or for worse, depending on which side you were on. Although **The Bob Jones Organisation** supplied the security for over twenty Melbourne dances by 1966, Jones himself and his most trusted staff members personally looked after the more difficult ones. The Catcher topped this list. Jones called in to meet the owner/operator just prior to opening night and remembers Geddes' was busy decorating the old warehouse:

BOB JONES: "I eventually made contact with Graham Geddes and he wanted me to come in one Saturday afternoon and chat with him about what it would cost to have security at The Catcher. So I went in and he was renovating Catcher ready for the opening. This involved one 44-gallon drum full of water which he topped up occasionally with 4 gallons of water-based paint! He had a spray gun and rollers and they just went over the whole place ... he sprayed the walls... the floors ...the staircases - everything was BLACK. Then he would floodlight the coffee shop and the toilets, but the night before the opening, he realized that you still couldn't see anything! So he put UV fluorescent tubes on the ceiling and painted fluorescent day-glo on the floor. He had red to point to the toilet, yellow to go to the coffee shop, orange to go to the dance floor. The problem was that on opening night, he had about two and a half thousand people in and nobody could see the floor at all and nobody could find the toilets or the coffee shop or the dance floor. So on the following Sunday, he painted the lines on the walls – which Catcher became famous for. So while the Knight family spent heaps on opening Berties and Sebastians, Geddes probably got The Catcher up and

running for a few hundred dollars. (Jones, op cit, 15 August, 2005)

Ivon Shell was typical of the disco-goers of the period, often testing many of the newer ones out before settling in at a favourite place:

IVON SHELL: "... you entered to your left, into a foyer with wine barrels along the right hand wall, the decor was

rough plaster painted a salmon colour, then it opened into a huge high-ceiling room with the stage in front of you on the southern end against the wall with some area behind for tech's and roadies. But the bands always entered via the front door. To your right was a stairway that led up stairs to ... open areas where you could still look down at the stage and dance area. It was a popular spot for couples... Upstairs was painted black, the atmosphere was electric. I use to wish it was open every night of the week, and couldn't wait for Friday nights. It stayed open till sometimes 5am Saturday & Sunday mornings, which is amazing because you didn't spend any more money once you were in there unlike the clubs of today which serve alcohol. Sunday afternoons, it would open at 5pm and around 8pm they showed movies on the top level...the only movie I can remember watching was Major Dundee (1965) with Charlton Heston," (Shell, email interview, 1 November, 2004).

Harry Tarasinski was lead guitarist for his band, **Harper's Bazaar** and played both *The Catcher* and *The Thumpin' Tum* at various times. This band was made up of Tarasinski, (Guitar & Vocals) **Peter Strangis** (Bass), **Kevin Marshall** (Guitar), and **Peter Russo** (Drums), and they had played the town hall and church hall circuit and therefore, the gigs they gained at *The Catcher* were a big move up for them. Tarasinski, who was not with the band at the start, had been playing



The band, Bazaar played often at The Catcher. Harry Tarasinski (second from right) remembers the venue, the crowds and Geddes. (Courtesy of Harry Tarasinski)

with another local northern-suburbs band, **Memorandum**, which shared the 'Tum's stage often with **Harper's Bazaar**. One particular night he was offered the chance to join that band. **Harper's Bazaar** with Tarasinski holding down the rhythm guitar spot managed to secure a residency there at the same time as they decided to shorten their name to **Bazaar**. This coincided with the venue's temporary change of name to *Traffik*. *The Catcher/Traffik* remains clear in his mind:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "My impressions of *The Catcher* are varied. It had a lot in common with the *Tum*, I think, in that it was a pretty dirty, grungy, looking place that was just a disused, bluestone warehouse before someone turned it into a disco with a bit of dark paint and a smattering of psychedelic artwork, with some coloured lights thrown in for good measure, and a stage up against the back wall. ... whereas the *Tum* only had one stage, *The Catcher* had one on the ground level and another one upstairs and often they had a couple of bands playing on both stages simultaneously in its early days, something that usually only happened at the much larger suburban town halls like *Broadmeadows* (*White Elephant*)." (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

Jim Keays and his early Adelaide-based **Masters Apprentices** had moved to Melbourne, knowing little about the city but they had managed to score a few gigs at *The Catcher*. The place left a lasting impression on him:

JIM KEAYS: "The *Catcher* was the new big gig in town. *The Thumpin' Tum*, *The Biting Eye*, *Sebastians* and *Berties* all still pumped furiously, but *The Catcher* was the new favourite. It was an old disused warehouse – some said it was condemned – at the Spencer Street end of *Flinders Lane* in what was a very run down part of the CBD... Still, *The Catcher* was packed on Fridays and Saturdays, in fact you couldn't move in the place. The stage was very high up, two or three feet above the heads of the crowd, and it was extremely hard to get equipment and the band up there through the throng below...." (Keays, op cit, 1999)

Out on street level, **Jim Keays** remembers the bouncers there as a particularly brutal bunch of "crowd controllers" who seemed to enjoy the sport of beating hapless and helpless patrons to a pulp if they stepped out of line inside or outside *The Catcher*. There was a vacant block next door and the old, crumbling bricks in the side wall had plenty of glass embedded in them with more glass lying broken on the ground. The bouncers would rub the faces of the unruly clients up and down the wall, drag them along the ground and through the glass, then piss on their cuts. A

stunned Jim observed this ritual one night from the back window of the Masters' van. **Mike Rudd** has similar feelings about the bouncers:

MIKE RUDD: "One of the things that was consistent on the tour was crowd control... bouncers... and they were very much less controlled than they are these days. To the very drunk patrons, a lot of very nasty stuff went down. Very often you were left thinking, "God. I'm glad they're on our side!" Then on the other hand feeling really ashamed that you can't intervene to help some poor bastard who's having the shit kicked out of him, just because he's paralytically drunk." (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

One evening after their set had finished, **The Groove** with **Rod Stone** as guitarist walked out onto Flinders lane to witness a scene that seemed to be reminiscent of Belfast, Ireland at its worst:

ROD STONE: "Catcher we thought was always a rougher place... you were much more likely to get punched in the head there. I can remember one night when we were leaving, seeing the bouncers out the front using tin rubbish bin lids as shields throwing bricks at some car which was driving up and down the road. It was like a war zone... there they were, crouching down behind bin lids trying to throw bricks through the window of this car as it went past. Obviously some guys were trying to get them and they were returning fire. We very discreetly just disappeared as fast as possible." (Stone, op cit, 27 October, 2005)

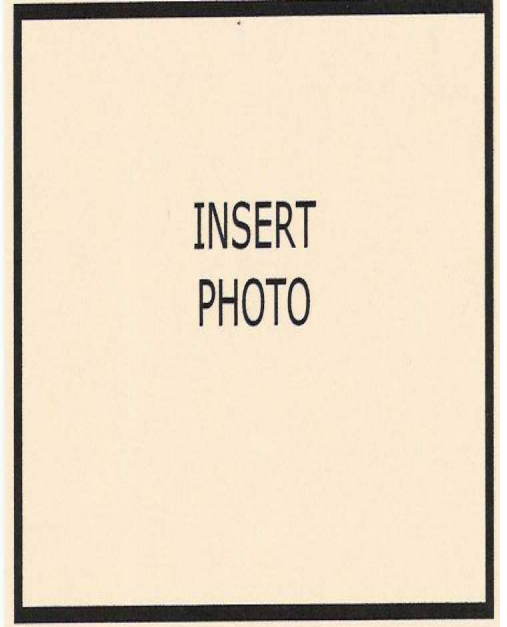
The Catcher could be a menacing place to some of the younger clientele at times. Sydney teenager, clearly underaged, **Ross Ward** played there as stand-in bass player with **The Flying Circus** and recalls:

ROSS WARD: "To a 15 year old, these discos were dark, mysterious and at times downright dangerous places. Not always inviting, but full of vibes and intrigue, and a far cry from the day-time world of shopping centres and pavilions. The inhabitants of the discos were of course, much older than the screaming teeny-boppers, and at times were also equally un-inviting, dark, mysterious and dangerous, this being a fond and very early recollection of Thumpin' Tum... It was also the place where I became acutely aware of the difference between Sydney and Melbourne culture and fashion, with the army-disposal great-coat being a fashion icon at the time. I watched two guys get into a fight there, both in great coats, one with long hair, one with short hair. The scene was quite futuristic, at least in my mind, and sort of resembled something from the set of a later sci-fi movie I saw! I don't recall that much security, despite the outbreaks of violence that used to occur so often. I do however, recall the 'bouncers', so often taking sides with mates in the audience who'd start the trouble, and a lot of the 'bouncers' were, by and large, just local thugs, unregulated, and would quite literally get away with murder in some cases back then. I saw enough to develop a healthy aversion to ever wanting to appear on any of these guy's shit-lists, which some bands managed to find themselves on..!" (Ward, op cit, 19 July, 2004).

At the age of about seventeen in 1967, **Ivon Shell** remembers being a regular at The Catcher. Along with his mates he would front up first on a Saturday afternoon to the Mitre Tavern or the Curry Family Hotel on the corner of King Street and Flinders Lane trying to look all of eighteen to get a beer or two, then walk along a few blocks to The Catcher. (Shell remembers that members of **The Chelsea Set** also drank at The Curry Family Hotel). He remembers too, the extreme brutality of the bouncers although he was never unlucky enough to test them out and feel their sting. Perhaps **Jim Keays** and **Mike Rudd** are remembering the same man:

IVON SHELL: " one person he (Geddes) hired was a brutal chap. He was vicious. He beat up so many (usually drunks). He used to wear a leather knuckle-duster on his right hand, although... security was needed because there was a creature those days called a Sharpie whose prime purpose in life was to fight and breed. However, everyone was very wary of him and gave him a wide berth..." (Shell, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

Brendan Mitchell, also a regular patron has said that there were many good reasons why the Catcher's bouncers had to be particularly vigilant and heavy-handed at times:



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BRENDAN MITCHELL: "This was a much scarier place than the Tum. Whereas the Tum catered for "Mods"--long hair conservative dress with some Carnaby St. influence, Catcher was a hangout for "Sharpies"---Baggy jeans or trousers polo shirts very short hair and always looking for a fight. Of course the best way around this was to become one which a lot of people did. I suppose the bouncers were more violent here but so was the clientele." (Mitchell, email interview, 1 November, 2004)

Bob Jones as head of probably the toughest team with the most dangerous job in Melbourne at that time has defended the actions of his bouncers:

BOB JONES: "Berties and Sebastians were similar but they went for the up-market crowd. The Knights who owned these two places, wanted well-to-do crowds, so if you worked at Berties and someone showed up who wasn't properly dressed and you refused them entry, they went away. But Catcher, for some reason attracted the dregs, probably not so much due to its advertising but because of its location – it wasn't up the top end of the city, but in the warehouse district in Flinders Lane. And whereas these other places were small, Catcher held upward of 3000 people, maybe two to two-and-half thousand on a regular night. So when you get a club of that size, you are probably going to knock back about 200 kids for various reasons. So in the lower end of the city, you are bound to have altercations. Now you can't talk to these people at two or three o'clock in the morning when they show up really drunk and/or under the influence of drugs ...very hard to talk to. So fists have to be used sometimes." (Jones op cit, 15 August, 2005)

As well as concerns about what was happening outside, Keays had doubts about what was served as "refreshments" inside the venue because there were rumours abounding at various times that some staffers would piss into the hot dog water and also snot into the pies!



Bob Jones' young daughter Tracey-Lee up on stage with the dancers at The Catcher. (Courtesy of Bob Jones, photographer Jim Colbert)

Jill Braithwaite, who with her two sisters worked at Berties, went to The Catcher only once to see Running Jumping Standing Still because they were not scheduled to play at Berties. They were not the least impressed with the attitude they got from the resident "Catcher chicks". However, it wasn't one of the bouncers or the Catcher chicks who flattened **Max Merritt** one particular night - it was a well-known and well-built drag-queen recognisable to many as "**Ellie-Mae**" – nobody seems to know exactly what was said – but it happened! "**Ellie-Mae**" was well known around The Catcher and from all accounts well-liked and was just like all other partons - she loved the bands and was just another groupie! However at the time, a transvestite such as "**Ellie-Mae**" was a highly unusual sight, even for a place like The Catcher. **Jim Keays** remembers that "**Ellie Mae**" was always getting picked on because there was no one at all like him/her around in those

days and he/she was always the centre of unwanted attention. Nine guys would come up and start taunting him and he would beat the lot of them up.

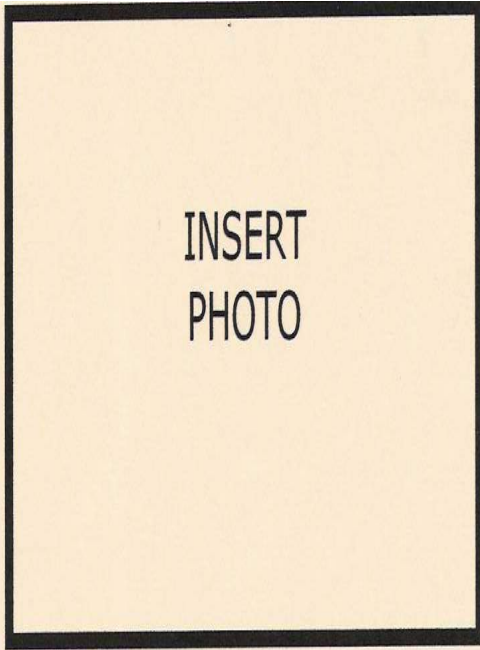
Judy McCarthy was only in her mid-teens when she joined the disco scene and found a home at The Thumpin' Tum. She felt, on the few occasions that she ventured to The Catcher that it was a weird, barn-like place and always seemed to be vaguely dangerous – so much so that many of her girlfriends would not return there after just one visit. Her impressions illustrate the polarisation of views about the place. To her, after spending much time at The 'Tum as a worker in various capacities, The Catcher crowd seemed more edgy and, in her mind, composed of old rockers and low life characters ready for the odd fight or two.

Graham Geddes who until recently, ran a long-established Malvern antiques business, took to advertising The Catcher's patrons as "pigs" – somehow it seems to fit the image of some of the staff rather than the patrons. He was a unique human being and was persecuted by the press – mostly unwarranted publicity, (according to some) but

probably understandable given the times and the prevailing societal attitudes. His mind-set was strange though, even for the times:

BOB JONES: "Thinking back, Geddes had strange ideas for the times. But he had this uncanny ability to run a disco and he could get away with calling his patrons 'pigs' and 'piglets' and he referred to the place as 'the piggery'. Then there was 'Hilary', a woman who had been evicted from a Housing Commission place – she didn't exist at all – it was all in his mind. There were some publicity shots taken of the bouncers standing at the door with their arms folded and on the footpath was this little old lady with her electric jug and her TV set, living in Flinders Lane – she only existed in Graham's mind and in his publicity which invited 'pigs' to come to 'the piggery'.

Then there was 'Harry, the pipe-bender'. Now, the real Harry was the manager who put in all the bands – he got the nick-name of 'the pipe-bender'. But this also was the name given to a rat (and there were a few scurrying around) which was the spirit of some dead person and it was so big that it would bend the pipes as it ran over them – all this too was in Graham's mind! (Jones, op cit, 15 August, 2005)



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The Masters Apprentices played there a number of times and Keays impressions match those of others:

JIM KEAYS: "It was a condemned building. I remember there were holes smashed in the walls and you'd play upstairs and the whole first floor would go up and down like a trampoline and any time the whole thing would collapse and a thousand people would be killed!! But it never did. But Graham Geddes was very good at promoting it. He called the kids "pigs"... "come and join the pigs". It was quite an astute advertising campaign because it alienated the parents and if you alienated the parents, you got the kids. It was a smokey, horrible place to play, but it was cool. I quite enjoyed playing there. We did it quite a few times but it was always good for a late night gig, around two o'clock in the morning. One night, it must have been about three o'clock in the morning, he (Geddes) was passed out on the concrete dance floor. They had painted like a huge target on the floor and he was lying in the middle of the target and all these kids dancing around him. There was probably only twenty people left in the whole place but they were all dancing in a circle." (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)

Ian Ferguson had served his apprenticeship on bass guitar with some early bands such as **The Moods**, with mate, **Mick Hamilton**. Following the departure of **Andy James** from **Running Jumping Standing Still**, he joined the band which also had a new lead vocalist

in Peter 'Ring' Newing. He recalls the different, more sinister and threatening nature of The Catcher and the demographic it catered to as well as the requirements of Geddes:

IAN FERGUSON: Graham Geddes – it's incredible that he's where he is now considering his attitude then. He didn't seem to care much about musicians. One time, I played there with Running Jumping Standing Still from 2am until finish – "finish" being a word that didn't have a time attached to it. He was off his tree and lying on the floor with all his friends. We'd play two sets and finish at 4am – that's what you would normally do, but he would want us to keep going. So we did another set and just left. It was the weirdest place.

It was very popular amongst the younger crowd. I found that a lot of the suburban people from out the north and the west would go there, whereas you would find a lot of the inner eastern suburban people from South Yarra or Toorak, Richmond or Hawthorn would go to Berties or Sebastians. But the Catcher would have a lot of underground acts – Sebastians or Berties would have mainstream acts – more towards the pop charts. So the Catcher was driven by the style of music which influenced the style of the place. (Ferguson, op cit, 23 July, 2005).

When **Mick Hamilton** joined **The Vibrants** in mid-1966, the band had a number of successful, charting singles in quick succession. They released, *I've Got To Go / Somebody Release Me* and *Something About You Baby / Danger Zone* which both charted locally for the band. **Graham Geddes** was quick to seize on the advertising potential of a band which had hits to its name and therefore a degree of drawing power with the kids, and signed them to a sort of

'residency' to his venues for a time in late 1966:

MICK HAMILTON: "I remember that we had two standing bookings on a Saturday night – like residencies. One was 8 o'clock to 8.15 at a place called Georgia in Balwyn. It was an old youth club hall or something like that... run by Graham Geddes who also ran The Catcher. So because The Vibrants were saleable at the time, he'd use us on the advertising at the time and get some more people there. So he booked us every night for about six months... it was seemingly forever... And we would play to hardly anybody because the crowd hadn't arrived at that stage. So he got us a little cheaply and we had a standard booking from 3.30 until 4 am at The Catcher. Half the time, we never did that gig because the place would be half empty... he'd give us our money and we'd go home! I think he was just using us to put our name on the advertising ... he got us cheaply anyway. So from his point of view, for whatever pittance he was paying us, he was able to advertise us as the band with number one records. (Hamilton, op cit, 2 December, 2005)

The Ram Jam Big Band had come to progressive rhythm and blues through the earlier jazz scene and along with bands like **Ray Hoff and the Offbeats** and **Jeff St John's** backing bands, **The Id** and **Yuma**, could boast a complete horn section. The Ram Jam played at all the major clubs around Melbourne and trumpet/trombone player, **Russell Smith** was used to playing very early into Saturday mornings:

RUSSELL SMITH: "The Catcher was the one that would keep us up with no sleep at all. But contemplate the idea that a club would be open that late with no alcohol! That was pretty wild! They'd run in maybe five bands in the night until maybe three or four o'clock in the morning. Then from The Catcher, we'd go out to Channel O and sit outside in the van waiting for *The Go!! Show* to open and we'd go in to play. But there'd be bands there which had been up all night – Max Merritt – coming straight from gigs. It was quite a scene out there on a Saturday morning 'cos all the big

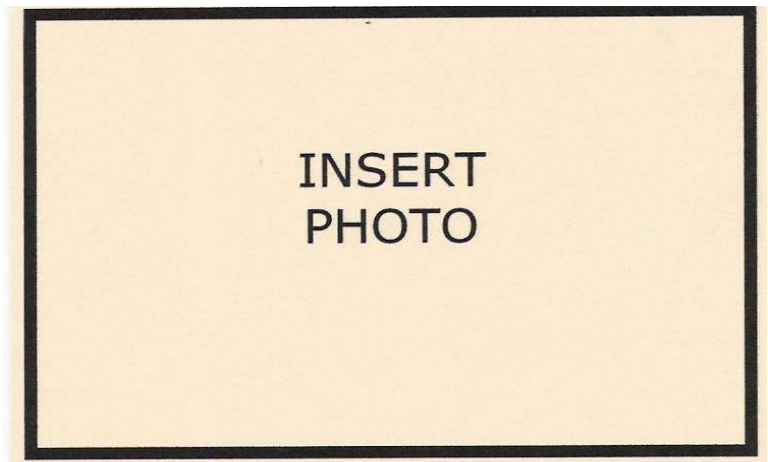
bands would turn up and everyone would have handovers... there'd be a fair bit of drinking going on in the car park. But there were a lot of pills going around that people could buy from the truck stops and so everyone would keep awake with these pills, then eventually crash out down the track." (Smith, op cit, 28 March, 2006)

Although **Spectrum's Mike Rudd** didn't know **Graham Geddes** at all, he seemed to recall that Geddes had a rather unique way of avoiding trouble with Melbourne City Council and its By-laws:

MIKE RUDD: "...he (Geddes) had a running battle with the council so he had to make it into a "club" so it would stay open... I think he got busted at one stage... and that's where he did the "club" thing. He would herd the patrons out into the street and say, "Right! When you go back in you're 'club members'..." (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004).

Daddy Cool, **The Pink Finks** and **The Party Machine's Ross Wilson** played many times at The Catcher and he remembers Geddes and the Sharpies who adopted the venue as their own:

ROSS WILSON: "The Catcher was considered THE place by many. It was run by Graham Geddes who used to stand at the door dressed in a big, old greatcoat and he was like... the Godfather. Somehow, all the Sharpies who used to go there liked him because he pretty much allowed them to do what they wanted to and have their own scene. But, I always felt a bit intimidated when I went there. They had a gigantic warehouse and in the middle was this stage which was elevated about ten feet off the floor... a great big square...and you'd get up there and play until some un-godly hour. There didn't seem to be any restrictions about how long it could stay open. I guess you could avert the laws as there were no liquor licensing laws which applied. I remember the Sharpies were out of their heads on Speed... you could get diet pills... like super-strong diet pills.



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I remember going to The Catcher to see Running Jumping Standing Still .. Doug Ford, Andy Anderson... they'd come out of The Missing Links who I liked a lot. But it wasn't the kind of place I went to hang out." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Harry Tarasinski with **Bazaar** recalls the atmosphere at the Catcher:

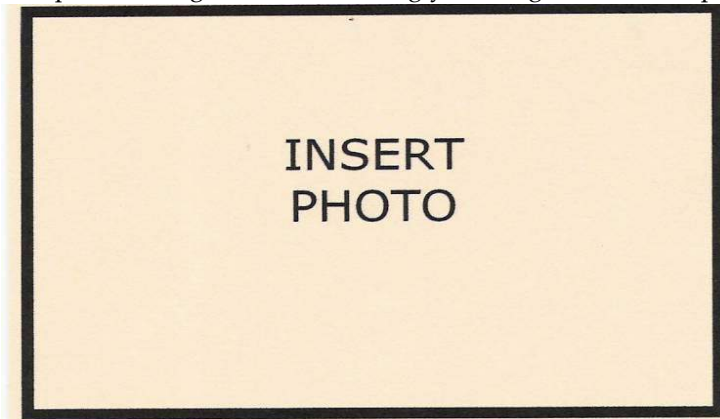
HARRY TARASINSKI: "Mostly, as a punter, I'd just hang around the edges of the dance floor with my mates and try to arouse some interest from a likely looking female and occasionally we'd try our luck in one of lounge areas, almost always to no avail, of course.

As a musician, I'd usually congregate with my colleagues either just inside the loading bay door or out in the lane if someone had a nice roach to share, which was by no means uncommon. The conversations were always about music and bands and what a pack of bastards we thought they were, except for those represented in the discussion group, of course. Some of the people who stand out in my memories are Doug Ford from the Masters, Max Merritt and his drummer, Stewie Spears, whom I often assisted onto the rather high stage at the Tum because he some sort of back problem, or something, and had a lot of difficulty getting himself up there on his own. These guys were all great people and very competent musicians, as well as being very easy to get along with, which wasn't always the case with many of the others. (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

Ivon Shell remembers that **Graham Geddes** ran a tight ship when it came to avoiding trouble and that he would personally remove drunks from the premises, not really caring too much where they actually landed, as long as they landed in Flinders Lane! Shell remembers that a mate of his bought a Bolwell, a locally produced kit-style sports car and one afternoon they drove it into town and around to The Catcher. Owner Geddes took a particular fancy to the rather exotic-looking convertible on this day and Shell's mates obliged with a "spin" around the block:

IVON SHELL: "...my mate and a couple of others, with the bearded Mr Geddes sitting atop of the back seat in his usual three quarter black coat, doing the Flinders St, King St, Flinders Lane block tour, with Flinders Lane full of long haired youths 'yahoing' and waving as he drove through the throng..." (Shell, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

It was at The Catcher that **Rick Morrison**, guitarist and original band member of **The Masters Apprentices** collapsed on stage, one excruciatingly, hot night. He had a pre-existing lung problem which he was aware of but



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the thick, acrid cigarette smoke wafting through the air that particular night would not have helped him. At one point during the night, he passed out on stage, was carried out through the crowd and treated in hospital for a collapsed lung. It was essentially the end of his time in The Masters.

Andy James, now Andy Anderson of firstly, **The Missing Links**, later joined with **Doug Ford** to form the outrageous **Running Jumping Standing Still**. Even now, he has strong memories of the Catcher. Following his near fatal brain haemorrhage on stage at The Thumpin Tum, James formed the short-lived **Andy James Asylum** just before opting for an entirely different direction – out of music and into acting. He had vivid memories of one particular Catcher

performance:

ANDY ANDERSON: "Later, as Andy James Asylum, we played The Catcher a lot. We wrecked pianos..TVs. That's where someone slipped me LSD one night... It peaked on stage during the big build up in *A Day In The Life*. Glenn Shorrock's band...forget their name, Twilights.. played all of the Sgt Pepper LP except *Day In The Life* and that was our big one. Anyway.. I'm feeling good, singing away... 'I'd love to turn you on'.. the big build up... There was this huge black and white print of a woman beside the stage. Suddenly multi-coloured snot started to pour from her nose and gush out into the audience. I thought 'Fuck, I've finally lost it.' I'm looking out at this mucous coloured sea of writhing people - some of whose heads would extend, and speed toward the stage - the big peak of the build up... the vamp...time for me to sing 'Woke up, got out of bed..' And I'm off my head, wondering

what's going on. Then I see the two guys who had slipped me the tab pissing themselves laughing behind the drinks stall. That's when I twigged.. 'I'm tripping!' The words 'Woke up' etc took a thousand years to sing and the next climax was indeed a climax.... Incredible! And luckily our last song of the night. Never was the same after that.." (Anderson, op cit, 3 October, 2004.)

It's really not clear who in the international rock 'n roll fraternity, initiated the spectacle of wrecking instruments on stage – maybe it was **The Who**, maybe it was **Jimi Hendrix** but in this age of rock-star excesses, it certainly caught on big in Melbourne for a while in the early stages of The Catcher in particular. This outrageous practice seemed to fit the wild and carefree image of The Catcher. **Andy James** and his cohorts from **The Missing Links**, **RJSS** and **Andy James Asylum** turned instrument-smashing into an art form – if that's anything like the correct terminology. Nothing seems to have survived their onslaught on stage throughout this short, but destructive period – instruments, furniture, amps etc. And the fans loved it – almost like some sort of ritual, primal sacrifice to the Gods of Rock. Even **Bazaar** got into the act:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "I'd just taken possession of my brand new Fender Telecaster guitar and was looking forward to playing my first gig with it. I had a pink Vox guitar, which was an absolute dog of a thing that I was taking a great loathing to, but it did look 'trendy' with its unusual shaped body. Anyway, I hid the new Tele behind my amp stack and started the set playing the Vox. About three songs in, half way through a pumping rendition of 'Wild Thing', I cranked the volume knob all the way up to get as much feedback as I could and spent the next few minutes smashing that guitar into tiny pieces and flinging them out into the audience, which went totally wild at my display of utter madness. I then retrieved the Tele and finished the song, along with the set, but I came off stage with one of the biggest 'buzzes' I have ever experienced." (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

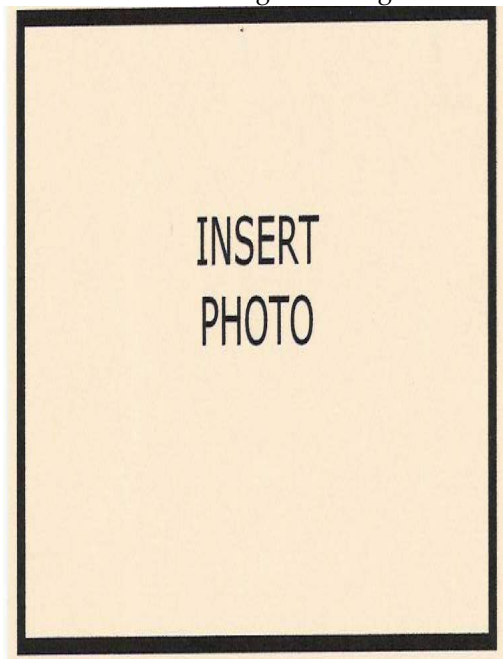
Geddes himself was not one to stand back and merely spectate. He often got into the destructive spirit himself:

BOB JONES: "Then about once a month, Graham would come in – who knows, it may have been connected with the full moon ... because it was total madness. He would come in on a Friday or Saturday night with a floorshow. He would come out with pianos which he probably bought cheap at an auction and then he would set about the job of smashing them up with a sledge hammer – took him maybe twenty minutes. This was not on the stage, this was on the dance floor and the patrons danced on amongst all the debris and rubble until about 5 o'clock in the morning. (Jones, op cit, 15 August, 2005)

The Catcher was often featured in newspaper reports about "outrageous and disgraceful behaviour" both inside and outside the venue. In particular, the scandal-rag, *Melbourne Truth* which sold copies on the basis of reporting (or miss-reporting) sordid behaviour, scandals (real or imagined) and plenty of sex, found the stories which were coming from The Catcher far too good to pass over. When a story didn't exist and needed to be manufactured, *Truth* did just that. At one point, in order to prove just how much lascivious behaviour was going on in these premises, the newspaper paid a young couple to simulate sexual activity at a time when a truth photographer and reporter, "just happened to be passing". The premise - if a scandal doesn't exist, why not just create one? However, unbeknowns to *The Truth*, the couple chosen however just happened to be friends of owner, Geddes who immediately took action, setting the bouncers on to the hapless *Truth* cameraman and reporter.

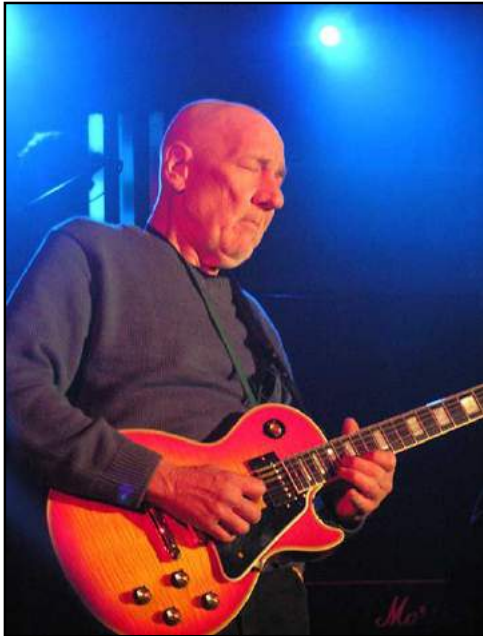
The result was a furore which guaranteed headlines in *The Truth* for about a week or more and rather than Geddes and The Catcher being disgraced, besmirched and tarnished, it resulted in unprecedented and invaluable free publicity for The Catcher – a virtual bonanza in fact! Reportedly, the venue was packed out for about two months, with hundreds every night left waiting in the street with no chance of getting inside.

The Catcher was a favourite place to play for **The Levi Smith's Clefs** and manager/technician **Robert Bradshaw**



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reports that they would often have visiting U.S. servicemen on leave in Sydney, hitch-hike down to Melbourne and The Catcher, just to see if the reputation of this or that band as the best R & B unit around, was true. There were the occasional great parties but contrary to common belief, few drugs other than marijuana appeared. Bradshaw reports that on return to The Catcher from Adelaide one time, they found themselves in a very hectic round of engagements over the weekend. “**Tweed**” Harris the ‘Clefs keyboard player who also played there with **The Groove**, instructed Bradshaw their, “all purpose man” to find him “something to keep him awake”. After searching truck stops, taxi ranks and certain “dives” around the city, Bradshaw finally returned with the only medication he could find - a packet of “No-Doze” – not quite what Harris had expected. “Tweed” got through the weekend but then slept for the next two days!



Lobby Loyde was in his element at The Catcher and so were his fans – many of them skinheads. (Courtesy of Harley Parker.)

Here possibly, the early beginnings of the type of performance program which involved mixing theatre and music could be seen. This “total entertainment” approach typified the later “head” venues like The T.F. Much/Much More Ballroom or Opus where a Vaudeville-style of “anything goes” kept the ‘teens interested. It’s just that The T.F Much refined the all-in entertainment more than The Catcher. Catcher regular **Leigh Rees** remembers that **Glenn Shorrock**, when on stage with **The Twilights** seemed to enjoy these romps which developed as part of **The Twilights** set. An integral part of any Twilights show at the time always included these interludes which the crowd always found highly amusing. A mixture of slapstick and standup comedy, it often found Shorrock bouncing off his stage partner, **John Bywaters** in a series of mostly unrehearsed and sometimes rehearsed mayhem. At any point Shorrock would reveal “Superdroop” who would appear in a ridiculous jumpsuit or a gorilla costume or swing from a trapeze. The jokes were purile, the visual comedy - vintage Keystone Cops. The crowd however could not help but get caught up in it.

But, the music goes on. Here’s how ‘Lil Goose’, **Barry Harvey** remembers The Catcher:

BARRY HARVEY: “Played the Catcher with the Wild Cherries, regularly. The guy that ran it (Geddes) was a former school teacher and

he knew how to get kids into that place. I have played there when there were 5,000 people there. It was the latest gig of them all - it went till dawn! It had a great atmosphere and I saw some great Australian line-ups there. Python Lee Jackson, R.J.S.S. and one band that came from Hungary, called Sirius, who were all great Jazz players. We became great mates with them and still are. The Catcher was the place to go if you weren't playing or if you were playing, to pick up chicks. So many girls went there to get on to guys. It was fabulous. You had to behave yourself there though as they had so many heavy bouncers. But, it was such an enormous gig.” (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

However, to all punters, it was still the music they went to see. **Ivon Shell** revelled in the R & B sounds emanating from the stage. As well as the ever popular **Chelsea Set**, **The Masters Apprentices** and **The Running Jumping Standing Still**, the late ‘sixties at The Catcher also had **Rain**, **The Loved Ones**, **Blues Rags** and **Hollers** and of course **Lobby Loyde**:

IVON SHELL: “...later on in ‘67, my favourite of all time was the Wild Cherries with Danny Robertson on vocals (still getting around the pubs playing in Fitzroy etc), Lobby on guitar, Keith Barber on drums (La De Da's) and Ian Clyne (Loved Ones) on organ. They had The Catcher jumping, and soooooo LOUD. When they broke into *Krome-plated Yabby* or *That's Life*, the place erupted. My mates and I would dance the night away to their music till dawn, then drive home with the sun rising and buy a roast beef sandwich from the Greek take-away at the Victoria Market...” (Shell, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

About the same time that the Catcher was renamed Traffik, perhaps in an effort to circumvent a build up of unfortunate, harsh and unsympathetic criticism levelled at the disco, the band **Bazaar** took up their extended residency there. It was on one particular rehearsal night that they had a meeting with the “boys in blue” – but

fortunately, not the real ones:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "I think it must have been sometime in 1970 ... that Bazaar had been offered a residency at Catcher but I never knew who made that offer, although I recall gaining the impression that it was the new owner of the venue who decided to rename it 'Traffik'. In any case, we jumped at it and began to enjoy the privileges that came with it. We were able to use the venue for our rehearsals so we weren't constrained with regard to volume settings and they went very well.

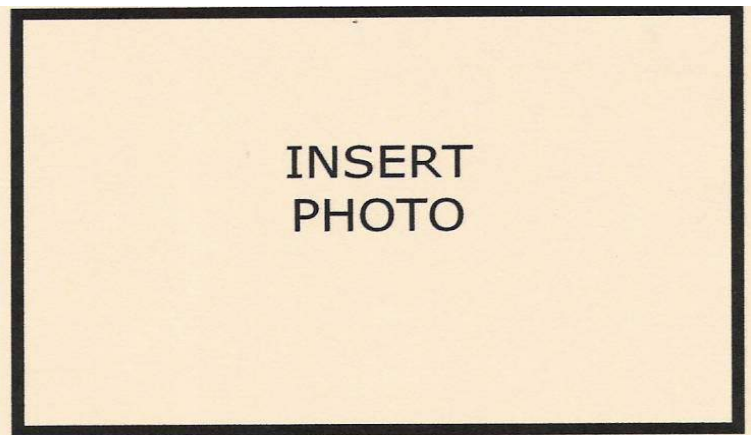
One night, though, we'd just finished going through a song when we heard a loud, frantic banging on the closed roller door at the front of the building, leading directly into Flinders Lane. We all went to investigate and when the door was opened we saw a guy with a massive tape machine hanging on his shoulder. He explained that he was the sound guy for a film crew that was shooting a night scene for the TV series 'Homicide' across the street and our music was bending the needles on his VU meters. So we agreed to take a break while we watched them do their stuff. We were introduced to the two actors, one of whom was **Leonard Teale**, before he chased the 'baddy' up a very narrow alleyway a few times until the director was happy with the result." (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004).

The writing on the wall was there for most discos as early as the first few years of the new decade of the 'seventies and hard times were on the horizon for these alcohol-free venues as well as for some of the bands. Many bands which had enjoyed halcyon times in the confines of the booze-free city discos found that their music did not necessarily translate to the suburban pubs as beer began to flow freely out in the suburbs. The almost simultaneous demise of both The Catcher and the band **Bazaar** was brought about by these more difficult times for the struggling outfits:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "The first hint of it came, I guess, in late 1971. The disco crowds were thinning out alarmingly as the kids began turning 18 and deserting them for the pubs, now that they were of legal drinking age, and, of course, the bands started going with them. The owner of Traffic had agreed to our suggestion that the place should be called Catcher again but, of course, that didn't stop the dwindling crowds and, like all the other discos, the old girl finally died a sad and lonely death. Another, even stronger, hint came at the same time in the form of less money. Kevin, who had always been pretty reliable, was increasingly turning up empty handed on pay day with some excuse like he was waiting for an agency cheque to clear, or something. As the weeks went by, we were being owed more and more money and our rehearsals became shouting matches as arguments raged between Kevin and the rest of us.

Then, one night, I arrived for rehearsal to find my amp and guitar missing. There were no signs of a break-in and it was incomprehensible that a thief would only take *my* equipment and leave everyone else's untouched. The answer to the conundrum arrived a short time later with Kevin, who sadly explained that he was desperate for cash and had hocked my gear to get it. He then presented me with the ticket from the pawn shop! I asked him why he hadn't pawned his own stuff and he told me that he didn't think he'd get enough for it. I informed him that if he ever did that to me again I'd leave the band and told him what he could do with his bloody rehearsal in no uncertain terms before I left to go home in disgust.

The following day I went to retrieve my things from the pawn shop without expecting for a minute that I would ever be reimbursed by Kevin, which, of course, I never was. It seems to me now, with the clarity of hindsight, although I was too young and naive to realise it then, that Kevin was injecting most of this money into his veins in the form of heroin and, while the band had plenty of work, he could afford to indulge his secret little habit without resorting to theft but, as the gigs began to dry up, he had to turn to more desperate measures.



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The last day of the band came a few weeks later when, sure enough, I arrived at Catcher to find my guitar gone. I told the other two that I was, from that point on, no longer a member of Bazaar and they said they weren't either so, when Kevin arrived some time later and handed me another pawn ticket, I knocked him out and left and that was the last time I ever saw him. (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004).

5. THE BITING EYE/GINZA.

Located: 56-62 Little Bourke St. Melbourne, north side between Exhibition and Swanston Streets.

Operated: The BITING EYE from February, 1966 to c. May 1967 then GINZA from 16 June, 1967 to ...

Today: Double story corner shop – currently a restaurant

Situated in Little Bourke Street, just beyond the Chinatown district at the eastern end of the city and behind Mario's Restaurant, The Biting Eye or Ginza as it was later renamed was created at the height of the psychedelic incursion into Melbourne. The Biting Eye/Ginza was a single-storey building;



Gone the way of a lot of city buildings, the site of The Biting Eye/Ginza has long since been redeveloped. It stood here – and is now a restaurant within a multi-storey building in Little Bourke Street.

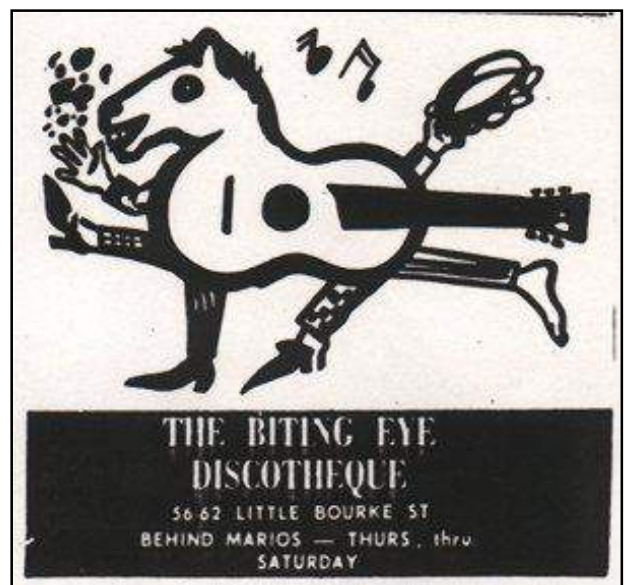
with a relatively small frontage on the street, just one solitary main room inside and not particularly spacious, according to most reports. Walking through the single front door, the punters were faced with the stage on the left and the toilets to the right – the central area being the dance floor. It was a dark venue until the era of psychedelia when the owners installed the glow-in-the-dark fluoro lights. Then there was the major feature which marked The Biting Eye out – a huge “Eye” painted on the wall. The Biting Eye became quite renowned for its Sunday afternoon gigs.

A feature of the decoration was the two-tone paintings which were done by

Kim Lynch, bass player with **The Red Onion Jazz Band** and **The Loved Ones**. Because the place was quite stark and bland in its early days, the owners may have made an attempt to give the interior of the building a lift. **Ian McCausland** whose art work with *Go-Set* and record cover designs was to eventually make him a well-known person on the scene, played there as a musician in 1966-7. His band, which included **Gulliver Smith** who was to go on to sing with **Cam Pact** and **Company Caine** later, formed under the name, **Little Gulliver and The Children**. McCausland as rhythm guitarist played at The Biting Eye a number of times:

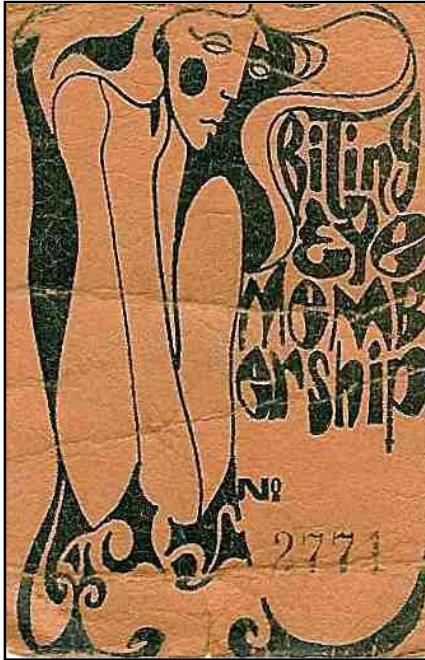
IAN McCAUSLAND: “I remember that Little Gulliver and the Children used to play at The Biting Eye. That was a great place. It used to have fantastic black and white illustrations on the wall, done by Kim Lynch of The Loved Ones ... very talented artist. It was a really, raw, basic place. Apart from Kim Lynch’s artwork on the walls, it was just a concrete floor. It wasn’t sophisticated as Berties, Sebastians or The ‘Tum. I think an attempt (was made) to dress it up with Kim Lynch’s artwork. I know that as a band, we had a bit of a Bkie audience at that place. We did quite a few Little Richard songs and the Bkies loved that.” (McCausland, op cit, 4 November, 2005.)

When **Ian Ferguson** played there with his early band **The Moods**, pop-influenced R & B was still big with the mod people which were frequenting The Biting Eye:



IAN FERGUSON: "The Biting Eye was a great place to play because it had a great sound even though it was just a single storey building with a fairly basic layout from what I can remember. I liked the split stage – it gave it a bit of ambience from the band's point of view." (Ferguson, op cit, 23 July, 2005)

Because it was a disco established at the time that San Francisco was leading up to The Summer Of Love, '67, it clearly took its lead from the acid rock scene in California and the management actively promoted it in psychedelic terms to the disco-going public – the Ginza/Biting Eye posters produced during that period imitated the style of psychedelic art produced for **Bill Graham's** Fillmore in San Francisco by such artists as **Stanley Mouse, Wes Wilson, Bonnie MacLean** and **Rick Griffin**. Considered by some to be an imitator of the favoured established discos like The Thumpin' Tum, Berties and Sebastians, Ginza existed for only a short while before transforming into The Biting Eye sometime in 1968. **Gary Young** had been playing with **The Silhouettes** and **The Lincolns** in the pre-discotheque era and as drummer with **The Rondells, Bobby and Laurie's** permanent backing group. Once **Bobby and Laurie** had passed through the pop phase, they took on a newer image and played gigs at The Biting Eye:



Folded and creased – but well used. A Biting Eye membership from 1966. (Courtesy of Ivon Shell)

GARY YOUNG: "I played a few times at The Biting Eye and I can remember Bobby and Laurie playing at The Biting Eye because instead of being like pop singers of the mid 'sixties, they were doing soul music and stuff. I believe that Kim Lynch, bass player in The Red Onion Band did the décor there. It had all these drawings from like.. Lewis Carroll there... Alice In Wonderland stuff all over the walls and it was really psychedelic stuff. The Biting Eye/Ginza catered for that psychedelic thing." (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005)

Ross Wilson played there at the time it was Ginza:

ROSS WILSON: "They had all the psychedelic stuff there... and light shows. It didn't last very long but I remember seeing the Vince Mouloney Set who I thought were really good. They were a R & B trio... really good. They were showing all this psychedelic junk on the walls and acid was sweeping the town..." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004).

Ivon Shell, a regular who with a number of mates, spent many nights at Ginza/Biting 'Eye remembers that at one stage, right across the road on the other side of narrow Little Bourke Street, **Graham Geddes**, owner of The Catcher opened up a small shop which was called The Gobble Shop. It sold incense, trinkets, the latest hippie, Mod clothes and had a resident hairdresser there to cut patrons' hair in the latest Mod fashion. Shell remembers Geddes bringing up one of the favourite Catcher bands, **The Chelsea Set** to play right in the heart of Biting Eye territory. Shell felt that after long and happy times at other discos, The Biting Eye then became one of his favourite venues at a time when its transformation from Mod establishment to hippie hangout was rapid:

IVON SHELL: "I remember the owners used to place bowls of apples on each table, which I remember one night became projectiles when the crowd became bored. It had a great atmosphere, very much the "in" place to be. The bands I remember were Sunshine, the Purple Hearts, and the Twilights... their first gig in Melbourne, or one of them I think. When the music world found psychedelia, Sgt Peppers & Jimi Hendrix, I remember the band Sunshine were one week playing blues covers, the next week the guitarist Ralph had his hair permed and they all looked like they had just shopped at Carnaby St and were doing covers of Hey Joe, All We Need Is Love, & tracks from Disraeli Gears..." (Shell, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

Like many bands, **Chain** played The 'Eye as well as just about every other disco in the city and **Barry Harvey** felt that perhaps from a musos point of view it was not as good as Berties, Sebastians or The 'Tum:

BARRY HARVEY: "The Biting Eye was a good gig too but its position in the city was difficult and the stage sound wasn't as good as the others, but some great people went there and some fine bands played there." (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004).

At a time when Adelaide's The Masters Apprentices were intent on establishing themselves in Melbourne, The

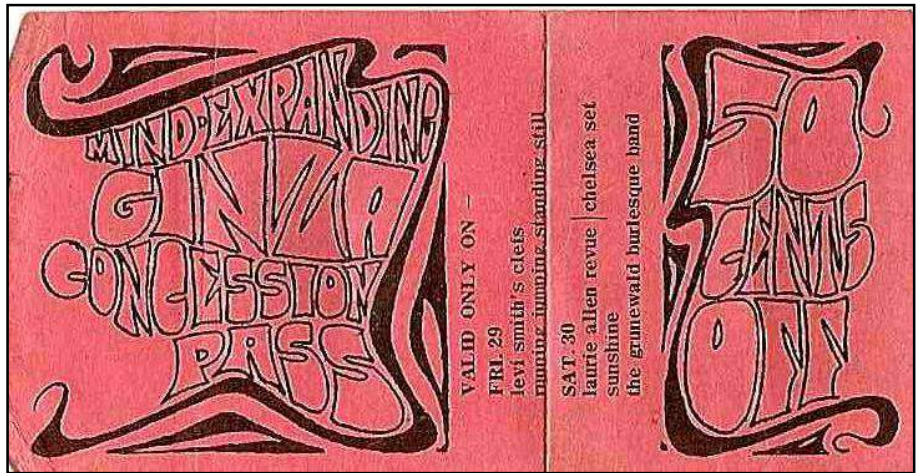
Biting Eye was one of the main city venues which fitted in well with their mod looks and sound:

Jim Keays: "It reminded me of The Beat Basement in Adelaide, it was one of those places which had all black walls and at the back, the chalked names of the bands which were performing. The Loved Ones were often there. It was similar to The 'Tum but probably, not quite as cool, but certainly a good place to play. You knew you were doing something right and playing to the right people. That was important. It was no good playing out in some place if it wasn't the right audience. So that was the right audience for us." (Keays, op cit, 8 March, 2006)

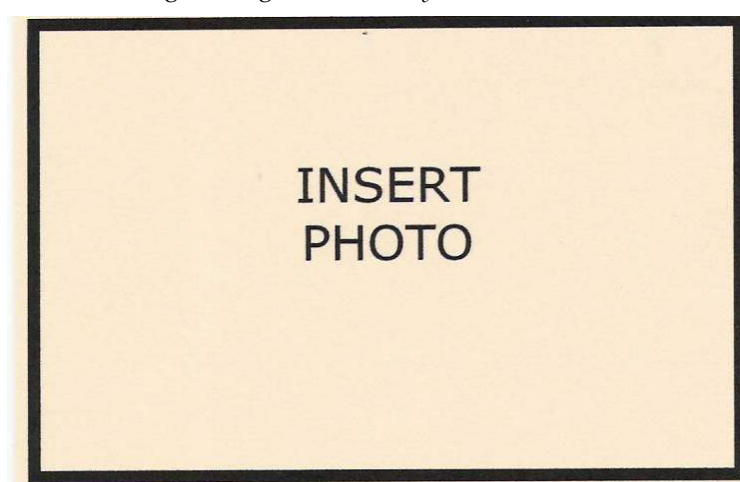
The Biting Eye continued as a popular Sunday haunt and it was the scene of a neat practical joke played one Sunday afternoon on **Gil Matthews**, **The Levi Smith's Clefs'** (and later, **Aztec's**) drummer. As reported by **Robert Bradshaw**, their roadie and lighting technician, Matthews had recently taken delivery of a brand

new imported black and white Ford Mustang – 5 litre, V8. Matthews had been Australia's "boy wonder" drummer and made a good deal of money from a tour of America. Having played extensively with Buddy Rich, his income had been wisely handled by his father and he now was able to spend a little on himself.

He had been boasting about how much his anti-theft device cost him and how it was, "state of the art"! While Matthews was inside completing a set, some of The 'Eye staff pushed the car down the hill and around the corner out of sight. The look on the face of Matthews when he emerged from the club was apparently priceless and the following day he had a motion sensor fitted, (yes.. again "state of the art"). It has been reported that Matthews also had a bar installed in this car which actually dispensed the booze straight from the dashboard while the boot held the "spare" stock needed. Matthews later recorded and released a track which commemorated this piece of innovative engineering – *A Bar In My Car*.



The venue became Ginza early in 1967. It's psychedelic mood was evident in its advertising and promotions. Above is a Ginza concession card for 50 cents off the price of admission. (Courtesy of Ivon Shell)



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As an adjunct to this story, on his return to Sydney he had this same car upgraded to full Trans-Am specifications and had a 7 litre V8 dropped in. He also changed the colour to a bright sunburnt orange. According to those who knew him well, he was notorious when in Sydney for waiting in the 'Stang at the approaches to the Harbour Bridge to burn off unsuspecting hot cars.

When blues band, **The Moods** played at The Biting Eye around 1966, it had quickly become firmly entrenched as a mod venue and sharpies, in particular, weren't welcome up in that eastern part of town. But that didn't stop them from turning up at The 'Eye. One particular Sunday the sharpies waited outside the venue for the afternoon to finish and the neatly-dressed mods to arrive out on the footpath:

IAN FERGUSON: "I played there with The Moods. In those days there were mods and sharpies. The sharpies weren't allowed into a lot of venues and The mods weren't allowed into the known Sharpie venues. Three members

of The Moods lived in Richmond so they knew a lot of sharpies and they dressed a bit sharp too, but they had long hair. I remember one Sunday afternoon when we played at The Biting Eye and the sharpies weren't allowed in, but at the end when it closed, there was a mass brawl outside and it went all the way down Little Bourke Street



Later Ginza membership cards featured designs by Frank Eidlitz which were clearly based on The Fillmore-style poster art. (Courtesy of Ivon Shell)

to Russell Street, along Russell to Bourke and then down Bourke to Swanston Street and then down to the station. There were about 150 people all, fighting in what was literally, a running brawl. (Ferguson, op cit, 23 July, 2005).

His bandmate in **The Moods**, **Mick Hamilton** recalls that although it was primarily a mod hangout, it seems that the hard and fast rules relating to the sharpies gaining entry, may have been relaxed a little for the Sunday afternoon sessions. At one particular gig that **The Vibrants** played, the sharpies did try to exert themselves and show the beligerent behaviour that they were best known for:

MICK HAMILTON: "I played there several times and I remember doing it with The Vibrants one Sunday afternoon. Well, they got in. I've got a vague recollection that The Biting Eye may have been one of the very few establishments which let the

sharpies in. They may have had a policy where they were allowed in on Sunday afternoon, but not Friday or Saturday nights.

There were a couple of guys... sharpies they were... in the front row giving all of us a hard time, particularly our lead singer who was up the front and getting more than the rest of us. We put up with it for a while then he decided that he didn't want to put up with it anymore and belted one of these guys with the microphone stand. Well, all Hell broke loose. The sharpies went beserk! It was like being in a fort on that stage and being surrounded by Indians trying to knock us down. We were defending ourselves on stage with all the microphone stands, defending ourselves with anything we could get hold of to keep these guys at bay, while the security guys who were hopelessly outnumbered went and called for help and tried to sort it all out. We got out of it, but..." (Hamilton, op cit, 2 December, 2005.)

6. GARRISON.

Located: 168 High Street, Prahran, southern side of High Street, 30 metres east of Chapel Street corner.

Operated: by Peter McKennell and Adrian Barker. August, 1965 to June, 1973

Today: Storage area for Ampere Electrical Manufacturing Co..

"... a fond memory of Garrison for me was the actual acoustic sound of the room. It had an amazing sound about it. The only other places that paralleled it, in my mind and that I consistently played at were Sebastians and... Pentridge Prison! (Brenden Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

In the early 'seventies even after six or seven years on the main scene, Garrison Disco was still drawing in the crowds and it became, along with The T.F. Much Ballroom on the opposite side of the city, one of Melbourne's best "head" venues. According to some sort of official definition, 'head music' was the self-indulgent progressive rock



The Fortress-like entrance to what was Garrison Discotheque in High Street Prahran is still evident in the building which is remarkably intact and probably much as it was. The shield to the right of the doors can be clearly seen – it carried the logo used by Madder Lake.

sound with lots of solos that you couldn't dance to, (therefore the opposite of 'body music'), that typified the era. (Makes sense, I guess!) It also may have had a connection to "pot" smokers – "potheads". As they did at all other venues, the finest rock acts, not just in Melbourne but around the land played here including the popular and fashionable **Madder Lake** who claimed the disco as their "headquarters" throughout their long period of residency there.

The building, just to the east of Chapel Street on the south side of High Street, still stands among a group of shops which has existed since late Victorian times and was built from the standard, indestructible building stone, bluestone. **Brenden Mason** believes this was what gave the building its great acoustic sound. In 1965 when it first opened, it stood between a chemist shop and a billiard parlour. Garrison was

managed and owned by **Peter MacKennell**.

The capacity for Garrison was much the same as Sebastians – possibly about two hundred people would fit into the ground floor on a jam-packed night – no space for dancing. It was not particularly wide but long and narrow as typical of the shops and business places built in the late nineteenth century. The pine-lined ceiling was supported down the centre by a beam and two large cast iron posts supported this beam – quite difficult to create a dance floor. I wonder how many Garrisonites bumped into these posts in the semi-darkness on a Saturday night? In its early days as a discothèque, only the ground floor was used, but as crowds began to build up, the first floor in particular became a chill-out room. A staircase took patrons up to this level.

Given a chunky 'seventies brick façade makeover at some time, it is easy to see where the "garrison" tag came from – it has a walled up, stronghold or fortress feel to it. It would seem that only a cream paint job to the street front in more recent times has brought a change to the building. The original shield to the right of the front door which once displayed the Madder Lake logo still remains firmly bolted onto the wall. Regular patron **Terry Murphy** recalls that Garrison incorporated something that seemed to him at that stage to be well ahead of its time –

unisex toilets! There was one door and both boys and girls entered through this door then went their separate ways. However, he recalls, given that Garrison hosted many from the emerging local gay community, both sexes could be found in either toilet and this didn't seem to disturb or faze anybody.

Brenden Mason recalls that Garrison was an early attempt to create a suitable venue for the gay fraternity and its early existence was as a nightclub-style venue. Gradually however, it transformed into a rock 'n roll venue and the crowd gradually changed its composition with this transformation:

BRENDEN MASON: "The first time I actually stepped inside Garrison... it was run by ... the gay group. This was when Madder Lake was rejected by Consolidated Rock and we were accepted by the gay community to play at their gigs... we had nothing to do with that scene apart from playing at their gigs. Garrison went from a gay club to a more rock 'n roll club and that's when the likes of Ayers Rock, MacKenzie Theory, Tank, Madder Lake and Spectrum started playing. It went from being this cliquy nightclub to more your trendy, progressive rock place." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

For a young **Terry Murphy**, Garrison was one of his favourite venues. A music fan, he was there for the bands, but he does recall that it was essentially a gay haunt earlier on:

TERRY MURPHY: "Gays yes... they were there also in vast quantities. The only fight I saw there was between two lesbians in front of the stage and the band played on... Madder Lake it was ... fantastic band.

It was a quiet venue... the only incident that comes to mind is a personal one for me. A mate went to the toilet and was half pissed. He was talking to someone in there who said he had beer in his car and being a pissed idiot, my mate was about to go out with him when I quickly jumped in and made out he was my boyfriend! This was not really to save my mate, but the person he was chatting to as he was gay and if he would have made a move on my mate, he would have been killed, as my mate was built like a brick shithouse ..but a short time later this person did find someone to go with him as we saw him swagger out with his hand on the other person's shoulder... The gays were openly exhibiting their inclinations with kissing and such ... it was



The rear entrance door to the building (below, right) was used by the bands for load-in, load-out purposes. The stairs were for entry to the first floor (and other recreational activities!)



Bumper stickers were produced by a number of venues but could be stuck up on all kinds of places – guitar cases as well. (Courtesy of Brenden Mason)

quite an education for my girlfriend who later became my wife" (Murphy, op cit, 31 October, 2004). A particular architectural feature of Garrison was a central hole in the ceiling/floor between the ground and first floor levels. It was large enough to allow patrons who had moved upstairs to the "quieter" level to chill out, to still hear and see the bands below. It also proved too much of a temptation for a high-spirited **Mick Fettes**:

BRENDEN MASON: "The upstairs was more like a coffee shop, restaurant area. You could get toasted sandwiches and probably a good joint out the back if you wanted it, but basically all the action happened downstairs. There was a hole in the centre above the stage – it was a great architectural feature and it was great

because people could stand up there and look down on the band as well. Then one night, Mick emptied a couple of bags of rubbish down the hole much to the annoyance of those below. Then there was another time when Mick ..

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(we had actually planned this one...) had a couple of bags of confetti and emptied them down, and there was a fan going and the stuff went everywhere." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)



These cast iron posts once were located right smack-bang in the centre of the ground floor at Garrison. How many dancers bumped into them during a set by Madder Lake, Chain or The La De Das?

Barry Harvey has some strong memories of the Garrison scene with a revitalised **Chain** and another combination which played as **Mighty Mouse**:

BARRY HARVEY: "Oh my God, GARRISON, that was dangerous! The Chain with Matt Taylor had broken up and Chain was a five piece band - Phil, Big Goose, Lil Goose, Mal Capewell and Ian Clyne and before that I started a 2 drum-set thing with Kevin Murphy from the Aztecs, which attracted Big Goose then, Mal Capewell and Ian Clyne. Then Phil Manning came around to my house where we use to practise and said, "I hear you have a great rhythm section thing happening. Do you need a guitar player and singer?" Before we knew it, the band was called "Mighty Mouse" a name thought up by Ray Evans who managed Renee Geyer and he and Gudinski started booking the band around Melbourne. Garrison was one of the regular gigs we used to play at. (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Ross Wilson, as a consummate musician has remarked that he felt comfortable as a performer when at Garrison and it was one of his preferred places just to hang out, see and hear other bands:

ROSS WILSON: "...we played there a lot.. I liked playing there. I was talking to Russell Morris recently and he mentioned that's where he first saw Daddy Cool. We played there regularly and it was a place where you could see other bands. I think The Groop played there a lot... maybe their manager ran it... (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

Garrison seemed to be one of those places that the musos were happy to go to check out the "opposition" bands on their nights off, but there seemed to be little fierce rivalry:

BARRY HARVEY: "As far as any rivalry between Chain and any of the other bands that played Garrison, there was NONE, we were all good mates." (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004).

Brenden Mason and **Madder Lake** played many gigs there and became very much the Garrison "house band". One particular night:

BRENDEN MASON: "... looking out into the audience and Lobby Loyde was there and this was probably the first time Lobby had seen Madder Lake and he came up to me after the gig and said, "Nice guitar playing, kid". I thought, "Wow, the God has spoken to me!" But it was just the different mixture of people who came into the place and the freedom that the place actually offered in so far as being yourself... you didn't



To the right of the front door, these steps led up to the first floor and the "relaxation" area - name your poison!

have to play commercial stuff, you didn't have to play covers... you could totally be yourself." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

It was the time of the extended and improvised guitar and maybe drum solos often in the middle of a song,
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regardless of whether that song actually contained a solo break or not. Garrison, in the early 'seventies was a place where the crowds loved to engage in this instrumental duelling on stage by various members of the band. **Lobby Loyde** had perfected this extended soloing and some of his blows were known to go for forty-five minutes in duration. Garrison also fostered this freedom on stage:

BRENDEN MASON: "But the other aspect that I liked about Garrison was the freedom of the place. Quite often we would have blows that would go for anything up to fifteen minutes. The blow would get so involved and we would get so involved in it ourselves... and the crowd would get so involved that the band members could be seen shuffling towards each other and saying, "...what song are we actually playing?" We'd just completely go off on a tangent... such a free time in that place." (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Drugs, despite being totally illegal and not rife in the general community, were quite readily available at Garrison after dark as they were at most venues, but it seems that the particular taste clients demanded, varied with the particular venue. The Catcher became a speed-freak's heaven. The Reefer Cabaret was known for its ready availability of marijuana. It seems that at Garrison, a fair smorgasbord of drugs was either available or consumed earlier by patrons, but marijuana seemed to dominate:

TERRY MURPHY: "Drugs! Ha ha haah ...what was your poison? All was available there. Yes, they were there also in vast quantities. There was a mezzanine floor and this was where most of the drug action took place... people stoned out of their brains laying on mattresses listening to the music" (Murphy, op cit, 31 October, 2004)

Bill Putt recalls playing Garrison only once with **Spectrum** and remembers the place as being a "good little gig." **Bill Putt** and **Brenden Mason** became firm friends despite being in "opposition" bands. Mason makes the point that Garrison was a great place for breaking down the barriers between bands which were weary of each other because of the chance that trade secrets could be found out and maybe, even band members poached. This certainly happened.



Putt, as well, recalls the camaraderie that developed throughout the period with some other bands and band members and remembers that particular night, when he shared more than camaraderie with a fellow musician:

BILL PUTT: " ... I remember us ...once with **Madder Lake** and **Brendan (Mason)**... I nailed him with a joint. We played our set and then went out the back and had a joint with **Brendan** and absolutely wrecked him! Blew his brains out and he then had to go and play. He said it was the most horrendous experience he had ever had." (Putt, interview, 20 September, 2004).

When **Barry Harvey**, **Phil Manning** and **Kevin Murphy** had formed a short-lived band, **Mighty Mouse**, he and his fellow bandmates found the lure of drugs just too good to be true:

GARRISON
- after dark

166 HIGH STREET, PRAHRAN.

...for the next two weeks we give you:-

Thursday 18th:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN
Friday 19th:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN (after 12.00) CHAIN
Saturday 20th:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN GREAT MEN (after 1.00) DADDY GOOL
Sunday 21st:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN KING HARVEST (from 4 p.m. til 10.30)

Thursday 25th:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN
Friday 26th:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN JEFF CROZIER MAGIK TRICKS
Saturday 27th:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN JEFF CROZIER'S MAGIK SHOW (after 1.00) DADDY GOOL
Sunday 28th:-	KEITH GLASS & SUNDOWN JEFF CROZIER PUNCH & JUDY (from 4 p.m. til 10.30 p.m.)

NOTE..... Thursday, Friday & Saturday
8.30 p.m. until ?
Sunday - 4p.m. til 10.30p.m.
Thursday only 50¢

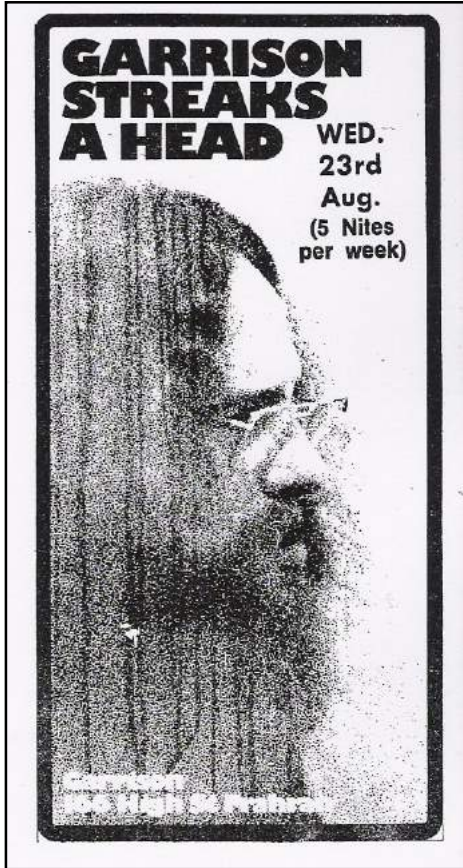
WE HOPE YOU LIKE US

The rear doors of Garrison – the stage was to the left.

BARRY HARVEY: "As that band went along, the guys were so out of it that one night at Garrison ...

Kevin Murphy was so out there that when he was playing the drums in a slow blues, his right hand stick went up 335.

to come down and play the cymbal, but remained in mid-air and never got to the cymbal. You could call it 'suspended animation' if you like. Big Goose and I kept playing and left Murph. in suspended animation until his



stick came down 3 songs later and he said, "... where you been man, I've been to Jupiter and back." We just laughed and said, "what was it like man???" He said, "...fucking amazing! You should come with me next time." Well, there wasn't a next time as Murph. decided that the band plays the songs the way he plays the drums or he is leaving the band! He left the band." (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004).

By the early 'seventies, **Kevin Borich** with his New Zealand band, **The La De Das** had worked their arses off around the city discos establishing themselves as one of the finest live bands around. They had played to large and small crowds and Borich had conquered the audiences with the quality and calibre of his guitar playing. He recalls however, one not so triumphant late night at Garrison:

KEVIN BORICH: "I remember watching Leo De Castro & Friends once at Garrison - over indulging on the many flavors going down, heading for the sanctuary of the dunnies and solace of the cool tiled wall, waking up in total darkness, I thought,...'black as Hell, that's it!... I've died and this is where naughty boys end up.'

Then the urinal symphony brings me back to the horrific reality that it was a Sunday night... it was all over, everyone had gone home, locked up for the next few days till it opened up later in the week when I would be "discovered", having in a poetic sense, been pissed on by the Garrison rats not a good look!!

I clicked into inferred mode, found the stage, fell through the drums... what a racket... still couldn't see a thing... tried clicking into 'FEEL' mode. It served me much better, right to the front door which was ...DEADLOCKED!!!.... Feel, Feel, feel all the way back to the kitchen's

back door. Tried it and boy did I feel great walkin' outta there!!.... funny now, eh!!! (Borich, op cit, 9 February, 2005)

As the venue was coming to an end in mid-1973 due to local council pressure to close it down, **Chain** along with other favourite bands at the place, was invited to be part of the live recording to say a fitting farewell to Garrison in its last days. On 17 June, two live tracks performed by **Chain** were recorded - *Grab A Snatch And Hold It* and *Do What You Wanna Do*. The compilation albums were released as, *Garrison: The Final Blow – Units 1 & 2*. **Barry Harvey** recalls the circumstances surrounding the recording of **Chain's** contribution to *Unit 2*:

BARRY HARVEY: "(Michael) Gudinski came back into the equation ... and because Garrison was closing, he said, "...we want to record a double live album set about the Garrison Disco." "Great", we thought. The



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date was set for the recording with the mobile recording studio. We had to record *Grab A Snatch and Hold It* with Matt Taylor and Greg ("Sleepy") Lawrie on guitar as well. We used to have a large bottle of Coca Cola that we passed around the stage, which really was 3/4 Scotch and 1/4 coke. So I counted in *Grab A Snatch* and the band was

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playing great, but the bottle of coke had been around the stage a few times and by the time we got to the second verse the band started to disintegrate, one by one, till there was no sound. John Sayers raced in and said, "What's happening?", and we all looked at him and fell on the floor laughing! Someone had laced the bottle of coke with the

strongest LSD imaginable and we all turned into blithering idiots. We had to record *How to Set Fire To An Elephant* also to go on the second side of the album *Two Of A Kind*. The gig was called off straight away and we were instructed to come back the next night and try it again, but no bottles (of Coke) were allowed on stage. We recorded everything first go and I recorded one of the best drum solos I have ever heard." (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Madder Lake also contributed three tracks for *Garrison: Unit 1*, *Bumper Bar Song*, *When Is A Mouse* and *Rodney's Birthday* and the tracks almost didn't make it to the record:

BRENDEN MASON: "One of my favourite stories from *Garrison* was in the last week where it was an absolute celebration of a wonderful gig... (we thought) it's a shame it's going down but it's going out in a blaze of glory. That was the *Garrison* LP's. We finished our set and we couldn't wait to get out to the O.B. van to see how it went. We went flying out to the back and John Sayers was at the desk... out like a light... asleep, and



The Garrison house band, Madder Lake benefited enormously from their residency at Prahran. This exposure allowed them to record their album, *Stillpoint* from which their single *12lb Toothbrush* was taken.

the spool was going around, ... kerthump... kerthump...kerthump...just flapping. We thought, "I hope he got it!" And he *did!*" (Mason, op cit, 19 October, 2004)

Other artists to contribute include ex-Perth based band, **Sid Rumpo** whose tracks *Now I'm Free* and *Forty Days and Forty Nights* were also included on *Unit 2*. **Chain**, with **Matt Taylor** supplying *Snatch It Back And Hold It* and *Roberta* were the other tracks and blues legend, **Dutch Tilders** recorded *Sweet Marie*, also for *Unit 2*. *Unit 1*, as well as having the Madder Lake tracks on it was rock solid with **One Ton Gypsy** and **Friends**. **One Ton Gypsy** was something of an experimental band in the jazz/rock genre and was formed by **Ray Brown**, who had come to fame earlier with **Ray Brown and The Whispers**. Their shifting line-up included stalwarts in the industry, **Ronnie Peel** and **Rockwell T. James**. Recorded at *Garrison* on that final night by them was *Boy You Shot Me Down* and *Covered Wagon* which was issued by Brown as a single in November 1973.

7. THE T.F. MUCH/MUCH MORE BALLROOM.

Located: Cathedral Hall, 20 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.

Operated as: The T.F. MUCH BALLROOM from 8 August, 1970 until late 1971, by John Pinder.

Operated as: THE MUCH MORE BALLROOM from 4 December, 1971 to early 1973, by John Pinder and Bani McSpedden.

Today: Central Hall, part of Australian Catholic University, St Patrick's Campus.

"The T.F. Much was probably the most "far out" of all the gigs that happened around town. All these fantastic clubs were great and they had their own vibe but the T.F. Much was something else again. It catered mainly for the hippie element of rock music. We'd had jazzers, mods, rockers, sharpies but by the time The T.F. Much started up, the hippies were present.

It catered not just for the music, but you could buy organically-grown food and there were pipes and smoking paraphernalia ... everything the hippie would want. In fact, they sold everything except hemp which for all the openness of the place, marijuana was still very much against the law. Mind you, people used to smoke marijuana there... the air used to be thick with the smell of it...but they could never actually arrest people for selling water pipes or psychedelic posters depicting drugs. (Gary Young - Daddy Cool, op cit, 3 October, 2005)

I've never been a fan of marijuana - I haven't even tried it. I think what was the intention was to cater to people who were gentle, thoughtful and at the time, I think a lot of these people enjoyed marijuana. I can't say that it was 'thick in the hall' - that would be wrong, but I also say that there were people who recall that being the case. (Bani McSpedden, op cit, 14 March, 2006)

While not a "discotheque" but a dance or as some would prefer to label it, "a performance venue", the relatively short-lived, T. F. (Too Fucking) Much Ballroom opened at Cathedral Hall, 20 Brunswick Street Fitzroy in early August, 1970. During the shortish time it functioned however, there was no better place to be in all Melbourne on a Saturday night if you had embraced the new youth culture which hippiedom brought with it. The venue was an imposing, three-story, late Victorian, Italianate stone building, which belonged to the Catholic Church and was one of those venues which were regularly available for hire to community groups or individuals.



Now its Central Hall but once it was Cathedral Hall - still looking just as it was in 1972. The Catholic Church continues to use the hall but the events of The T.F. Much and The Much More Ballrooms have been assigned to the past.

As a consequence of its community use, it was not set up permanently as a dance hall or disco unlike some of the city venues, but operated every third or fourth Saturday or Sunday night. John Pinder and later, Bani McSpedden were

the operators of this very popular “head” venue. For the uninitiated, ‘head’ music was a particularly self-indulgent form of progressive rock music based on long guitar solos which were very difficult to dance to – hence it was the opposite to ‘body’ music – (or so the explanation goes!). It could equally be associated with the fact that many patrons smoked “pot” at this time and were referred to as “potheads”

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or “heads”. Well... whatever! Maybe neither of these explanations accurately covers where the term actually came from, but they both do sound quite credible!

Shortly before the T.F. Much opened, Pinder had created the “Let It Be” Agency with the aim of organising their own gigs for the sake of their music, rather than being at the mercy of unscrupulous agents and rip-off merchants – (it’s not hard believe that these characters were around and thriving in this super-heated atmosphere!) As a result of this, plans were made to create their own venue and The T.F. Much Ballroom on the city fringe was the result. Unlike some of the city discos of the same period which just concentrated on rock music, it was very much a marriage between rock music and performance art. In an article in *The Daily Planet* magazine in 1972, David “Dr. Pepper” Pepperell, who had been a vocalist with the band, **Union** and now, a budding rock journalist with both *Go-Set* and *The Daily Planet*, made the following contemporary observation:

DAVID N. PEPPERELL: “I personally think that Much More Ballroom is, perhaps save for the very early



Fans in their thousands passed through these doors into the foyer first, then into the main hall.

Catcher (and that might be only nostalgia speaking), the finest rock venue Melbourne has ever had. I say this for a number of reasons. Much More is planned as a night’s entertainment - it has usually a total concept behind it -it is much more than a dance hall (more a way of life?). The entertainment is not just Rock culture -it incorporates theatre, farce, absurdity, involvement, art. It has never been, and never will be, sufficient to hire a hall, put on a few bands until 12 and charge people admittance and call that an entertainment.” (Feature Article by David N. Pepperell reprinted from *The Daily Planet*, 10 May, 1972, in www.milesago.com)

When it was decided after a year or so of operation that for the sake of better, more positive publicity, the name of the T.F. Much Ballroom should be changed to The Much More Ballroom, a second phase of the greatly loved dance venue opened up and it became a degree more commercial. The bands, rather than alternate-style acts became important once again. (The name change was brought about because advertising naturally did not favour using expletives in print!) Pinder continued to be the promoter and took as a partner, **Bani McSpedden:**

BANI McSPEDDEN: Firstly, John Pinder started The TF Much Ballroom and he ran that in Cathedral Hall in Fitzroy and he ran foul of the Church authorities which owned the hall – The Catholic Church. And they couldn’t



John Pinder, owner of The T.F. Much Ballroom stands proudly by the front entrance in 1971. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique, aka David Porter)

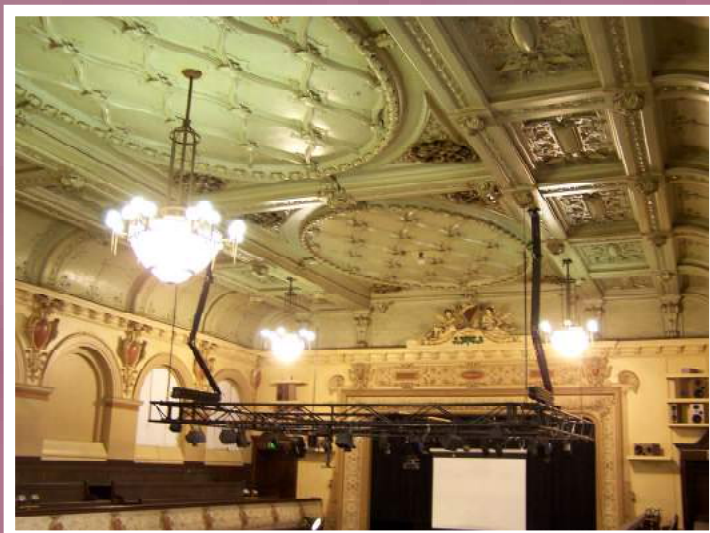
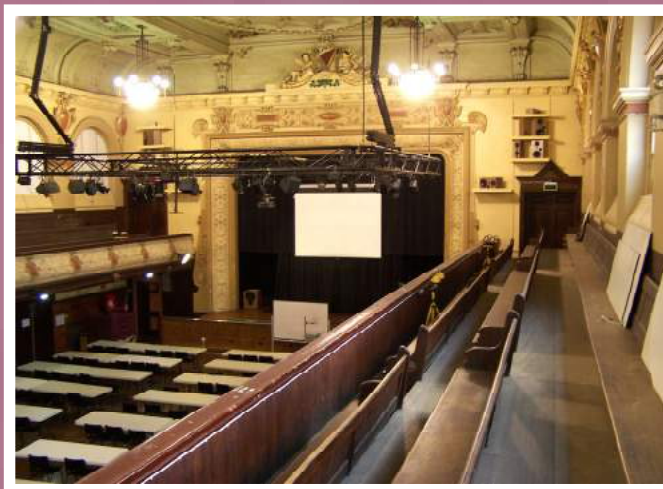
alternates-style acts became important once again. (The

in Fitzroy and he ran foul of the Church authorities which owned the hall – The Catholic Church. And they couldn’t

run it any longer, but it was very much talked about ... when I say it was successful, it was creatively successful. But I'm not sure what the (attendance) figures were, but in any case, they didn't have the venue. When I met John, he had finished with it – it had had a very short life. One of the objections to the venue was its name – they didn't like the name, TF Much. They thought the TF Much stood for "something", which we all know it did! When I got together with John and we talked about it, I think what we

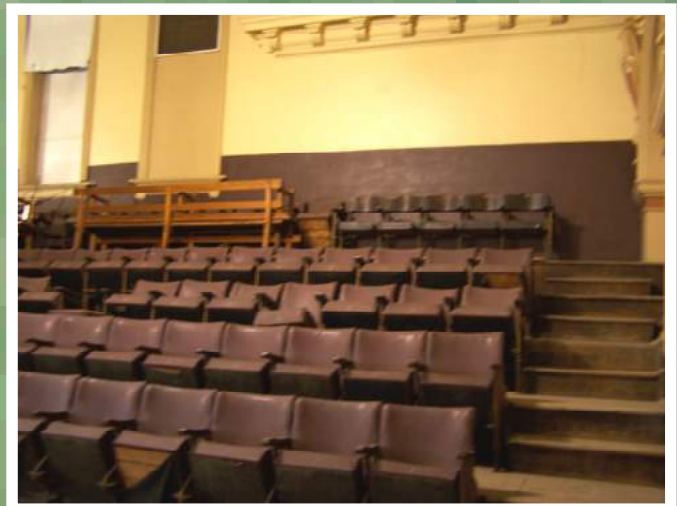
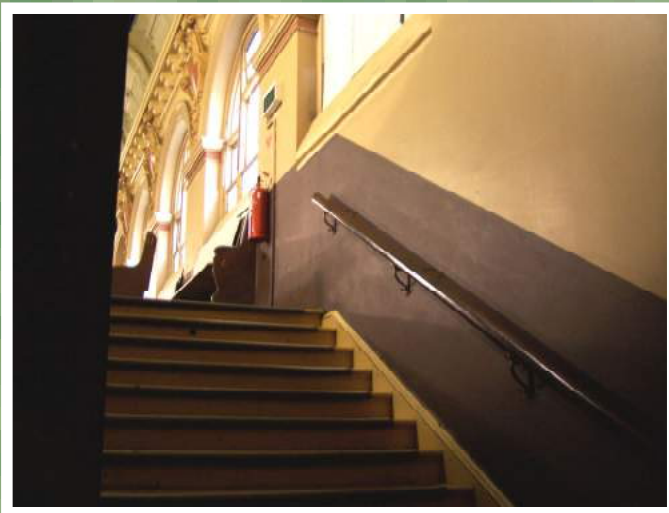
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Inside Cathedral Hall -1...



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Inside Cathedral Hall -2 ...



realized is that we could do something different... we could do it again... but it would be terrific to have that venue



again. And so it was decided that if we called it The Much More Ballroom, everyone would know it was the same thing, but it would not offend the church authorities" (B. McSpedden, op cit, 14 March, 2006.)

Pinder was rather surprised that McSpedden had been able to convince the Catholic Church to allow them to all that open the venue up again, but there was nothing magnanimous in the church's decision. It all came about because McSpedden's father, an Anglican priest had worked for The Victorian Penal Department and had been based at Pentridge Prison in nearby Coburg where he got to know the much respected Roman Catholic Chaplain, Father John Brosnan. Brosnan, who was to serve at Pentridge for many years, spoke to McSpedden and told him just who

to speak to in the church. The result; the doors were open again and the venue was in full swing.

The activities, which had been described somewhat as a cross between a rock concert, a circus and a flea-market continued almost unchanged:

MIKE RUDD: "...it was kinda "rock 'n roll Vaudeville" with a broad collection of acts, which I thought was terrific – mixed in with alternative lifestyle things. So it was very much an alternative sort of thing but it brought in people from the suburbs to the city ... they dragged kids in because this would always have one or two standout acts from the rock 'n roll side of things and these kids would be exposed to a lot of this stuff for the first time. Bands like Captain Matchbox, It Flew Away and The Leaping McSpeddens... the kids would be very unprepared for that. And I think it's still a great idea. (Rudd, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

Even such a mundane thing as entry to the T.F. Much could be a performance in itself for the patrons, as on one occasion:

MIKE RUDD: "The entrance to the Cathedral Hall was once made up to resemble an inflatable plastic vagina that you pushed your way through to be rebirthed as a happy/hapless hippie, and to discover for perhaps the first time the joys of lentil burgers, patchuli oil and a vast array of bongos available from the market-style stalls set up inside." (Rudd, www.mikeruddbillputt.com)



The horn section of Lipp Arthur. They were just the kind of act that the T.F Much/Much More was made for. (Courtesy of Jacques L'Affrique, aka David Porter)

Bani McSpedden had a clear plan in mind when he joined with Pinder and that was to provide a full and varied program for the evening, which is what many patrons remember:

BANI McSPEDDEN: "...rather than just hire bands that come on, my thought was that if you wrap the show up conceptually... have a concept and an idea, then you're providing a whole evening of entertainment. So together with John, I looked at programming things so that instead of a band coming on doing whatever it wanted to do, then wait while another band got its equipment onstage, we produced what we hoped would be a much more seamless show. And I can't remember to be honest, who had the ideas and who didn't, all I know is that The Much More Ballroom wouldn't have happened without John, who was a driving force and a tremendous enthusiast. He

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had great contact with the bands. I think I brought some conceptual discipline to it – I knew other people who could make it happen too, like graphic people. So what we wanted to do was have a much more living entity than just a



The events at Cathedral Hall appealed to groovers of all ages. Two young girls watch from the floor. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique, aka David Porter)

roll-call of bands. And I think that that met with great approval from the bands, because they felt that there was never a dull moment. Now I don't say that with any hint of ego because the response we got was so surprisingly good, I think we were astonished. But there's a reason for that because if people think they're getting good value and not just being entertained, that's what happens." (B. McSpedden, op cit, 14 March, 2006.)

With entertainment as the keyword, the irrepressible **Mick Conway** and his brother **Jim** could often be seen on stage with **The Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band** singing their unusual retro-style hit, *My Canary Has Circles Under His Eyes* (1972) and at one point they managed to form **The National Jug Orchestra** which included members of Captain Matchbox and **The Moonshine Jug and String Band** – all one hundred or so people on stage at the one time! Then there were the freakish and absurd **Lip Arthur** and **The Double Decker Brothers** who got more freakish and more

absurd when they actually joined together on 4 December 1971 for the Fitz-Carlton First Annual Christmas Social. The new paper-on-the-block, *The Daily Planet* in its first edition reported on the unscripted stage insanity which came to mark out **Lipp Arthur**, The T.F. Much and The Much More Ballroom:

MARGO HUXLEY: "To start with L & T.D.D.B. have more members than Lipp Arthur. There is a core of six musicians, around which floats a population of Lippettes (3-girl choir), a Crystal Tapper Extraordinary and a Conductor, sometimes even a tea-lady, making a band of up to 13 or more members, depending on the mood of the moment. The act is more worked out than before, but is still spontaneous, retaining that element of surprise, which means no-one, least of all the band, knows what's going to happen next. (This was rather a handicap ... on Sunday night, when a member of the band collapsed on stage from exhaustion ... everyone, including the band, thought it was part of the show!)" (Huxley, *The Daily Planet*, op cit, 29 December, 1971.)



The dancers became entranced by the progressive sounds from the stage. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique, aka David Porter)

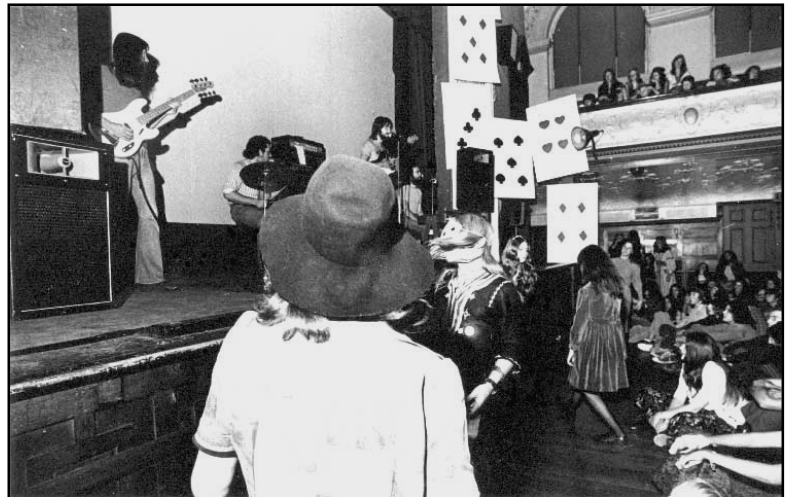
Lipp Arthur was but one of the many attractions that had kids queueing up on the footpath outside Cathedral Hall on the weekends just to get in:

JEFFREY SIMMONDS: "I have fond memories of lining up outside Cathedral Hall with fellow music fans for a night of magic (sometimes literally if Jeff Crozier's Magik show was on the bill...). These acts wouldn't have all been on the same night, but I do recall some fantastic line ups...things that stand out: Carson doing the full blown boogie bit, great light shows (Edison, Ellis D. Fogg), great food (probably macrobiotic/veggie), a memorable set by Lipp and the Double Decker Brothers (featured Joe Camilliri) where Jane Clifton sang La Mere; leaning back in comfy seats in the balcony while MacKenzie Theory blew us away with lengthy violin/rock improvisations...weirder stuff

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from Sons of the Vegetal Mothers (Ross Wilson's Zappa styled alter ego band, I guess to even outdo the commercial Daddy Cool).....great venue, great music, great atmosphere...." (Simmonds, email correspondence, 12 September, 2005)

The TF and Much More differed in many ways to the city discotheques, and variety of entertainment was just one approach. McSpedden and Pinder were keen not to have just another discotheque but were aiming to appeal to a wider age group and certainly to a different clientele. The early 'seventies in Melbourne was a time of strong political protest – growing dissent against the successive post-Menzies, Canberra Liberal Governments and the Bolte/Rylah Victorian State Government. Moratoriums led by future Labor Deputy Prime Minister and treasurer, **Dr. Jim Cairns** drew tens of thousands of protesters railing against both the war in Vietnam and the Conscription in Australia. It was these people (and others) who came to the Ballroom to create quite a diverse group there:



Spectrum proved extremely popular as they were in all venues they performed in. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique, aka David Porter)

BANI McSPEDDEN: "This is a recollection, but (the ages ranged) anything from 17 to 40. I knew people who were older than that and I knew some who were younger than that. I remember I had neighbours at the time in Richmond and they had girls who were aged about nine and I remember them pestering to come along to the Ballroom, because they'd heard about it somewhere – that's one extreme. The other extreme – I knew people who were radio and newspaper executives who went along and absolutely loved it. What broadened the audience was that very often music has a very narrow band of appeal, but at that time there was an anti-war movement going on, there was a strong political awareness – the McMahon Government at the time was running out of steam and there were a lot of students. If we look at the students in general, there was a fairly wide age group there – university students can range from rather talented 16 year-olds to mature age people.



A dancer takes the floor while Spectrum play. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique, aka David Porter)

If you like, the audience defined itself on the basis that we were giving them more than just music. We had people like Max Gilles doing stuff for us between the bands and the other acts. So we weren't lumbered with that rather tight age grouping that comes when you only play a particular type of music. I'd also like to think that a lot of the bands then that we featured, from Daddy Cool to Spectrum – their writing was not for lazy idiots, there was some terrific stuff they were doing. And that found a terrific audience." (B. McSpedden, op cit, author's interview, 14 March, 2006.)

The Ballroom took its cue from such venues as San Francisco's Fillmore and **Andy Warhol's** New York Factory which while both worlds apart,

pushed the boundaries of clubs at this time. When **Jeff Simmonds** and his friends finally managed to get in they would have witnessed an entrancing psychedelic light show featured on the walls during each performance. The product of experimentation by **Hugh McSpedden**, (brother of co-owner Bani) it toured around Melbourne as **The Edison Light Show**. The McSpedden brothers and a few mates also took to the stage as **The Leaping McSpeddens**, although as Hugh recalls, they were only an occasional and semi-professional balancing act and they really began their "on-stage" career with just the

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two brothers – Hugh acting as a springboard or landing platform for Bani's athletic efforts. Hugh recalls "always being on the bottom" of the heap, often on his hands and knees. Part of the act was, for him to get up at the end to wild applause, in a mock confused state and bow to the crowds facing the wrong way – with his bum pointing to the audience! This is how many remember the bottom half of **The Leaping McSpeddens**.

The T.F. Much/Much More Ballroom became the leading "head" venue of the period and on 13 August, 1972, it hosted the final **Daddy Cool** performance. This was recorded and released as an LP eventually titled *The Last Drive In Movie*. Pinder also opened and ran **Opus (The Reefer Cabaret)** at **Ormond Hall**, Moubray Street, Prahran (or South Yarra), from 1974 and in somewhat similar theatre/variety style, **The Last Laugh** theatre/restaurant in Carlton from 1976.

The Cathedral Hall has always belonged to the Catholic Church and today, as Central Hall, it is part of St.Patrick's Fitzroy Campus of The Australian Catholic University. But back in the rock era, the activities and functions under the T.F. Much/Much More Ballroom were many and varied. Between acts there was recorded music to keep the patrons occupied while the next band/act set up on stage:

BANI McSPEDDEN: "The theme might be - water. Bands would be hired and hopefully do material relevant to that theme. The bands ranged from Carson to... Spectrum, Captain Matchbox.. whoever. So we'd have a main band, we'd have a backup band and we had a loose group which was run and organized by Joe Camilleri – Jo Jo Zep – which was called The Much More Review Orchestra, which had an assembly of musicians who weren't working on that night. There would be some crazy bands like Lipp and The Double Dekker Brothers. A typical night might have a more serious band like Carson or Spectrum. Spectrum might also do their Murtceps set and there would also be some light relief in the form of a Captain Matchbox.

It didn't just happen. We worked on it and put that program together well beforehand. We would have something to happen in between the acts. It could be some political satire, a group from The Pram Factory or Max Gilles doing something. We'd have The Leaping McSpeddens or we'd have all manner of completely idiotic fillers.. And we also had there food and all sorts of other things. The astonishing thing was how successful it was without alcohol!" (B. McSpedden, op cit, 14 March, 2006.)



Sometimes, it all seemed so chaotic when Daddy Cool played – Ross Wilson and Ross hannafors are in the centre. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique, aka David Porter)

Bill Putt remembers having done a commercial for Camel cigarettes during his Spectrum/Murtceps period where they took to the stage as The Camels for a one-off, bit-of-fun gig after recording the commercial that same day:

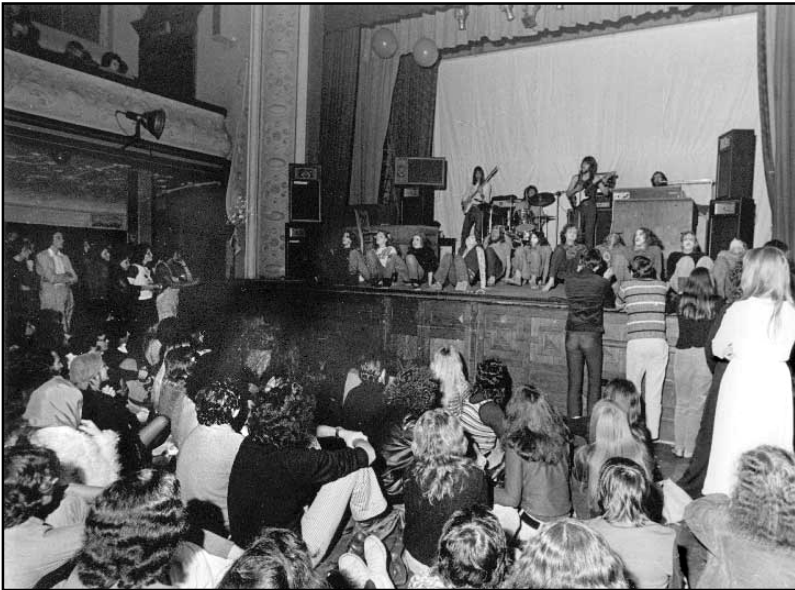
BILL PUTT: "...we went in the studio and bashed it out. So that night we played at the T.F. Much Ballroom, ...we dressed up in long flowing robes and head-dress, you know, Arabic gear, and played the song at its normal tempo, and played it again slightly faster. Played it again even slightly more, and so on and so on, until it was going flat out, and we couldn't keep up with ourselves. And that was the end of The Camels." (Putt, op cit,

Not everyone approved of the circus-come-Vaudeville-come-rock, performance atmosphere of The T. F. Much Ballroom. Pepperell (Dr.Pepper) had his criticisms and was not impressed with two aspects of the Saturday night entertainment:

DAVID N. PEPPERELL: "The two main concrete criticisms I have are the compere and the Idiot Dancer. The compere by greeting the audience as if he was warming them up for the Happy Show, by carrying on routines that were completely unfunny even in the face of utter audience disapproval, by ignoring the people he was supposed to be relating to was the bummer of the night. This, is one of the greatest faults of New Society, phony hipness,

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these exhortations to laugh at things because they are hip and unusual (?) rather than that are entertaining ... dragged on for eternal hours having no beginning or end save to let the compere spread some more verbal



At times, the crowd just sat around on the floor to enjoy the music – Spectrum are on stage. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique, aka David Porter)

diarrhoea over his captive audience. The audience did not respond to him yet he was their creation - he was the stereotype that they were supposed to dig -- do you see what I mean? The Idiot Dancer was the same - taffeta all over his head, a flashlight (how groovy, how fab, how HIP) prancing right in front of stage obscuring it both with his body and by the temporary blindness caused by his flashlight." (Pepperell, op cit, 10 May, 1972,)

Dr. Pepper, who was a regular at Cathedral Hall still found the venue crowded even though it could boast probably the best floor space available for any venue at the time – in fact almost town hall sized - before the larger pubs in the suburbs opened up after about 1977. It attests to the numbers of people who went through the doors of The T.F. Much and packed the place out on the weekends at the

time of its peak popularity – 1971 to '72.

DAVID N. PEPPERELL: "The first criticism must be the general over crowding of "the place" -- unfortunately popularity means too many people in too small a space. At various times breathing became difficult, moving virtually impossible, living uncomfortable. With such a large audience vision naturally becomes obscured, the stage hard to see." (Pepperell, op cit, 10 May, 1972.)

As mentioned previously, by the early 'seventies, drugs had become an integral part of the youth culture but that was not to say that drugs were prevalent. It was at venues such as The T.F. Much that young people probably felt safe and secure in their own environment to partake of their favourite drugs. Certainly the hard, addictive drugs were available but probably, Cannabis or "Pot" was the drug of choice of the majority of 'teens and early twenties, if they indulged at all. Some were students and at campus' such as Monash and Melbourne Universities, pot smoking was rife. However, even in such a seemingly safe cocoon on a weekend, it wasn't always safe from the authorities who were constantly suspicious of the "pothead" kids and their habits.

Chain's drummer **Barry Harvey** enjoyed the atmosphere at The T. F. Much and remembers the large upstairs seated area where it was possible to sit and listen to the music or watch the other acts – something that was not comfortably possible at many of the city discos:

BARRY HARVEY: "T.F. Much was a great gig. It was the first time I ever met Ross Hannaford and Ross Wilson. I liked Ross Hannaford's guitar playing. I reckon he is a genius and so is Ross Wilson. I remember playing there very clearly even though if you didn't smoke grass you had no chance of escaping it as there was a permanent gig full of smoke from the hundreds of joints being smoked. If you weren't a dope smoker, you would get stoned from the smoke in the room. It had a great set up with a balcony full of seats where people used to watch the bands from above. A lot of the future of Australian Music started at that gig." (Harvey, op cit, 19 October, 2004).

When **Ross Wilson** formed his “splinter group”, **Daddy Cool**, they became an absolute sensation with their boppy, do-wop pseudo-’fifties music. So much so, that the crowds who used to sit trance-like on the dance floor and soak up the long guitar solos, now got up and started to dance. **Kerri Hooker**, became an instant fan when she saw them at The T.F. Much after her fiancé had been at Berties upstairs for one of their early gigs there. They both went to T. F. Much:

KERRI HOOKER: “I was away when my fiancé (now husband) saw Daddy Cool for the first time at Berties. They appeared upstairs in the sort of dining area. When I returned we went to see them perform at T. F. Much Ballroom.

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Ross Wilson had his pants with the fox tail on the back of course and they had the whole building shaking. And I mean that literally. Everyone was jumping to their music and it was an old timber building and it started to shake and vibrate. We also saw Gerry Humphrys and the Loved Ones that night. As we were leaving there was some sort of raid by the police and also building and health inspectors I believe. I think that it closed down after that night.” (Hooker, op cit, 20 November, 2004).

Others couldn’t help but get caught up in the infectious beat of Wilson’s and Hannaford’s creation. After spending nearly a lifetime in rock broadcasting, Billy Pinnell still finds the memories of the ballroom fresh in his mind:

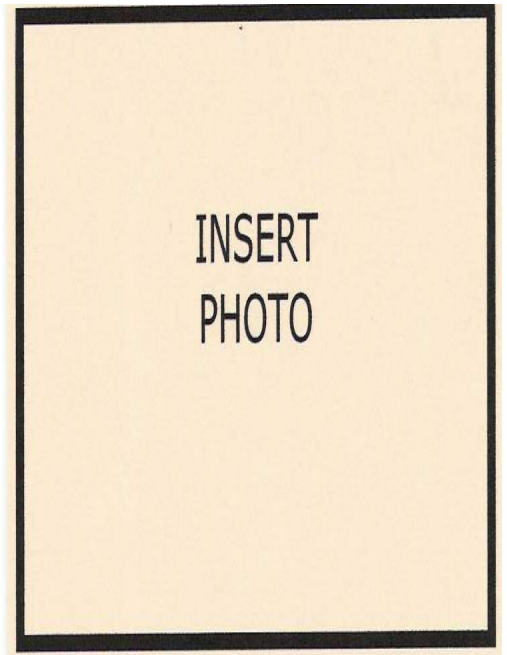
BILLY PINNELL: “Yes, it was very communal. I saw Daddy Cool play there and everybody knew every Daddy Cool song – easy to latch onto songs. I can recall hearing “Eagle Rock” there many times even before the single was released. So people knew every word of that song.” (Pinnell, op cit 19 September, 2005).

Daddy Cool probably could be credited with ushering a new era at The T.F. Much which saw kids, for once getting up on their feet and reacting strongly to the music. For so long, they had been used to sitting passively listening, but now Daddy Cool changed all that:

GARY YOUNG: “Daddy Cool was very much a dancing band. We’d come out of an era where you had you bands like Brod. Smith and Carson, for example which were playing John Lee Hooker boogie stuff. The music was designed for standing in the one spot and nodding your head up and down. Daddy Cool when we burst on the scene had this do-woppy thing, Wilson would force people up and once they got to their feet, found that they could actually dance to it. So you had these crowds at The T. F. Much Ballroom which were very much sit-on-the-floor type crowds, so now they were getting up and enjoying it! Not feeling that they were being forced to do it, but once they were up, they were loving it!” (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005)

The T.F. Much did, in fact come to a rather sad and perhaps premature end to some people but to Bani McSpedden, it wasn’t too much of a surprise. This was at a time when the Catholic Church probably discovered that their hall was being used by marijuana smokers – shock! horror!...you mean it took them that long to discover this? Surely their curiosity must have been aroused when on one memorable T.F. Much Spectacular, on Saturday 8 August, 1970, a bunch of Hells Angels rode their bikes INTO the hall in an attempt at some sort of Happening! At the instigation of **Gerry Humphrys** who was performing there with his re-formed **Gerry and the Joy Boys**, a number of Hell’s Angels rode right inside the Ballroom, revving their engines as they went. Humphrys was also compare for the evening, a job with which he had become quite quite well known and adept at in his own unique, quirky way. On this night, about half a dozen Hell’s Angels took their bikes up onto the T.F. Much stage and revved their engines up in time to the music! It was reported that the bikies were so impressed with Humphrys’ style that they made him an “honorary” Hell’s Angel.

But it wasn’t these antics or the evolving attitude of the Catholic Church towards The Ballroom, which brought it to an end in the early months of 1973, but rather a level of complacency and weariness amongst the organisers, setting in. True, the Church was starting to have a few old reservations about the activities going on there, but



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equally, it was becoming very difficult to keep up the pace of organising something exciting, new and different. McSpedden had added another partner, a young bank teller, **Philip Jacobson** to the team, but lost **John Pinder** when he went to London. It was at this point that he began to think of winding The Much More Ballroom up. McSpedden had contemplated leasing the hall on a permanent basis as a day-workshop for bands to use as a rehearsal place but that too faded when the Church rejected this approach:

BANI McSPEDDEN: "I do recall me trying to hire the hall permanently, rather than once a month, or every three weeks and even though we'd had a sort of standard booking over that period of time, I do recall that I really hoped

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that if we could have the hall full-time, we could use it as a workshop space in between shows and a home for bands which had nowhere to rehearse. I thought we could do something terrific with that. I think, when the Church said no to that... and I think they also might have said to me, 'and by the way, we're worried about this and we're



A flamboyant Doug Parkinson with In Focus. (Courtesy of Jacques L'Affrique, aka David Porter)

worried about that..." I can't say that they actually rang and said to me, 'you can't have it. Now, that might be wrong and in fact, if I went back it's possible that we reached a point where they said, "...we really don't want you to go on any longer." If that was the case, it would have coincided with my own thoughts that we were now working pretty hard to keep up the standards. And I think too, that when you see a way of going on which was to take over the hall permanently and do something else with it as well, and that denies you. I think you realize well... what's the future. We weren't interested in doing the same thing over and over again... if I can put it this way, after I'm going for a while ...the original contributor... people get tired. These are hard things to do. You're reliant on a lot of people. Then suddenly, we were having a lot of complimentary scrutiny – we were having a lot of pieces written about us. So the standard of obligation that followed that you had to keep the standard fairly high, I found harder and harder to do. And I think some of the bands got more and more success generally. Their willingness to put a lot into The Ballroom... not every band worked hard presenting original material. We liked bands to play stuff at The Ballroom that was not part of their normal repertoire. So those things become harder over a period of time and I'm not sure that I didn't get a little bit tired – I had a day job too.

I think then too, that the church became worried about the size of the crowds at The Ballroom – not because of the danger from crowds, but I think they saw something become very popular – and a bit naughty – so it raised the old questions that they had been raised in their problems with The T.F. Much. Well, I looked at all of that and I remembered thinking that the time was going to come when we wouldn't be able to go on and once I'd reached that conclusion, I thought well... it's important that we finish on a high rather than somehow let it peter out. And that's what we did!" (B. McSpedden, op cit, 14 March, 2006.)

Two interesting artefacts from The Much More Ballroom remain. In 1970, Ross Wilson's Sons Of The Vegetal Mother recorded four tracks in the hall live, which were released as *The Garden Party* EP. This vinyl disc can only be considered as a private issue and was never put on sale to the general public, but probably given away at a sort of "multi media art happening" by artist, **Warren Knight**. For a short time, McSpedden and Pinder published a small comic called *The Much More Ballroom Funnies* and this was distributed to the kids on Much More nights. Both are very difficult items to find today.

8. OPUS and THE REEFER CABARET.

Located: Ormond Hall, Moubray Street, South Yarra, opposite Wesley College ovals, north side between Punt and St. Kilda Roads.

Operated: from March, 1961 as Opus – (jazz) then OPUS, SWINGER CENTRAL from 30 November, 1968, THE REEFER CABARET – to 31 December, 1975, and STONED AGAIN, 1976. Opus was owned and run by Jeffrey Leech and Derek Harris.

Also at the same venue: IMPULSE

Today: Still Ormond Hall, now re-furbished.

Ormond Hall, just off St Kilda Road in Prahran/South Yarra has been around since 1891 when it was built using money bequeathed by wealthy Grazier, **Francis Ormond**, and the building has not changed a great deal to this day. Not to be confused with that “other” Ormond Hall in Ormond which also hosted dances, this Ormond Hall stands



Still owned by the R.V.I.B, Ormond Hall saw it all – jazz to rock. It was a major venue for music hroughout the period until music moved to the pubs.

opposite Wesley College’s Prahran campus ovals in a stretch of Moubray Street which is still a little off the beaten track. It was probably an ideal venue in the early ‘seventies for loud music and doubtful activities because there weren’t too many neighbours around to complain about the noise and the behaviour of the patrons outside the building.

It is a purpose built concert and dance venue which for a time from March, 1961 hosted **Opus** as a jazz dance and was operated by **Barry Veith** but by 1964, it had been caught up in the new wave of rock/R & B and began to feature popular music. Opus then opened as a progressive rock venue featuring the best of local and interstate talent. Eventually, due to excessive demands for greater rental on Ormond Hall, Veith and Leech relocated Opus

to the St. Kilda Town Hall to continue the dance. For a period of time Ormond Hall lay empty at nights but at a later date, (1974-75) **The Reefer Cabaret** opened its doors at Ormond Hall to have another bite at the progressive rock cherry.

Given that title as a sort of nick-name for obvious reasons, it stuck with patrons. It also operated at one time later in its existence, under different owners as Swinger Central, Impulse and probably later as Stoned Again. All were separate incarnations of the trend which Opus had set up. The Reefer Cabaret unashamedly advertised itself as a drug establishment and was more like a series of concert events than a regular club. It carried on the “performance style” which had been so successful at The T. F. Much Ballroom. Eventually officialdom, which had long sought to close the dance down, won the day and the operator at the time, **Mike Robert** was eventually forced to concede defeat. On 31 December, 1975, The Reefer Cabaret folded and Ormond Hall finally closed its doors to the great era of rock music. Stoned Again was a short-lived attempt to keep the tradition alive but eventually, it too yielded to attempts to close it down forever.

With its polished timber floor and set up for seating if required, the hall was originally used at the turn of the century by the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind for much more refined concerts and religious services – a long way removed from Opus or The Reefer Cabaret events. Built of bluestone and trimmed around the windows and doors with lighter coloured cream bricks, it still reflects its semi-religious and castle-like origins in its architecture. At some later stage a portico and new entrance was built on the front facing Moubray Street. In 1922 the main hall was given a complete remodel and the current timber dance floor was installed. The interior of the hall was redecorated in the popular Art Deco style of the 'twenties. It was at this time that Ormond Hall began its long career as a dance hall. Today, with some spectacular restoration work on the interior, it is an even more beautiful

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venue than it was in the early 'seventies.

While it operated, Opus/The Reefer Cabaret gained a reputation as a drug hangout – whether it wanted to be known that way or not. Marijuana was the preferred substance of use by those who wanted to clearly show their defiance towards authority and their identification with the new youth culture. The fact that it was illegal gave it more credence amongst the 'heads' – it tended to polarise the two sectors in these changing times – the establishment and the new youth culture:

JIM KEAYS: "Being illegal gave dope even more appeal. There was a certain rebelliousness attached to it and this evolved into the users having a general suspicion of the establishment, forcing them into an underground situation and creating a sense of camaraderie." (Keays 1999, P 117)

The venue became a target on occasions for the ever-vigilant members of the Prahran Drug Squad and not without good reason, given the existing drug laws and low community tolerance levels towards drugs of any sort at the time. When it assumed the name The Reefer Cabaret it was a well-earned title by then and this clearly established the type of behaviour and activities which the police were hell-bent on destroying. The stairwells were often choked with Marijuana smoke from reeferers at those times when patrons weren't inside, dancing to the music, checking out the Opus Dancers or watching the TV in the "chill-out" area. Bass guitarist, **Bill Putt** who played there, recalls an early **Ariel** gig, probably at a time the venue operated as Stoned Again:

BILL PUTT: "Ariel was booked and that was the one that got raided by the cops. There was a stripper on before us and we were getting ready to go on because she was nearly finished, then all the doors flew open and they busted everybody... and we didn't get to play. I had just gone upstairs and I thought, 'I'll just brush my hair', brush...brush...brush... then the door broke open. "DON'T MOVE! THIS IS A BUST!" Just nearby on the table I had a packet of cigarettes with five joints in there. So as he (the detective) turned around I just grabbed the packet and threw it on the floor. So I got searched and then he said, "Get out of here!". There were drugs on the floor all over outside. My girlfriend disappeared. Nearly everyone was taken and searched to some degree." (Putt, op cit, 20 September, 2004)

Opus promoted the popular band, **The Mixtures** which gave them a dedicated following and they were almost the "house band" at the venue. They also did a lot of nearby private parties for the well-heeled Toorak crowd. Adelaide's **The Twilights** with **Glenn Shorrocks** out front played Opus often and over their early career, they had gained a reputation as being "Australia's Beatles". At the time of the 1967 release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Band*, they managed to get a copy flown with all due haste from London to Melbourne by air mail even before the landmark album officially landed in record shops here and on the following Saturday night, they played the whole album on stage, apparently 'note perfect' according to those who were there ... and that included the sitar parts.

Robert Bradshaw remembers a band called **The Going Thing** which somehow managed to get the Ford Motor Company to sponsor and bankroll them, including buying their instruments for them. Ford had just released its Capri range of GT sports coupes and convertibles. In return for their promotion, the band members were each



Dancers at Opus, Ormond Hall – from *Everybody's Magazine*, 20 July, 1966. (Photographer unknown)

given a brand new Capri in standard white with a blue stripe, (the Ford colours) to drive around in and the band's roadies received a large capacity, new Ford van to carry their equipment. Certainly all other roadies must have been extremely jealous as this wasn't the standard transport for any band at that time - they would probably be struggling to get hold of a rusty, but workable old Transit van or Kombi to get them from gig to gig, provided it didn't break down. **The Going Thing** may well be remembered by some who were at the early Opus as they had both a male and a female lead singer, (that is – one of each!). They were known to have recorded and released one single but even though they were **The Going Thing**, they didn't actually get too far!

Sydney band, **The Flying Circus** made a now famous appearance at Opus in 1969 to promote their successful single, *Hayride* which was achieving huge success in their home town, Sydney but not selling as well elsewhere. On this particular night, while making a "flying visit" to Melbourne to rouse up some interest in the single, lead singer **Doug Rowe** didn't make an instantly successful impression on his fellow artists who were there to share the bill on that night. It was all probably due to his prima donna antics which were irritating members of other bands waiting to go on stage. So to bring him down a peg or two, the Opus sound crew discretely disconnected the earth lead from his microphone just before the Flying Circus' set began. The result – when he made his grand entrance, he got a brand new Afro hairstyle – absolutely free and courtesy of the sound guys at Opus!

Peter Rechter of **Bendigo** band, **The Tol-Puddle Martyrs** had played many times with **The Mixtures** and **The La De Das** at Opus and had even been electrocuted himself at one stage but at the Winston Charles disco, not far away in SouthYarra and not at Opus. While at Opus, Rechter found these band more that helpful and he regards some of the gigs done by **Kevin Borich** and **The La De Das** as amongst the best he has seen



Some memorabilia from Opus – a matchbook and a members card. Yes, they even supplied you with matches to light up a joint. (Author's collection.)

anywhere.

He was also present one night when Billy Thorpe turned up his volume switch as he would often do. At places like Sunbury and The Melbourne Town Hall, the crowds loved it. But extreme volume wasn't always the answer to success:

PETER RECHTER: "We were at Ormond Hall one night when Thorpie cleared the place. With the volume. Everyone just went outside. It was just so loud. I think Lobby was playing bass at the time...I just remember so many people going outside. There was that balcony around the top. He cleared that. It was vibrating your trousers at the time.

Lobby has told me the story of when Thorpie was almost a big star in the 'States and Lobby flew across to a concert and just as he was playing his first song, Lobby saw him turn around and turn the amp up. When he hit the first chord, the front twenty rows ducked!!! That was it. After that, he went downhill from there." (Rechter, op cit, 5 October, 2005.)

Volume was again the problem one night at Opus but for a different reason: the lack of it. **The Groove**, popular for their R & B Hit, *Sooth Me*, which featured "Tweed" Harris on the keyboard played small spots there from time to time. On this one particular night:

ROD STONE: "A place in Brisbane supplied Tweed with a huge, 300 watt amplifier, big



The view of the stage from upstairs in the balcony.

speaker cabinets with six twelve inch speakers in each one. The first time we played with it was at Opus. On one stage, we were announced on to play ... in those days were only doing spots, not playing for the whole night. Dennis comes out the front and announces that the most powerful keyboard amplifier in Australia was here. So he made a big feature out of it and when it featured Tweed on the organ solo it went ...zzaaaap! It just stopped. The big fanfare.... Nothing! (Stone, op cit, 27 October, 2005).

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When Opus finally packed up for good after **Bill Joseph** had run the dance through its final phase at Ormond Hall, entrepreneur **Mike Robert** stepped in and filled the now vacant hall and so the venue continued to provide the best in youth music and entertainment for another year or more. Named officially The Reefer Cabaret, Robert, who had been overseas for some time, returned home with some great ideas and little money to see them to fruition. His first Reefer Cabaret was not held at Ormond Hall but at The Dallas Brooks Hall in East Melbourne.



The dance floor at Ormond Hall has been replaced at least once but could accommodate any number of dancers. Those who just wanted to listen to the music could get a great view from upstairs.

Why? It was the only venue Robert could get at that time to put his vision into practice:

MIKE ROBERT: "It just happened after about two or three months after being home I thought... fuck it – there's nothing going on. There wasn't a good venue in Melbourne.

I had seen a lot of good acts overseas and I had seen how they were presented, so I decided to have a go at that.

I had sixty dollars to my name and I borrowed about another three hundred dollars.

I was totally new to the business. I mean, I had never promoted anything in anyway before as far as music was concerned." (Robert in Juke, January 14, 1976, P.7).

Robert certainly underestimated the amount of money needed to run a dance such as this, yet by Robert's account, all artists who appeared at the first Reefer Cabaret were paid by taking the money paid at the front door and running backstage with it, to divide up between the acts

which included **Skyhooks** and **The Dingoes**. Fortunately for him, the crowds were pouring in and his gamble was really paying off even if The Dallas Brooks Hall didn't quite provide the right atmosphere.

When Robert noticed that the demise of Prahran's Opus was imminent, he saw that there was a possibility to create a second and more sustaining Reefer Cabaret and in the void left by **Ron Joseph's** withdrawal from Ormond Hall, Robert was able to grab about twelve vacant dates for the remainder of 1974 and the same number in 1975.

The new Reefer Cabaret was not a carbon-copy of the original. Firstly, the new venue gave the organiser the chance to branch out a little more and indulge the wishes of the patrons:

MIKE ROBERT: "The second Reefer Cararet was different again. I used a film which was called *Reefer Madness*; a really good dope film which at that stage had only been shown around Melbourne, once or twice.

The Reefer Cabaret, the name, obviously conveyed what it was all about – a freaks hang-out. I sort of specialised to a dope-oriented audience as compared to a booze-oriented gathering." (Robert in Juke, January 14, 1976, P.7).

Its popularity with the marijuana crowd was not difficult to gauge. Regular crowds were never less than 1,500, spread out on the main floor, up in the balcony, in the adjacent rooms or elsewhere in the building where the sweet stench of marijuana wafted through the night air.

Eventually, The Reefer Cabaret succumbed to the move into the suburban pubs as the alcohol-fueled gigs took the crowds away from the alcohol-free venues and in late December, 1975, Robert planned two final, spectacular concerts which were recorded at Ormond Hall and released as the LP, *A-Reefer-Derci*. There were contributions by **The Renee Geyer Band**, **Ariel**, **Split Enz**, **Ayers Rock**, **The Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band** and of course, **Skyhooks**:

MIKE ROBERT: "The first concert was very good, there were nearly 1,900 people there but the last one wasn't as good. I was sort of expecting a full house, but there were probably only 1,600 or 1,700 people present. It was still a reasonable attendance considering that it was New Year's Eve and most people would have been at parties, etc.

I had a lot of added expenses for those two shows. Considering that they were the last, I wanted to make them very special. And having an act like Skyhooks on the bill is obviously quite expensive." (Robert in Juke, January 14, 1976, P.7).

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9. ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY AND OUT IN THE SUBURBS.

The move to suburban pub rock.

"The pub scene really created the different type of band. I had a saying for it; I used to call it the "punch-fuck" period... if they didn't pull a chick, there was bound to be a fight. There wasn't a lot of room for thinking but prior to that, there was no alcohol and a lot of drug-inducement. Volume came in and Billy was responsible for that – so no one could talk while he was playing! (Neale Johns, op cit, 19 October, 2004).

The city venues were not the only discos in Melbourne in the period up to about 1977, when "disco fever" eventually became associated with **John Travolta**, **The Bee Gees** and *Saturday Night Fever*. By this period, the great city discotheques which hosted an amazing number of bands and singers over a period of about eight years had long since lost popularity and had already closed, giving way to the larger pubs in the suburbs. However, during their time, they were not the only discos which existed in greater Melbourne. Out in the suburbs, similar scenes were being repeated for teenagers who did not venture into the Melbourne CBD for the nightly entertainment.

Suburban Melbourne...

Some of these discos and dances opened in larger halls and pubs in western, northern, eastern, south-eastern Melbourne and Mornington Peninsula. Out in the bush, some were still held, as dances had always been, in local halls in country areas or closer in to Melbourne, but in more sophisticated surroundings in the major regional cities. **Memorandum**, the first band in which **Harry Tarasinski** played, travelled around the northern suburbs to some unusual gigs and some in the usual church halls:



Claxton, at the Sacred Heart Hall in Johnson Street, Oakleigh was just one of the enormous number of mod dances – large and small which operated in the suburbs from 1966 onwards. Doing the Frug or the Mashed Potato was the go. (Everybody's Magazine, 20 July, 1966, photographer unknown.)

HARRY TARASINSKI: "Another gig I can recall very well wasn't at any of the city discos. It was in a church hall in Whittlesea, which was very much considered to be 'out in the sticks' in those days. I was still with Memorandum then but Peter Strangis had left after he had a very heated argument with Steve Moloney, the drummer. They later patched things up and Pete rejoined but we were short of a bass player for this 'country' gig so I contacted a good mate of mine, Spiros Fillipos, who was the bass player in a band called 'Heaven For Aching Hearts And Tired Souls' (the band was as big as its name, with a three-piece horn section, a la Ram Jam Big Band) and he agreed to fill in.

Steve's parents had a couple of baby-wear shops and were pretty well off and his father drove a Ford Fairlane. So Steve borrowed it because he was the only one in the band who was old enough to have a licence, and his dad's car was the only one that was big enough to carry all the gear. Even then, we had to mount a pack rack on the roof, much to his father's angst, to carry the drum kit because the boot and the back

seat were full of amps, guitars and PA equipment. With the vehicle thus loaded and sagging under the load, the three of us climbed onto the front bench seat and set off for Whittlesea.

The gig went very well and the kids loved us, screaming for three encores before they'd let us finish, and Spiros did an outstanding job on bass so all was well..." (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004)

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Some of the larger hotels, such as The Whitehorse Inn, The Village Green and The Southern Aurora transformed over time into major pub venues when liquor laws began to be revised. However, many earlier fans would still say that the crowded and more intimate city venues, even without legal alcohol, had all the atmosphere but they quickly became redundant when alcohol hit the scene. Nevertheless the change was inevitable and the impact of new and liberalised alcohol laws changed the whole playing field:

BILL PUTT: "...it's like the difference between an eight-year olds' birthday party and a 21st or a Bucks' Night. That's what it was like when booze came in. It was like completely different ends of the scale. Think beer – the introduction of alcohol put paid to the discos. Most folk wouldn't remember the discos of the 'sixties – there was no booze. Once the booze came in it became open slather and you get a crowd drinking alcohol and then throw in loud music and you've got the recipe for violence." (Putt, op cit, 20 September, 2004)



Brian De Courcy at the microphone about to introduce Merv Benton to the crowd of delirious 'teenage girls at Mentone Mod, 1966. (Everybody's Magazine, 20 July, 1966, photographer unknown.)

Bringing back memories...

A list of some of the dances, discotheques, clubs and pubs (some licensed, some dry) operating at various stages throughout the mid-'sixties to mid-'seventies might look like this:

City and Inner suburbs:

431 431 St.Kilda Road, South Yarra

10th AVENUE – 1st Floor, 231 Bourke Street, Melbourne

ALCATRAZ – Cnr Burwood Road & John Street, Hawthorn

CAFÉ ON STAGE – 112 Bourke Street, Melbourne

CHEVRON HOTEL/SPEAKEASY – 519 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne

CHICAGO – 524 -8 Swanston Street

GERRY HUMPHRYS BIZAAR – 471 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

HARD ROCK – Spring Street, Melbourne

IMPULSE – Ormond Hall, Moubay Street, Sth Yarra

LAZARS – 546 Little Bourke Street

LE CHATEAU – 109 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

LEGGETT'S FABULOUS PALADIUM – Greville Street, Prahran

LOVE IN – Cnr. Drummond and Faraday Streets, Carlton

OPUS 71 – St. Kilda Town Hall

OUTPOST INN COFFEE LOUNGE – 52 Collins Street, Melbourne

PARKINSON'S SUNDAY CIRCUS – 184 Russell Street, Melbourne

PENNY FARTHING – 243 Swanston Street, Melbourne

POWERHOUSE – Lakeside Drive, Albert Park

PRICKLY BUSH – Dan O'Connell Hotel, Canning Street, Carlton

SHOW GO DISCO – 18 Upper Esplanade St. Kilda

STANLEY'S STOMP STATION – opposite Prahran Station
ST. GEORGE'S DISCO - Cnr Pelham and Drummond Streets, Carlton
ST MARY'S HALL – Cnr Westbury Street and Dandenong Road, St Kilda
THE BOWL/PUNCHBOWL/THE TRIP/LUCIFER'S/PEANUTS - Degraeves Street, Melbourne
THE MAZE – 378 Flinders Street, Melbourne

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THE MELBOURNE JAILHOUSE - Railway Ballroom, Flinders Street, Melbourne
THE STATION HOTEL - Greville Street, Prahran
TRENDSETTERS – 208 Dandenong Road Windsor

Western and Northern suburbs:

ALCATRAZ/SHAZAM – Mariana Hall, Sunshine
ANTON'S – Plaza Hall, Newport
BIG JULIE'S - Cnr High Street and Bastings Road, Northcote
BUS STOP – Centenary Hall, Werribee
BENJAMIN'S/ ROUNDHOUSE/SOUND MACHINE – 7 Russell Street, Essendon
BERG – Heidelberg Town Hall
COPACABANA – 1 Phoenix Street, Brunswick
HIGHWAY 31 – Hume Highway, Fawkner
MONDAY MOURNING COFFEE SHOP – 403 Sydney Road, Coburg
PRINCE ALFRED'S / MERSEY CITY / MINDBENDER / STOREYVILLE / BISCIFAC – Preston Town Hall
POPEYE'S – Sunshine Town Hall
PRESTON CIRCLE/CIRCLE BALLROOM – 499 High Street, Preston
SHIRAZ - Trinity Hall, Sydney Road, Coburg
SWINGER/SCENE 1/NEW SWINGER/OPUS COBURG – Coburg Town Hall
TARMAC HOTEL – Cnr Leaks and Fitzgerald Roads, Laverton
THE ATTIC – 35 Edwards Street, Reservoir
WESTSIDE 14/WILDSIDE – S t. Augustine's Hall, Sommerville Road, Yarraville

Eastern suburbs:

BLACK AND BLUE/BASTILLE/JAM PATCH – RSL, Balwyn Road, Balwyn
BOND STREET/GEORGIA – Balwyn Road, North Balwyn
DE FACTO – Williams Road, Blackburn
EASY RIDER DISCO – Whitehorse Hotel, Whitehorse Road, Nunawading
GLU POT – Cnr Whitehorse Road and Dorking Roads, Box Hill
ICELAND – Maroondah Highway, Ringwood
IMPULSE/PENDULUM/CAMBRIDGE/MAX'S PLACE – Cnr Punt and Tookak Roads, Toorak
LOSER'S LOUNGE – McLeay Park, Belmore Road, Balwyn
RENDEZVOUS – Mitcham Shopping Centre
RICCI-TIKI – Memorial Hall, Kilsyth
TOM FOOLERYO /OPUS EAST/SIX WAYS MOD CENTRE – St John's Hall, Camberwell Junction
PEPPERS/SIRIUS/TEMPEST/HEADQUARTERS/SOUND SPECTACULAR – Box Hill Town Hall, Whitehorse Road, Box Hill
PICADILLY/RINGWOOD ROCK/REVOLUTION – Ringwood Town Hall
PICOLLO – 431 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn
PINICCHIO'S – Carters Avenue, Toorak
Q-CLUB/ ODD MOD/PROM – Kew Civic Centre, Kew
THE FAT BLACK PUSSY CAT – off Toorak Road, Toorak Village
THE SCENE/BASTILLE/LORD JOHNS/THE CIRCLE BALLROOM - Maling Road, Canterbury.
THE UNDERGROUND – Camberwell Junction
WINSTON CHARLES - Toorak Road, South Yarra
ZIEGFELD – Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn

South-eastern suburbs:

54321 – St. Mary's Hall, Dandenong
ALFRED'S INVENTION – Ewar Street, Moorabbin

ASTOR THEATRE – Cnr Chapel Street and Dandenong Road, Windsor
ATICO – Cnr Neerim and Grange Roads, Glenhuntly
BABU'S – Clayton Road, Clayton
BLAISES – Sacred Heart Hall, Warrigal Road, Oakleigh
CARNABY – Chadstone

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CARNABY STREET – Noble Park Public Hall, Noble Park
FIREBALL/COLOURED CAVE/MARCUS FANDANGUS/ THE HAPPENING – Brighton Town Hall
FIFTH AVENUE - Glenhuntly
FRENZY – Clayton Hall, Clayton Road, Clayton
GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH – Beaumaris Civic Centre, Beaumaris
LYNDALE – Menzies Avenue, North Dandenong
MATTHEW FLINDERS – Warrigal Road, Chadstone
PAPER SNAKE – 1385 Malvern Road, Malvern
PARADISE – Ormond RSL, North Road, Ormond
PENNY LANE/HOT POT/ FREEDOM / IMPACT/SMOKEY HOLLOW/TEENBEAT – Dandenong Town Hall
POULSTATE – Poulson Road, Carrum
SATISFACTION – near Sandringham Station, Sandringham
SOUTHERN AURORA HOTEL – Princes Highway, Dandenong
SOUTHSIDE 6 HOTEL – South Road, Moorabbin
SURFRIDER/ROCKVILLE ROCK – 202 Beach Road, Black Rock
SHELTER/DOVETON BARREL – Prince Mark Hotel, Princes Highway, Dandenong
STONEHENGE – Reserve Road, Beaumaris.
TIME CAPSULE - Beaumaris

THE VILLAGE GREEN HOTEL – Cnr Ferntree Gully and Springvale Roads, Glen Waverley
THE WALTZING MATILDA – Cnr Springvale and Heatherton Roads
VIBRATION – Abbeygate Street, Oakleigh

Mornington Peninsula:

EVOLUTION – Memorial Hall, Nepean Highway, Rosebud
KING NEPTUNE – Pier Hotel, Kananook Bvd., Frankston
MENTONE MOD – Mentone City Hall
MUSHROOM – Mechanics Hall, Cnr Bay Street South and Plowman Place, Frankston
NERGULA ON SPON – Mornington Civic Centre, Mornington
TOM KATZ – Sorrento

There were *many, many* more operating at one time or another over the period covered in this book and probably, some which would bring back memories to those who went there, are not named on this list. Many discos and dances existed for many years, steadily building up their clienteles. Some dances functioned intermittently and some appeared on the scene with fanfare only to quickly disappear from sight. Others changed their names when it was necessary to re-invent themselves perhaps due to receiving some adverse publicity or by simply changing owners/operators. A number were run as fully professional business operations while others were just the products of an active and interested non-profit community group. No doubt, many will remember fondly some of these dances and for others, they will only be a fleeting memory.



Lock up your daughters, the Sharpies are here...

As a seasoned musician, Mike Rudd was astute and savvy enough to realise by the mid- 'seventies, when alcohol was finally being served in the venues, that the older progressive, guitar bands had to adapt or die. Some of his compatriots from the discos however, did not make any real attempt to change

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their styles of music or stage presentations, and so suffered the obvious sharp decline into oblivion as the mid-seventies arrived.

The move to the pubs in Melbourne had the same devastating affect on rock bands and discos as the comet which struck the earth some seventy thousand years ago had on the Age of Dinosaurs – the fate for both was the same – virtual oblivion. Rudd was one who survived all this by transforming his band **Spectrum** into the more pub-friendly **Ariel** and therefore gained the transition from discotheque to pub and an leap into the future. But trends elsewhere were also changing. The long-haired and bearded male music fan was no longer typical of the Melbourne scene any more. Those that were left soon came face to face with the new breed of music fans – the re-emerging sharpies:



MIKE RUDD: "I don't know whether you remember sharpies everybody, but they were just the nemesis of anybody with hair, basically. And fortunately, our first gig ..., we were adopted by the largest of the sharpies, he said "you guys are really great" – after we'd grovelled on the ground: "don't hit us!" And we were safe after that and we were able to play our stuff, which wasn't very much. And that was the thing you see – I used to come in with a basic sorta idea and then the band used to have to expand on this idea wildly because we had nothing else, we had no

repertoire at all. So this gig was reasonably regular and it allowed us to expand. And the good thing was that every now and again a real band would come, like a pop band. The Valentines I remember coming in. And they were deeply impressed with our commitment and our earnestness, and they used to convey our reputation around to their managers, and their managers used to know people in other places. So we'd get gigs by this means. And our reputation spread narrowly" (Rudd, op cit, www.milesago.com, 2001)

To **The Masters Apprentices** however, the early sharpies were quite a bit more threatening. **Jim Keays** recalls one particular night at The Malvern Town Hall when about fifteen or twenty sharpies burst into the band room and held a knife to **Doug Ford's** neck accusing him of bashing one of their girls. Peace was restored (somewhat tenuously) when police arrived to sort out the problems. On a second occasion, the sharpies gang "visited" The 'Masters at their flat in St Kilda:

JIM KEAYS: "We were having a bit of a party but heard them outside. ... we spotted them coming down the drive with weapons. We locked ourselves inside and waited. Petrified. Next thing a rock came through the large window followed by – horror of all horrors – an axe blade through the doors. That was enough for me. I made it to the bathroom and joined the queue jumping out of the window to safety. .. I ran with my eyes closed until I reached the beach a kilometre away. The girl who followed me had her leg slashed by a



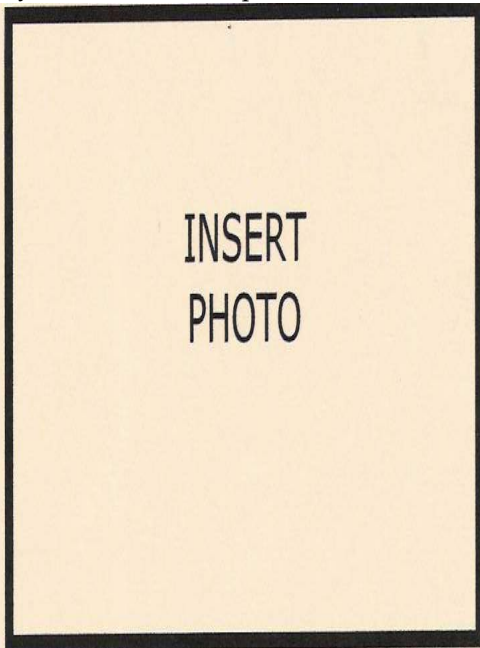
Sensational in Satin! The central Victorian band The Tol-puddle Martyrs were essentially mods in 1967 and as such were prime targets for sharpies. (Courtesy of Peter Rechter, photographer unknown.)

bottle as she tried to scale the fence... When we regrouped at the flat an hour or so later the sharpies were well and truly gone but the place had been completely trashed." (Keays, 1999, P 131)

Not to be easily deterred, **Barry "Lil Goose" Harvey**, playing with Chain has memories of meeting a group of sharpies in Melbourne during the late 'sixties when he and the band had only just arrived in town. **Chain** played at **Ivan Dayman's** The Bowl in Degraves Street, downstairs in an atmosphere similar to the original Cavern Club,

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spiritual home of **The Beatles** in Liverpool. The Bowl was one of those venues which held lunchtime discos in the city from 12 noon to 2pm:



xxxxxxx

BARRY HARVEY: "...in the 1960's when Big Goose and I first went to Melbourne, our first gig was at the BOWL in Degraves St. I think, but it went off Flinders Street, ...The Bowl was sort of opposite to Flinders Street Station area. I was only talking to Doug Ford the other night and we were talking about all the axe attacks on the Masters Apprentices and general heavy shit, man. The Masters Apprentices were a good target for the sharpies as they were very pop looking with fancy clothes and really long hair.

I think what saved us many times was the fact that we only wore jeans and T shirts. When we went into the gig, we got surrounded by what was known as the Sharpie Generation, we hadn't come across anything like this before, they were all dressed in the same clothes and had the old bowl top hair-cuts, like Moe from the Three Stooges. They blocked us at the bar when we were trying to get the gear to the stage, surrounded us and called us "long haired geoses" and "poofsters". They obviously wanted to beat the shit out of us, but we just barged our way through with the gear, set it up and started playing. Once we started playing they didn't bother us because I think they actually dug the band." (Harvey, email to Rock 'n Roll Scars Group, 4 November, 2004).

Peter Rechter and **Kevin Clancy** of the Bendigo-based band, **The Tol-Puddle Martyrs** gained a lot of work in Melbourne as a result of their creditable fourth placing in the national final of The Battle Of The

Sounds in 1986. They encountered the sharpies on many occasions and in many venues but particularly at Swinger, Coburg. Dressed in uniform maroon T-shirt, baggy jeans and sandals, the Sharpies quickly took exception to the long-haired pop bands whose music they labelled as "Bubblegum" and preferred to do their goose-stepping line dance to their own music. **The Tol-puddle Martyrs** at this time like **The Masters Apprentices** dressed in Edwardian, velvet-frocked coats at dances and they resorted to drawing straws at the conclusion of their gigs to see who would go outside to bring the van around to load out their gear.

In an effort to eliminate any potential trouble which might arise at their home dances in Bendigo, they eventually employed their own bouncers and one tough in particular they engaged went by the name of 'Blockhead' which may be a clue to his appearance. He was, however, very efficient in the job he did with the Sharpies who were often willing to test him out:

KEVIN CLANCY: "I went out to see the crowd numbers one night while another band was playing and I saw this sharpie come up the staircase and he had his shirt off ... he just had his jeans on. 'Blockhead' said, 'You're not getting in dressed like that, pal!!!!' You could see what was going to happen... and I thought, 'oh, my GOD!' There were about twenty sharpies waiting down the bottom of the staircase, waiting for the fight. 'Blockhead' was standing with his arms folded... 'You're not getting in like that!' 'Who's going to stop me?' I could see what this guy was going to do and he swung to the side and hit 'Blockhead' on the nose as hard as he could. It must have been shattering for 'Blockhead's ego because he didn't move!!! ... and he just smiled! (laughs) You could see the look on the sharpie... 'Oh God, what have I done?' 'Blockhead' just grabbed him and put him in a headlock, under his left arm and walked him down the stairs. Each step he took he went ...Crrraaash, into his head and when he got down to the last step, he just threw him into the street and went... 'NEXT!' (Clancy, author's interview, 5 October, 2005).

These early sharpies often roamed the streets looking for a fight and then provoked trouble with anyone who didn't look like they did. They found it hard to follow any particular band at that time until **Lobby Loyde's Coloured Balls** filled that void later, so their presence at various venues around town was not motivated by the music presented by the mainly Mod-style bands of the era. Even seasoned band members like **Mick Hamilton of The Moods** presented a legitimate target:

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MICK HAMILTON: "One night outside the Thumpin' Tum, when The Moods turned up there... in fact, I don't know whether we were working that night or just there... We got out of our cars in Little Latrobe Street to be surrounded by sharpies. And that was bloody scary! We were only about 100 metres from the club... too far away to expect any help from their security guys or anything... They started to beat up on us ... I got a couple of whacks in the head, then I got away and ran down to The 'Tum. I ran like I've never run before and I was hammering on the door. The door was always closed... to give this illusion of exclusivity,,, I don't know whether it was or not... . They knew in there because we were screaming, "We need help! We need help!" So these guys came streaming out of The 'Tum and the sharpies all took off. But our bass player at the time, (Peter Noss) got pretty hammered. He was okay." (Hamilton, op cit, 2 December, 2005)

In sharpie territory – the northern suburbs – Hamilton again found himself in a difficult situation:

MICK HAMILTON: "I remember a venue out of town, in Preston at the end of the tram line... I think the dance was called Terminus and it was in a hall. We were in there one night and it was with The Moods and the place was full of trouble-makers. I don't remember if they were sharpies, but they probably were. We were on stage backing a duo called The Field Twins – two very good looking girls – and all Hell erupted.

We tried to play on for a while but then we said, "Bugger this!" So we took a break which was the worst thing we could have done because they just got angrier. Then we went back out and started playing again, but the girls wouldn't go out again. So the band went out but that's not what the crowd wanted – they wanted the girls back out again. So while all this is going on, somebody had been thrown out and he came back with a *shotgun*! He got back in because the bouncers were not going to stop him. We spotted this so we were *off*! We were in the backstage area blocking the stage and hoping like Hell.....!

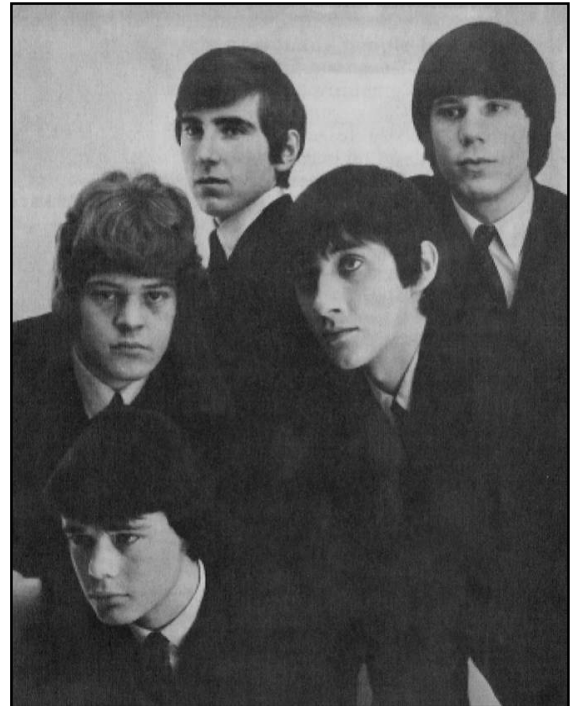
Well, he didn't fire the gun but someone that night, got hold of some poor bugger and threw him over the fence of the tennis court – you know how high a tennis court fence is! He broke an arm.

... there weren't really any sharpie bands. There weren't enough sharpie bands to keep them happy. They had to put guys like us, long-haired poofers in there to play to them." (Hamilton, op cit, 2 December, 2005)

The mods vs sharpies debate was the subject of letters to *Go-Set*. The responses to a provocative letter on the subject by "Pointed-Toe Hater" were typical of the divide that existed between mods and sharpies:

GO-SET – Liz Davidson: "Reading the letter by "Pointed Toe hater", I have come to the conclusion that he needs his head read. If he thinks "Sharpie Scum" are good looking with their crew cuts, sandals and pants ten feet wide, he must be truly and utterly blind, in both eyes. May I also point out that the "mods" or the long-haired kids to whom he refers dress very smartly in pin-stripe suits, chisel-toed shoes and a lot of them have had their hair-cut into the popular stylish hair-cut (the Who cut). Others dress as they want – but they all don't wear exactly the same clothes as these "sharpie idiots" do." (*Go-Set* Wednesday, 17 August, 1966.) or:

GO-SET - Mod, Victoria: "Mods today are not members of a set group – they are individual guys who stick to what they believe in until some great even-cuttied, muckle-headed, flag-panted creep knocks him down and gives



The Moods from 1966 – they drew some unwanted attention from a group of sharpies outside The Thumpin' Tum. From left, Ian Ferguson, John Livi, Kevin Fraser, Carl Savona and (front) Mick Hamilton. (Courtesy of Mick Hamilton.)

him a sharp kick in the guts to remind him he needs a hair cut or his trousers are too tight..." (*Go-Set*, Wednesday, 17 August, 1966.)

These kids were the incarnation of the late 'sixties sharpies and they now re-emerged a couple of years down the track to claim **Lobby Loyde and the Coloured Balls** as their pub rock heroes. In the first instance however, they were in some way reflecting the changes in society which were gradually taking place as the "old guard" - the 'sixties disco favourites like **The Masters Apprentices** with their long, flowing manes, boots and Regency-style

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frilly shirts were gradually becoming "pop dinosaurs" - redundant and outmoded and only those bands and musicians who could adapt to the new tougher, ballsier pub style of rock presentation, would survive. **The Masters**

Apprentices folded in 1971 and didn't make the transition to the pubs whereas Thorpie did, joining a new range of heroes such as "Doc" Neeson's **The Angels**, **Cold Chisel** with **Jimmy Barnes**, **Ian Moss** and **Don Walker**, "Angry" **Anderson's Rose Tattoo** and of course, Lobby's **Coloured Balls**.

Poster artist and *Go-Set* Art Director **Ian McCausland** made a name for himself for his exceptional artwork on such album covers as **Chain's**, *Toward*



Stonehenge began at The Community Hall, Reserve Road, Beaumaris in 1964.

The Blues, **Carson's Blown** and **Company Caine's Product of A Broken Reality**. But he had always been a musician himself. Before joining with singer **Gulliver Smith** in **Little Gulliver and the Children**, he had played rhythm guitar with **The Strangers** for a short period of time. He makes the distinction between the two separate incarnations of the sharpies - those which formed during the 'sixties and those which came later. He is in no doubt which was the more violent bunch:

IAN McCAUSLAND: "Oh the sharpies... My experience with sharpies was as The Coloured Balls followers. They were sharpies mark II. There was a whole group before them which was much more violent. The Strangers used to play down at St Moritz, the ice skating rink in St Kilda. The venue used to be called Surf City. That was when The Strangers were doing their Beach Boys thing. The Strangers would be doing their perfect Beach Boys songs to a room full of brawling sharpies. Those guys just lived for fighting and that was all that they were there for. They had the guise of looking respectable - short cut hair and cardigans with shirts under them... hand-made Italian shoes, but they were just thoroughly violent. I first saw a really bad fight amongst two groups of sharpies and even the bouncers at the place would lock the doors and leave them inside until they sorted it out. The bouncers would be too scared to go inside. The police? Well.. they were just too ineffective in those days. They were still riding around the lanes on their push bikes in pairs." (McCausland, op cit 4 November, 2005)

Back in the swingin' 'sixties though, for the well-to-do Mod-about town, there was a series of annual social events known as The Mod Ball - strictly a sharpie-free zone. Initially they were held from about 1965 onwards and were by all accounts civilised and fairly traditional affairs which were held initially in the Supper Room at the Exhibition Buildings, Carlton. Young Mods or would-be trendies could wine and dine to the music provided by the best bands - those which were also their favourites at the discos. **Jeffrey Simmonds** was around 16 years old when he and his mate attended their first Mod Ball and he remembers **The Flies**, originally fronted by **Ronnie Burns** playing there with **The Twilights** who had not long arrived from Adelaide. They rounded out the night's entertainment. This was their early tartan pants period as Simmonds recalls:

JEFFREY SIMMONDS: "My best mate invited the president of the Herman's Hermits Fan Club, and her best friend was my date for the night. This is probably 1966 or it could be a year earlier as the girls wore Moddish pants suits and vests, a la Sonny and Cher. We made do with what we assumed was Mod gear - my friend had bought an expensive and striking two-tone yellow and brown shirt from Gaylords in Melbourne and I remember having bought an apricot-coloured shirt with white collar and cuffs from somewhere less fashionable. You basically

danced with your partner while the bands played then went back to your table, had a drink, chatted and some kind of meal/supper was served – very conventional, but it was the mid '60s and it was Melbourne!" (Simmonds, email correspondence, 7 July, 2005).

By 1967, *Go-Set Magazine* had taken the reins of this annual function and they became The *Go-Set Ball* and were heavily advertised and promoted in the magazine. Simmonds also remembers that that year, the music was provided by The Virgil Brothers resplendent in their powder-blue shirts.

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Devil Boys...

Many of the bands associated with the city discos played in the suburbs as well, along with a myriad of bands made up of local hopefuls who were strictly amateur and did not necessarily play outside their own local area.



Local kids, local band. The Chimney Sweeps typified the bands of would-be rock and pop stars who rehearsed in garages and played at local halls and dances. (Courtesy of John Reid)

These bands never really made the big time of the city circuits and stayed entirely in the suburbs, if they managed to get any gigs at all. **The Chimney Sweeps** who were local lads from the Mount Waverley area were one such suburban band and could be representative of all those local kids who desperately wanted to be rock stars. Their story was repeated in almost every school and suburb in Melbourne and in Victorian country towns. They serve as a contrast to those bands which had a strong following and maybe a recording contract, became more professional and had plenty of gigs to fill their itineraries.

Throughout 1966 and 1967 this five-piece try-hard, beat band comprising, **Carl Hartung**, **Howard Ellingham** (vocals/guitar), **Barend DuPreez** (bass), **John Reid** (lead guitar) and **Allan Voss** (drums), played only local halls and parties for rock-hungry Waverley kids. The 'Sweeps had a chance to compete at Hoadley's Battle Of The Sounds at Festival Hall in 1967 but

found that they didn't have the capacity to contend with the likes of **The Groop**, (the eventual 1967 winners) with its near professional set-up. (McIntyre & Marks, 2004).

They present a perfect image of the hundreds of hopeful local bands made up of starry-eyed school kids out there who dreamed of becoming famous. Then, when the experience of playing at being hit-makers was over, most went on with their lives, their schooling, their careers, and their relationships and blended into their communities as time went by. Most didn't get a chance to record because they weren't that good – let's face facts. But to their own ears while jamming around in someone's garage they sounded like world-beaters. However, the world didn't exactly beat a path to their doors.

The Chimney Sweeps did have potential and although they didn't make it past 1967, they did do around about fifteen local Mt. Waverley/Glen Waverley/Syndal gigs as well as having the foresight to set up a reel-to-reel tape to actually record some of their songs. These tapes have recently been located, dusted off and put onto CD by **Glenn Terry** of *Vicious Sloth Collectables* in Malvern. They show a very raw and energetic kids' band with a few original songs to their credit, interwoven with a number of covers – the staple of all bands in the beat era. Their own material, *Devil Girl*, *Lies, Lies* and *Not Much Time* clearly show the influences – **The 'Stones**, **The Yardbirds**, **The Kinks** and **The Pretty Things**, which sent many kids to the local secondhand shop to pick up a cheap guitar. While the 'Sweeps didn't last, DuPreez and Allingham did go on a little further – (not quite to stardom) – to create **It Flew Away**, a middle-level band which played at The T.F. Much Ballroom among other venues.

Rock on the sand...

Further around Port Phillip Bay on the sunny Mornington Peninsula, the seaside resorts of Rosebud, Rye, Blairgowrie, Portsea and Sorrento came alive when the long-awaited summer holidays arrived – clear, safe beaches for the family with late-night foreshore carnivals and sideshows on those balmy evenings over the traditional, Christmas-New Year holiday break. Camping on the Peninsula foreshores or in the caravan parks was a must and a tradition: many families braved the often unpredictable weather year after year to set up their tents at the same camping spot that they held seemingly forever. This was when family Christmas/New Year Holidays were always taken to co-incide with the major school holiday break. Melbourne newspapers loved to feature stories of these

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intrepid holidaymakers being flooded out over the Christmas-New Year period if the often unseasonal weather arrived.

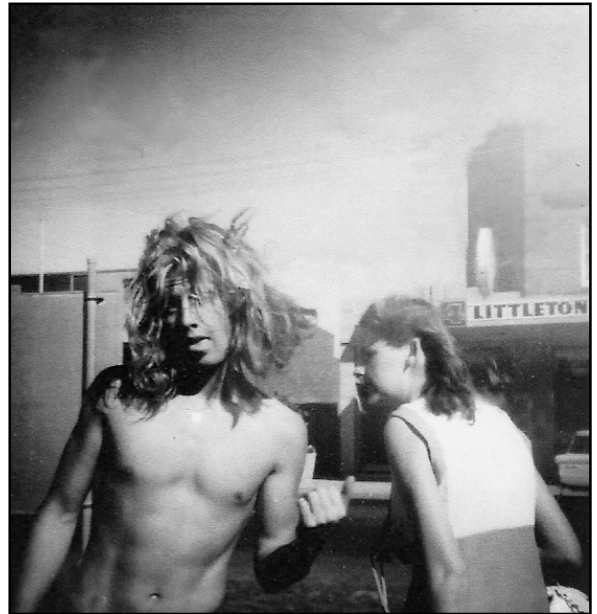
Radio stations 3AK and 3XY set up their series of Beach Broadcasts, moving on a daily basis to a different beach location up and down the Peninsula with the regular city disco bands performing on the sand-stage – **Zoot, The Mixtures, The Groove, Max Merritt and the Meteors, Lobby Lloyd, The Loved Ones** and **The Levi Smith's Clefs** – as the travelling beach shows toured around the seaside spots.

Tom Katz was the feature holiday dance on the Mornington Peninsula and attracted huge numbers of teenagers when it operated each summer break, between 1963 and 1969. Run by **Jeffrey Leech**, (who also ran The Swinger at Coburg, 431 St Kilda Road and Opus, Ormond Hall,) it operated at the Sorrento RSL building, right in the middle of the packed Ocean Beach Road. In many ways, Tom Katz had a “captive audience” on the Peninsula with kids who enjoyed the beach by day, and stayed with their families in the holiday houses, caravan parks and foreshore reserves. They had little to do at night except maybe attend the Rosebud Foreshore carnival. Some very astute planning and improvisation by Leech and his team ensured that Tom Katz was packed every night of the week up to the Australia Day weekend at the end of January:

JEFFREY LEECH: “ ... the magnet on the (Mornington) Peninsula is Sorrento. The Sorrento RSL was right in the middle of the main street and we negotiated with them on a five-year lease over the holiday seasons. We had an open go with the place and we fitted it out, each year, a week before. We put the sound in, lights, fishnetting on the ceiling, coffee shop, change rooms, the staging... we did the whole lot. We had a DJ on... Malcolm T. Elliot... great bloke but a ratbag... he went up to Sydney. In those days we had turntables and reel-to-reel. It was very rough gear but we had great PA systems.” (Leech, author’s interview, 2 December, 2005).

Some ingenious advertising was thought up and at one point, the team bought an unusual vehicle to do their advertising with:

JEFFREY LEECH: “ ... we bought an ex-army Jeep... painted it pink. It was in army colours and we painted it in Hawaiian colours... striped canopy. It had four speakers on it and it would go out all day. Ross Campbell, who was with 3AW at the time, made all the tapes. We’d go into Bill Armstrong’s studio and we’d make up reel-to-reel tapes running on batteries. And we would say, “Tonight at Tom Katz... The Mixtures, The Vibrants... come and see us tonight! Fashion Parade... win \$100 cash.” We had the Go-Go girls on board going up and down the Nepean Highway.



It was ... sooooo hot on the sand at Dromana in the 'sixties. Darryl Cotton is caught off guard after appearing on stage with Zoot. (Courtesy of Margaret Storey.)



Dromana – featuring “Beeb” Birtles with Zoot (Courtesy of Margaret Storey.)

We couldn't get away with it today because we'd go through the caravan parks, the foreshore camping, everywhere. We got it really firing – everyone would go to Sorrento." (Leech, op cit, 2 December, 2005)

Robert Bradshaw who had come over from Adelaide with **The Levi Smith's Clefs** looked after their equipment, the lighting and "anything else" they needed. He recalls that during the day, he was one of the team which drove the Jeep with its candy-striped top, up and down the Nepean

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Highway between Dromana and Sorrento, picking up young hitchhikers, mostly bikini-clad females (with totally honourable intentions, of course!) and he would give them a lift to Sorrento and complimentary Tom Katz passes for use during the week.

Boxing Day, 1969 was a particularly interesting time. Tom Katz had **The Levi Smith's Clefs** as the house band

that night with **Zoot, The Loved Ones, The Mixtures** and **Max Merritt and The Meteors** also on deck. The Sorrento Cinema also showed Woodstock – the movie, but the owner cut it short by one reel so he could open the candy bar at intermission. By all reports, he was given a hard time when recognised in the main street next day!

Tom Katz was a particularly safe venue for 'teenagers as security was tight but never overzealous and it was nothing like that experienced at The Catcher, for example. Here too, Leech's team developed an ingenious idea of transporting the kids in safety, by hiring three buses to start at Dromana early in each evening:

JEFFREY LEECH: "...we hired three buses every night from Peninsula Bus Lines which were based in Sorrento and we would take the buses to Safety Beach. The kids would get on the bus free of charge and they'd buy their Tom Katz ticket which was 5/-. They wouldn't have to get in the queue when they got there, they'd go straight in. So we'd put

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COVES EASTER BAND BOOKINGS 1968.

<p>GOOD FRIDAY. <u>12th. April.</u></p> <p>EASTER SATURDAY. <u>13th. April.</u></p> <p>EASTER SUNDAY. <u>14th. April.</u></p>	<p>THE DYMND.....(\$60:) THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE.....(\$60:)</p> <p>THE DYMND.....(\$60:) YES NO UNDECIDED.....(\$50:)</p> <p>THE DYMND.....(\$60:) THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE.....(\$60:)</p>
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Jeff Leech, organiser of Tom Katz and Swinger, Coburg also organised a number of other venues and events.

handbills all over the beach each day and there were so many who just loved being on the Jeep. The speakers would be saying that the bus would be coming there, leaving Dromana at 7.30, please hail the bus. So five minutes before the bus arrived the guys in the Jeep would announce that the bus was near and they'd say... The Vibrants were on that night. We'd go through the caravan parks. In the end, the council banned us.

Then at midnight, the buses would leave and take the kids back, free of charge and on the bus we'd have our staff as well.

Then we'd have parties back at the houses. We used to hire all these houses around the place for the bands and the biggest problem we had was the bands wrecking the houses! They couldn't help themselves! Some went back to Melbourne from time to time but others, like The Vibrants stayed for the whole time – they loved it."

All those who holidayed each year on the Mornington Peninsula beaches would remember the excitement of camping out, often with the same site and the same people every summer, in caravan parks and on the Foreshore, year after year. After the holiday period was over and caravans were towed home and tents put into



Bob Jones, karate officionado lets fly at Frankston in 1972. This festival almost developed into a disasterous riot. (Courtesy of Bob Jones, photographer unknown.)

storage in garages, many would still remember the multi-coloured Jeep with the four blaring speakers travelling up and down the Nepean Highway. This, coupled with the myriad of beach-related activities which went on from Christmas Day until late January, would make for memorable holidays.

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Tom Katz functioned for about four years until the focus of rock music was transferred to Lorne on the ocean coastline. **Ross Wilson**, in his early days played the summer gigs at the seaside discos:



Jones and his staff always wore their distinctive singlets at all festivals they worked at – sometimes this proved to be a disadvantage for them (Courtesy of Bob Jones, photographer unknown.)

ROSS WILSON: "...the Wild Colonial Club down at Lorne. This place was a summer thing. It was a big old dance hall on the foreshore ...they also had an amusement thing on the foreshore with a skating rink and music machines. It was a jazz/mod music place about the time I was starting up The Pink Finks." (Wilson, op cit, 29 September, 2004)

By the '71 to '72 holiday season, the traditional dance at the Lorne R.S.L. had transformed into Jerry's Juke Joint, but in previous years it had been marred by drunkenness, poor crowd control and average band line ups. However this season promised better with **Gerry Humphrys** acting as host again and the promoters, **Howard** and **Bill Freeman** offering a better deal with a line up that included **The La De Das, Daddy Cool, One Ton Gypsy, Pirana, Highway, Carson, Friends, Blackfeather,**

Captain Matchbox, Lipp and the Double Decker Brothers and Langford Lever. As well, eight bouncers were to be employed for the season which ran from Christmas Day until 3 January, according to the publicity in *The Daily Planet*. (*The Daily Planet*, 29 December 1971).

Meanwhile over in Frankston, radio station, 3XY and its program manager, **Dennis Smith** decided to put together a free rock concert on Boxing Day, 1972 at the Frankston Oval. He had managed to convince many of the top bands to play for nothing on this occasion in the spirit of free, festive-season music. He also asked **Bob Jones** to supply the security staff in this instance based on reports of Jones' expertise and know-how at Mulwala and Sunbury '72 and his handling of the most dangerous and difficult of the city's discos.

Jones was asked to submit a budget and was told that 3XY would fund only a small proportion of what he wanted. Of concern was the fence to the oval which could be easily climbed. Smith and 3XY were keen to keep alcohol away from the event but this was going to be an impossible task. What has since become known as "The Frankston Riot" was something that nobody had thought would occur:

BOB JONES: "I would need 50 men to secure the oval because they didn't want any alcohol at all. So they wrote up a budget for 13 people to work there – me and 12 other guys. I asked them how was I going to keep the grog out when they only had to jump the four foot high fence? – which they actually did on that day that turned out to be extremely hot. And they all got extremely drunk. My question was how were 13 men going to look after 5000 fans? As it turned out, 5000



Bob Jones still keeps up his fitness regime and continues to workout when possible.

all got extremely drunk. My question was how were 13 men going to look after 5000 fans? As it turned out, 5000

arrived the first hour, then 5000 more and so on. They just wandered over the fence and brought as much alcohol as they wanted. Rough estimates were that close to 25,000 people came along.

Now, there had been a problem with the sharpies punching the music people – there had been a bit of conflict there. The music people were smoking grass and the sharpies of course, were drinkers. So the sharpies decided to
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try marijuana a bit and were punching the others for their joints. Dennis Smith was constantly saying to me, 'why don't you do something about it – put a stop to this because I don't want the music people getting hurt.' So this conversation went on for hours – every half hour on the dot.

At 3.30 in the afternoon, we got a report of a pregnant woman being kicked in the stomach, so we decided to move into the crowd to do something about it. I had seven guys on the stage and six, including myself working the gate. So I left the seven on the stage and the six of us left the gate and went in. We had to give the impression of doing something otherwise if we stayed out too long, it could turn ugly.

As we walked along with the husband of the pregnant woman, he said, 'Oh, by the way she didn't really get *kicked* in the stomach, the boys were playing football with beer cans, and one took a mark, hit the ground, rolled over and his leg bumped into her stomach because she was sitting on the grass near the group.' So when we were about three-quarters of the way into the crowd, I turned to ask him a question – and he'd gone!

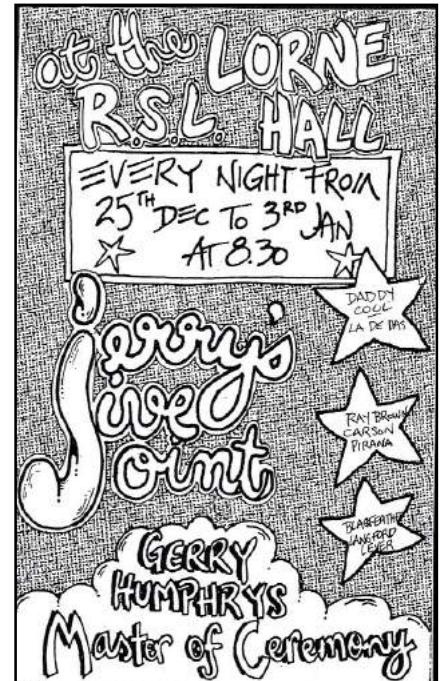
Now, there were twelve cops who had been there and as I'm wading into the crowd, I noticed the twelve going over the fence near the scoreboard, on the way back to Frankston Police Station which was about half a block away. I spotted the woman who was by now being placed on a stretcher because she was eight months pregnant. Then a few dummy, pretend fights started up in an effort to try to separate us. They knew who we were because we had white singlets with "SECURITY" across the front and my reputation was fairly well known.

Then it erupted into a real riot which put us in the newspapers for five days. "Crazy" Dave Pendlebury from the stage came in with his five guys because we were going to get severely knocked about. If that had've happened, I wouldn't be around today. We got out of it but there were reports of 56 being injured.

About an hour later the police from Melbourne arrived in their brand new, black riot truck and I believe it was their doing that so many were injured – we weren't to blame. The Frankston police who jumped the fence on their way out had called Russell Street and they sent about 40 coppers down to Frankston. So they all came out of the riot van with their helmets on, face masks, shields, batons and they came in and beat the snot out of everybody in sight!



The Melbourne Town Hall, better known for its classical music concerts than rock 'n roll hosted possibly the wildest series of rock/pop concerts of the time.



At the time, Lobby Loyde and the Coloured Balls were playing on stage when the police came in from behind the crowd and attacked everyone from the rear. I was just sitting there watching the stage and probably only about 1000 of the 25000 people there would have been aware of what was going on. As well as assaulting anyone nearby, they hauled them off and charged them. We got the blame. (Jones, op cit, 15 August, 2005)

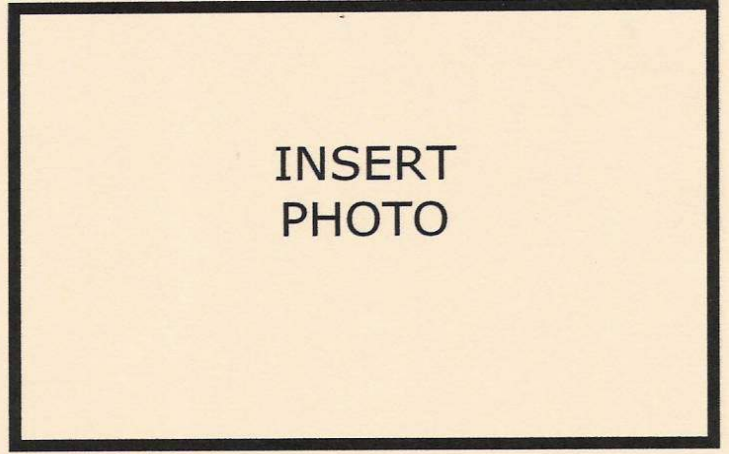
Town halls, school halls, scout halls...

Back in the CBD of Melbourne, the old Melbourne Town Hall in 1971 again became the scene of rock concerts which shock the

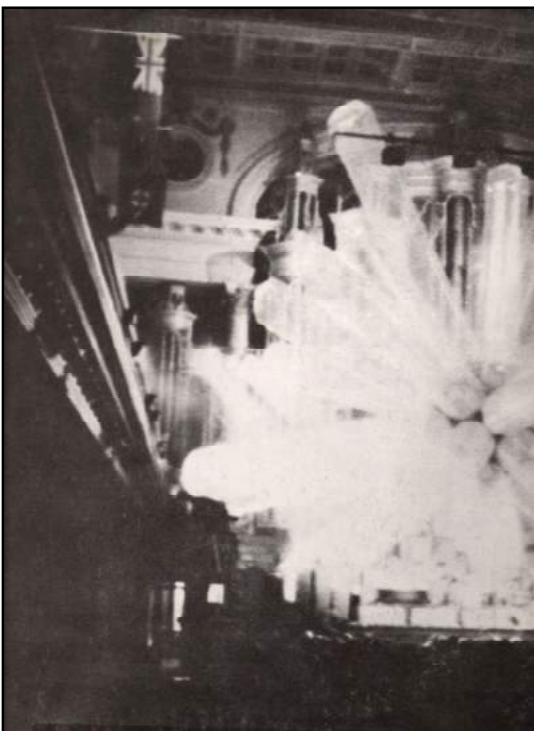
old building to its very foundations. Some two years earlier, the Melbourne City Council had banned rock concerts from its precious venue after some earlier ones had caused chaos and damage. But, by January, 1971, all seemed to be

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forgiven between the rock 'n roll fraternity and the historic's venues owners, represented by The Lord Mayor. The first of what became four massive concerts was held on Tuesday, 12 January and **Healing Force** with New Zealand Guitarist, **Charlie Tumahai** initially set the night alight. No Melbourne concert in these years would be even nearly complete without either **Chain** or **Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs** and while **Chain** went through their repertoire of blues-based songs, Thorpie again exploded on the stage full of arrogance and producing that thundering curtain of sound that he was gaining a reputation for. The advertised climax of the night for the jumping, leaping fans was certainly an on-stage jam with both **The Aztecs** and **Chain** although, Thorpie's absolute volume level tended to drown out **Chain** leaving them floundering a little. Hard to believe but on this night, there was still a "feature" act to go after this energy-sapping jam. It was to be the virtual launch of **Doug Parkinson's** new band, **Fanny Adams** which he had brought back with him following a stint in England. Hailed by Parkinson himself in the press as earth-shattering and the best band ever, they failed on this night to ignite the crowd and therefore put paid to the possibility of ever living up to that grandiose tag – if you can't succeed in Melbourne in 1971, you can't succeed anywhere else in the land! Time was not on the side of **Fanny Adams**:



The stately old Melbourne Town Hall organ became an instrument in a rock band on Sunday, 13 June, 1971, when Warren "Pig" Morgan of The Aztecs played it to the packed house.



The "inflatables" go up on stage at the Town Hall Concert - Sunday, 13 June, 1971. The Aztecs booming set was recorded and released on vinyl as *Aztecs Live*. (Photo by B. Walker)

HARLEY PARKER: "Concert number one had Fanny Adams with Doug Parkinson and I don't know if they played anywhere else, but they didn't go down too well in Melbourne. They had Vince Maloney from Thorpie's Aztecs and I think they'd been in England, but it dragged on too long and they didn't let their music do the talking. And the crowd didn't like the fact that Vince Maloney turned his back on the crowd when he played. So they isolated themselves a bit from the crowd while they played. They were dressed up a bit too pretty too for a progressive rock band... the flares, leather pants... the wrong thing.. for London maybe it was okay ... but not for Melbourne." (Parker, op cit, 7 December, 2005)

Concert #2 in the series was held on Sunday, 7 March, with all of the earlier concert's bands again rockin' the house down and with the edition of **Tully**, from Sydney and Melbourne's **Spectrum** ensured a great time for all. There were two innovations for this concert. Firstly, **Gerry Humphrys** took to the stage as compare; a job he was doing at The T. F. Much Ballroom and one he would take to the outdoor stage of Sunbury the following year. The second major innovation was something of a novelty act – a 'fifties-style, do-wop band named **Daddy Cool** which was at this stage was in its infancy and still meant to be just an adjunct to **Ross**

Wilson's main band, **Sons Of The Vegetal Mother**. But at this early stage, **Daddy Cool** was not quite the phenomenon that they were to become within a very short period.

By the time that concert #3 at The Melbourne Town took place on Friday night, 14 May, there had been a major turn around in the

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fortunes for **Daddy Cool**. This time the kids were jumping on seats and treating the Town Hall furniture with little regard. D.C. had become a sensation! The established bands were back again and this time, the crowd frenzy seemed greater than ever as each band took to the stage. **King Harvest** again started proceedings and **Doug Parkinson** was back – this time with the less hyped, **In Focus**. The crowd response now was nothing short of



Spectrum was one of the great bands which thrived on performing live. (Courtesy of Jacques L’Affrique aka David Porter.)

hysterical as Parkinson rode the wave of success that all the other bands were experiencing on that night:

HARLEY PARKER: “...the reaction of the kids was instantaneous. As soon as we moved into the place, everyone was sitting on the backs of the seats.. you didn’t sit down... it was to get a better view and as people stood up at the front, everyone just stood on all the seats and that was it. Then they’d get up on the stage and they’d even be running across the stage between the band. The bouncers had trouble keeping them off the stage. They weren’t too worried about them being on the stage, they were more worried about the equipment and the electrical leads from the amps to the guitars. But the kids were dancing all over the stage.” (Parker, op cit, 7 December, 2005)

The Melbourne crowds had taken **Spectrum** to heart over the course of 1971 and their performance this night also set the crowd alight. They received a silver disc award on stage for their best-selling song, *I’ll Be Gone*.

Concert #4 was held on Sunday, 13 June and it was the one which has received the most publicity because this was the night that **The Aztecs’** performance was recorded and released later on Havoc Label as *Billy Thorpe And The Aztecs: Live*. It came out just in time for Christmas that same year.

The crowd enthusiasm and hysteria generated by the previous three concerts had guaranteed the success of this penultimate Town Hall epic with large media contingents being present to witness what the kids were getting up to. To say that the

Melbourne Town Hall was packed on this night would be an understatement of epic proportions as its capacity of about 2500 was nearly doubled. Only a sea of heads was to be seen from wall to wall with not even enough room for anyone to raise their hands. **Daddy Cool** literally ignited the crowd once more and their songs now had been lengthened out by more instrumental breaks. If they had not come back on stage for their encore, it would have seen the Town Hall reduced to rubble!:

GARY YOUNG: “Those Town Hall gigs became historic gigs. Daddy Cool was at the peak of its performance when those gigs were done. So we went out there and really rocked and I think those were the best Daddy Cool gigs that anyone ever saw. It was really hard for anyone to follow Daddy Cool on stage, not because we were so great but because the *audience* thought we were so great. The kids always had such a great time dancing to us ... it was hard to follow us, no matter who you were.” (Young, op cit, 3 October, 2005)

It *was* a massive job to follow up this incredible set but **Chain** did just that as the hysteria increased. This time, the fans had found some way of getting up on the seats and were leaping in the air as Town Hall management just simply contemplated what the hall would be like after this event.

Finally, **The Aztecs**, whose performance was to be recorded, took to the stage amidst huge inflatable hands which others have described as similar to very large condoms. At the beginning, a few sound problems and some deflating balloons got this set off to a false start but it all culminated when **Warren “Pig” Morgan** was revealed to

the surprise of all, seated and spotlighted at the keyboard of the Town Hall's huge, precious, antique, 1929 Hill, Norman & Beard organ. It was a breath-taking climax to this best-of-all concert which featured only local talent:

HARLEY PARKER: "I don't think anyone expected "Pig" Morgan to be up there... how many rock bands would have played the Town Hall organ? He started with the classical Bach stuff and he came up in the dark so you only

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heard him; you didn't know where he was. They must have rehearsed it, because the spot light came up. Maybe the record company got permission to use the organ because of the recording they were doing that night.

They had a few problems with the the inflatable "things" they had on stage. I think they called them 'giant sausages' but they looked like giant condoms. They were long... about ten or fifteen metres long and they had these heater fan things trying to blow air into them. Then they'd start to go down because they'd run out of air. They tried to have a light show with it as well and eventually, I suppose it all worked." (Parker, op cit, 7 December, 2005)

There was to be another concert at this venue, but this time all seats were pre-sold in an effort to control any crowd crush as the era of 1971 Town Hall rock spectaculars came to an end. So by early 1972, these same crowds had begun to assemble in the open paddocks of Sunbury to begin a whole new era in Melbourne rock music.

10th Avenue at lunchtime...

One of Melbourne's very earliest discotheques was 10th Avenue in Bourke Street which in the main, opened its doors on the first floor for top level rock music at lunchtimes during the working week. It became extremely popular around midday when the young office and store workers took their hour for lunch – (some obviously took longer!) The concept was started by **Eddie Floyd**, who had been manager for **Ivan Dayman** at **The Bowl**, in Degraeves Street, which had run similar programs for kids on their lunchtime break.

Floyd was a drummer with The Roulettes and they played at many of Dayman's city, suburban and country dances. After one particularly dismal night at Morwell, Dayman reneged on his fee:

EDDIE FLOYD: "...not many people turned up and he lost money on the deal. He said to me, 'listen Eddie, we didn't have a good turn up tonight so I'm only going to pay you 50% of what we agreed.' So I said, 'oh yeah...in other words you want to make me a partner in your business.' He said, 'why is that?' I said, 'when we play at Ballarat and you pick up 4000 bucks, we still only get a fee. So I said, 'mate, you still have to pay us what we agreed on. We're not partners in your business. You have to pay what's agreed.' Anyway, he was that impressed with me standing up to him ... in a nice way ...that he thought I'd make a good manager. So that's how I got the job of manager at The Bowl." (Floyd, 21 April, 2006.)

The Bowl had been open since the early 'sixties and Dayman installed Floyd as daytime manager.

When he started 10th Avenue just before Christmas in 1963, he and partner **Con Calatzis** arranged to secure the first floor of a building in Bourke Street. Calatzis had been bar manager at The Bowl and both decided to take up the lease on the building at 231 Bourke Street. 10 Avenue differed to most other discotheques of the period in that it was situated right within the main shopping thoroughfare and easily accessible to lunchtime shoppers and city workers. The Thumpin' Tum, The Catcher, The Biting Eye, Berties and Sebastians were all either tucked away in smaller alleys and lanes or on the edge of the city proper. 10th Avenue was easily accessible right in the centre of the shopping precinct and for the two hours it was open – 12 noon until 2pm, was packed with 'teenagers, many on their lunch breaks. It also opened again around 6.30 and continued until close at 10 pm. Floyd reports that many bands and singers got their first opportunities there. **Johnny Young**, who was riding the charts with his hit, *Step Back* did his first gig there after arriving from Perth and **The Easybeats** did there very first show in Melbourne at



Commenced by Eddie Floyd in 1963, 10th Avenue was certainly one of the earliest "discotheques". Their fare was mainly lunchtime concerts, although they also opened up after dark.

10th Avenue. On the floor below the discotheque was Bachelors Mens Wear and for a time, **Mike Brady** of MPD Ltd, worked there as a sales assistant and was given time off by his generous employers to perform and to tour. 10th Avenue continued until around Christmas, 1967 when Floyd began to concentrate on his other enterprise, Winston Charles in Toorak, which by this time was operating as a cabaret lounge with a full licence until 3am.

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Swinger at Coburg...

To the north of the city, Coburg had for a long time been renowned for being the home to a number of citizens who had been detained for varying periods of time and housed at Her Majesty's pleasure behind the imposing bluestone walls and ramparts of Pentridge Prison. However none of the residents were actually known to have been given a "leave pass" to attend Swinger, which in 1963, was held right next door in the Coburg Town Hall. Swinger was the descendent of a number of dances which were conducted there throughout the first wave of rock 'n roll, the jazz period and into the 'sixties. In fact, possibly the first rock 'n roll music to be played in Melbourne was played inside the doors of this typically grand, spacious suburban town hall.



Coburg Town Hall, just around the corner from Pentridge Prison came alive on weekends when it was transformed into Swinger from 1963.

Run from 1963 to about 1968, Swinger was the brain-child of **Jeffrey Leech**, who with his company, Harris, Leech and Associates was responsible for setting up and running about twenty or more dances and discotheques around the state in that period. This includes other dances using the Swinger "brand" in the regional towns of Wangaratta and Warrnambool; there was Tom Katz at Sorrento, 431 in St. Kilda Road South Yarra and another summer holiday period dance at Cowes, on Phillip Island. At Coburg, Leech and partner, **Derek Harris** wanted to create a large dance but with that smaller discotheque atmosphere:



A number of venues put out their own match books but only Swinger had a full set of four different colours. (Author's collection.)

JEFFREY LEECH: " ... we ran it at Coburg Town Hall which was huge ... it was the first large dance. It was set up more like a discotheque than a dance and it was unbelievable. It was a large hall and we had a big stage there and when we looked at it we thought, "How in Hell are we going to fill this place?" We had upstairs balconies and coffee lounges... the whole works. There was nothing in the northern suburbs like it. It was a tough place to run... we had to keep our eyes on the place and we had 25 people on the floor... you'd call them bouncers but they had red tuxedos and bow ties. You'd walk into an area... like there'd be a coffee lounge upstairs. Because of the seating, we called it "the love-in balcony". ... we thought out how to run this place. The entertainment had to be current and The Go!! Show was running at that stage and we built it up similar to a town hall dance, but with rock 'n roll. We had an all-night band... probably a large band like The Crickets or The Dave McCallum Power Set as a backing band with maybe, four artists... Carmel Chayne, Lyn Oakley, Colin Buckley, Bobby Cookson. This was not straight, heavy rock, this was a mixture. Then we had The Vibrants and The Mixtures, Johnny Young and his Kompany, The Tolpuddle Martyrs. Then we had Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs and Johnny Farnham of course. The Easybeats... it was huge." (Leech, op cit, 2 November, 2005)

The Vibrants and The Mixtures, Johnny Young and his Kompany, The Tolpuddle Martyrs. Then we had Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs and Johnny Farnham of course. The Easybeats... it was huge." (Leech, op cit, 2 November, 2005)

Many of the innovative sound and lighting accomplishments at Swinger were created by a group of students from Swinburne Technical College in Hawthorn who, in the pre-computer age, invented some nifty gadgets to work the lights and speakers. Leech and Harris also installed a cinema screen, which with all the lighting and sound equipment, had to be set up by a dedicated team every Saturday morning in preparation for the nights activities. Movies of all types were shown behind the bands as they played on stage – clips of The Beatles, old Charlie

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Chaplin, black and white movies and even footage of racing champ, Alan Moffat's driving team was shown. There were Go-Go dancers dressed in black and wearing Batman masks who danced on a catwalk which protruded out on the dance floor. One evening, the dance was raided by the police after a complaint about the attire the Batman Dancers were wearing, but little came of this.

At various points in its history, Swinger attracted its fair share of criticism about behaviour but was probably no worse or any less safe than any other dance around town. However, there was one particular night that shots from a rifle sent staff and patrons scurrying for shelter. Leech himself was the one to catch a bullet and he was the only casualty on this night where the trouble had stemmed from an altercation which took place earlier in the evening:

JEFFREY LEECH: "I remember that. Someone fired a gun from over the road... a .22 rifle. It was no big deal, but they fired right across Bell Street from the park. It was right at the end of the night. What we'd do was open three great big doors and let the 2000 odd crowd out. I would stand out the front and we had the police there as well making sure that they all dispersed. I had the guy from the City Of Coburg in full uniform sitting beside me and five bouncers in their red jackets.

Now, Graham Ashby was the head-bouncer and he wore a blue jacket. We believe that they were trying to shoot him. Earlier that evening some clowns caused problems, were thrown out and came back with a gun. So it seems that someone king-hit this guy earlier and they had put him out and locked the doors. So I got a .22 through the knee. It was no big deal but they could



(Courtesy of Peter Rechter)

have killed someone driving past in a car. The police got him in the end. Everyone dobbed him in.. I think he was from Broadmeadows. That was THE worst problem we had there." (Leech, op cit, 2 November, 2005)

Swinger attracted crowds of 2,000 or more on almost every evening and all of the top bands played there. This included **The Easybeats** who toured Melbourne and Victorian country centres. Three ticket boxes were set up for this event and prices for this special night remained the same as any other night. Even the American vocal group **The Platters** played there thanks to **Ron Blackmore** and his compatriot, **Elliot Davis**. Leech remembers this night because a fight broke out in the middle of the floor brought on by a few blokes who had obviously been drinking in their cars, before the doors opened.

By the late 'sixties, Swinger, like many city and suburban dances of its type, was suffering at the hands of the pubs:

JEFFREY LEECH: "In the end, the reason it all slowed down was because we were in a market where there was no grog... and the hotels just took over and they could put these shows on for very low money. We used to close at 1am and these other places went on later – the numbers dropped and it wasn't worth keeping it going." (Leech, op cit, 2 November, 2005)

Take it or leave it...

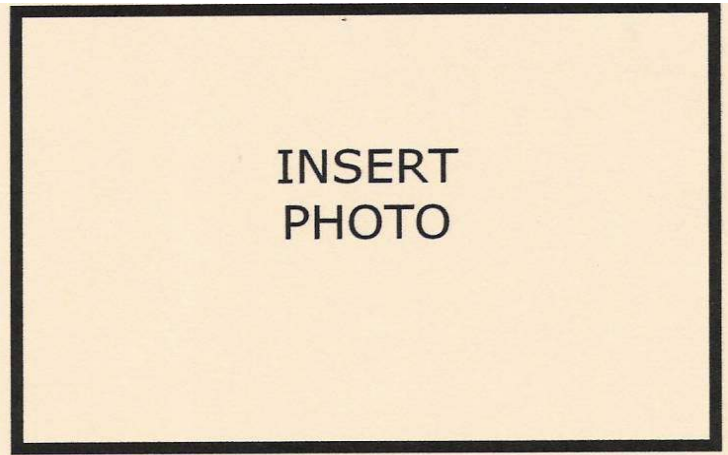
Playing at private parties around the suburbs as an adjunct to their disco and dance hall gigs could be a profitable way to supplement the meagre income that some bands existed on. In Toorak, South Yarra, Brighton and

other affluent suburbs, the best that money could afford created some lavish spreads for a few fortunate birthday kids. **Harry Tarasinski** of the band, **Harper's Bazaar** recalls that some party hosts could be worse than a few of the well-known, unscrupulous promoters around town when it came to paying for services rendered:

HARRY TARASINSKI: "Some gigs were better than others, of course. I can recall that we were booked as the third band of five to appear at a lavish ...21st in Caulfield but we made the mistake of being too conscientious by 370.

arriving early. The opening band had arrived late and was just starting when we got there but there was no sign of the second band so we agreed to fill their slot. We also agreed to play an extra fifteen minutes to make up some of the 'space' left by the missing band, which never did make it to the gig, as I recall.

When it came time to settle the bill, we found we'd been docked a hefty chunk of money because, according to the guys in charge, we started late. We explained that we'd arrived early, played an additional half a set to help them out because another band failed to turn up and it certainly wasn't our fault that we'd been forced to start late because of the first band but it all fell on deaf ears, for some reason. We were told we could either take what was being offered or take them to court for the full amount so we grabbed the cash and told the pricks just what we thought of them. As usual, the crowd had a great time and the band went over really well and, thankfully, such situations were always the exception rather than the rule, in my experience" (Tarasinski, op cit, 1 November, 2004).



Home of the Q Club – the Kew Civic Centre. It started out as a jazz club then graduated to mod music and progressive rock.

The Q Club...

ODDMODD
GO - GO - GO
 SAT., 28th MAY
 ★ The Vince Malony Sect
 ★ BOBBY KAIN & THE TREMORS
 ★ THE LOVED ONES
 ★ Georgie Kay
 ★ GO-GO Girls
 SAT., 4th JUNE
 ★ The Cherokees
 ★ Peter Briggs and the Vikings
 ★ City Stompers
 ★ Marty Kristian
 ★ GO-GO Girls!
 Compere: Suzette Jauhari

Out at suburban Kew, the Q Club was a major drawcard which rivalled the foremost city discotheques for a while. It drew the same bands as the city circuit, often all on the same night and like Swinger, was staged in a huge hall. The Q Club, in one form or another including The Odd Modd, spanned the years from about 1961 until its demise around 1972, but always at the same venue The Kew Civic Centre. In the early 'sixties The Q Club had been a jazz club. In about 1966, it took on a decidedly blues/rock leaning and abandoned its former name to become The Odd Modd. By 1967, it had reverted to its original title until it closed in 1972. The Q Club (Mark II) was operated by **Howard Freeman** and compared for four years by the renowned **Suzette Jauhari**, ("Susie Q") who took over the job from **Ron Cronin**:

SUZETTE PEDERSEN, (nee JAUHARI) "The Q Club was run in the Kew Civic Centre and it was basically just a big hall with a huge stage and a big entrance foyer. They had no alcohol, no food.... All they had was a couple of tables that sold cordial. It was very well run with lots of bouncers around. Ron Cronin, who was Howard and Chris Freeman's cousin had been doing all the comparing there and I came to meet him because I was invited by a friend of mine to go to Lynne Randell's 16th birthday party and Ron Cronin was there. It was at Carol West's house and he called me later and asked me if I would be interested in doing the comparing. I'd never done anything like that before and I ended up doing that from 1966 to February, 1970 and I gave it up because I'd met someone who wanted to marry me.

Some nights we would have 2000 people there. I used to talk to the bands in the breaks and I'd go out to the back door and let kids in when they weren't allowed

in the front. 'Cos I'd have my favourites who would be right down in front and if I couldn't see them there, I'd let them in. Everyone was pretty young and at Q Club. The parents would drop them off and come back at 11.30, pick them up and take them home." (Pedersen, author's interview, 22 November, 2005)

Being set in middle-class Kew, it drew its crowds from the largely affluent eastern and north-eastern suburbs and 371.

the dance tended to cater for the Mod crowds, and was by the standards set by some of the northern suburbs and city dances, quite tame and yet it drew the crowds to see the bands and hear the music.

By 1970, it began to follow the lead of the performance venues such as The T. F. Much Ballroom and began to provide the absolute best music in town matched with the off-the-wall, avant garde performers of the time.



Benny Zable is still active in political activism and performance art. (Courtesy of Benny Zable)

One of these artists was **Benny Zable**, who was brought up around the Yiddish theatre in Carlton. He trained solidly in modern dance and mime throughout his late teens. Zable danced and choreographed with a number of dance companies his teens around Melbourne and later, travelled overseas ending up at the London Arts Lab. This was a multimedia club in Drury Lane. Zable became well-recognised around all of the city discos, including Garrison, La Mama, The Pram Factory, Ormond Hall, Monsalvat in Eltham, Research Hall gigs and Festival Hall where his dance routines would be used to "warm-up" the crowd:

BENNY ZABLE: "I experimented with movement and mime and developed what people in the USA described later as a crowd motivator through the dance medium. My main costume on the club scene was a tie-dyed or black, full body leotard. (Zable, email correspondence, 7 August, 2005)

Zable was part of the anti-establishment movement in the arts, world wide which spawned the overseas Beat poets and writers such as **Alan Ginsberg** and **Jack Kerouac** and represented the anti-Vietnam, anti-war generation which was just beginning to flex its muscles. Melbourne also gave birth to an underground scene:

BENNY ZABLE: "This place and the scene at the the time greatly influenced me to move away from the classic, staged structure to explore with the dance movement,

mime mediums in a happening way.... This first began with the Melbourne Arts Co-operative and then the T.F Much Ballroom (when it) developed under John Pinder. This period climaxed most dramatically at a gig at the Melbourne Town Hall with Daddy Cool, Spectrum and Jeff Crozier to name a few on the bill at the time. I ran dance movement workshops with poets, filmmakers, dancers and musicians in a casual way, sharing techniques and jamming in many ways. The Melbourne Arts Co-op had a number of venues where we played. One was in the city. I think it was in Little Lonsdale Street and the last was a church complex on the corner of Elgin and Nicholson Street. The Manse part of this complex was an artists' residence of which I shared space with the band, Mackenzie Theory, artist-playright-humorist, Dary Dickins, poet Gary Huchison and friends, Richard Bingham, mystic artist to name some." (Zable op cit, 7 August, 2005).

This was all part of a stimulating, developing alternative culture reflecting the feelings of youth of the late 'sixties and early seventies. Around this time, Zable teamed with **Hugh McSpedden's** psychedelic light shows and they both gained a two-year long regular gig at The Q Club creating their light and shadow dance routines on stage. Zable would take along his prop box of different and colourful fabrics and



Suzette Pedersen (Jauhari) performed the role of compere at The Odd Modd then The Q Club for four years.

costumes to dance with and interact with the light shows from McSpedden's projectors as the images appeared on the walls behind him. In 1973, Zable Left Melbourne for Nimbin and has since become a prominent activist and artist in the anti-nuclear protest organisations. In 1969, the often unpredictable Kiwi, **Leo De Castro** was on tour in Melbourne from Sydney with his band of the time, **The Browns**,

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before joining **Friends**. At The Q Club, **The Chain** drummer **Barry Harvey** had an unusual encounter of the Leo kind:

BARRY HARVEY: "Leo and his complicated web, you are not kidding. At that time Leo had a girlfriend called Suzie who used to try to keep him under control... brilliant effort on her part, I might add. I was playing with Chain at that time and one night we were doing The Q Club, and half way through the set comes this wildman, with an uncontrollable laugh and joins in with the vocals and rocks his arse off singing along with the band. We didn't mind because it sounded great. After a couple of jams in comes Suzie, grabs Leo by the ear and says, 'Leo, you are supposed to be at Sebastians ... singing with the Browns', so Suzie drags Leo off the stage and takes him to the



Browns' gig. We just kept on playing as usual because Leo used to do that all the time. (Forget which band he was in and go and sing with whoever took his fancy each night.)". (Harvey, email to Rock 'n Roll Scars group, 25 November, 2004).

The Q Club was the venue chosen for a "surprise" performance by visiting British blues great, **John Mayall**. He toured Australia in 1972 and when he was in town in early March for his Melbourne Festival Hall performances, appeared at The Q Club. Possibly as a rehearsal and warm up before the tour started in earnest, Mayall and his band did a full-on jam on stage while over 2000 punters crammed into the Civic Centre building pushing the venue beyond capacity. Mayall brought along his support acts, **Tamam Shud** and **Carson** which then accompanied Mayall on his tour of five major city gigs over a two week period:

GO-SET: "First up were Carson who warmed up the crowd but didn't really get it on as much as they have on previous occasions. Next were Taman Shud. This band is incredible and must be one of Australia's best. Virtually all original material, they have the melodic softness that makes music enjoyable to listen to. Then there was Jerry Humphries (sic) singing in-between brackets, chanting random numbers, and generally getting the audience going while Mayall's equipment was set up. I must give a special mention to the hoons who kept chanting for Thorpie numbers - they sure are an intelligent lot! (When) Mayall came on the audience was sitting and he put on another incredible set. Credits go to Edison Grant for a good light show, the Freeman Brothers for putting on a great concert and John Mayall's band for some beautiful music." (Go-Set, date unknown, quoted in milesago.com.au)

It has also been reported that the Mayall entourage did a "private" gig at Sebastian's discotheque during this time and possibly several other day-time University performances.

The rounds of the suburbs were no less hectic than the city circuit and both the established bands and the lesser known outfits all found themselves on the treadmill, often not quite knowing where they were playing. **The La De Das**, which had proven themselves as one of the best live acts around were also on the treadmill:

KEVIN BORICH: "The Suburban scene was very different... huge Town Halls, (Q Club) etc. and we'd do four shows a night, PA and all, one 45 min set at each place, darting from inner city to suburban dance, all these bands criss-crossing

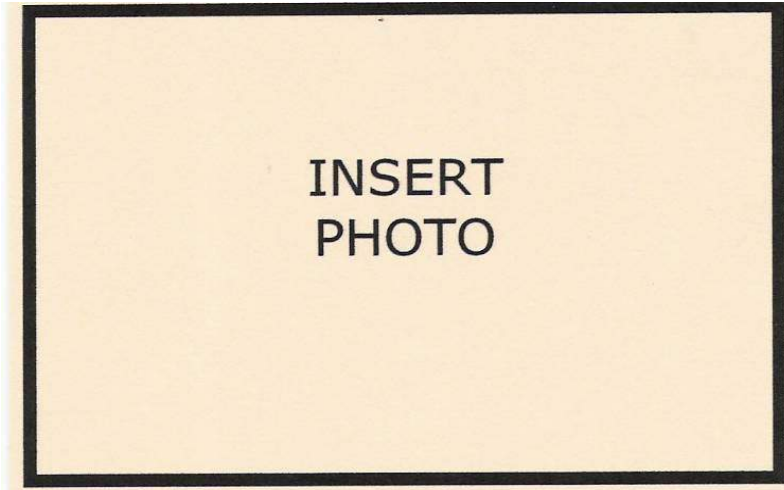


Graeme Webber's triple portrait of Lobby Loyde shows him as Coloured Balls' fans would remember him - with cigarette firmly pressed between his lips. (Courtesy of Graeme Webber - Australian Rock Folio.)

Melbourne. Funny thing was, early in our Melbourne days, we hired a guy with a van which had no windows. We'd be in the back with the gear, bouncing around climbing out at the

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destination, blinded from our pitch black ride and never knowing where any place was!" (Borich, op cit., 9 February, 2005)



One of those magnificent "beer barns" complete with permanently sticky carpet – The Waltzing Matilda in Springvale South. The crowds packed in when liquor laws were liberalised in the early 'seventies.

we played in a licensed venue. ... I think Billy Thorpe and The Aztecs at Melbourne's Village Green Hotel were the first. It was tried as an experiment and it was an amazing success. Soon every pub got into the idea of featuring rock bands and it was not long before the dances were doomed. The fans... were sophisticated now and demanded to see and hear their rock 'n roll in licensed places. Up until this time, pubs had been the domain of the previous generation. ...Now the kids took over the biggest pubs in town every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. They were at last craving to hear bands without the screaming and chaos of the past. Musicians had to become more proficient and song development flourished. The emphasis was on the song more than its delivery or what was worn while delivering it" (Jim Keays 1999, P 156).

Having played much of his music in the discos, Thorpe could be considered to have single-handedly been responsible for the demise of these city discos which had ironically, championed his music for so long. He is said to have arranged a shrewd deal with The Whitehorse Hotel and The Matthew Flinders to play for a cut of the beer takings on each night. Therefore, the over-eighteens could buy a jug of beer for \$2 and the patrons flocked to the pubs drawn by the "Suck More Piss" slogan which certainly pushed the movement along.

All of these bands which set the pub scene alight had tasted huge success at Sunbury, Myponga

(South Australia) and Mulwalla (N.S.W.) festivals and were basking in the glory of these career-defining appearances. This was the immediate post-disco period of the late 'seventies to the early 'eighties. Glam Rock

Big, bad, beer barns...

When the liquor laws began to change and discos began to lose popularity, music started to make its way into the more expansive suburban pubs and several bands which took full advantage of the changing musical landscape, stand out. There can be no better examples of the bands which moved in to attack and assail their audiences with a solid wall of sound in these venues than **The Angels, Rose Tattoo, Lobby Loyde and The Coloured Balls** and of course the loudest of them all, a thoroughly re-born and now legendary, **Billy Thorpe** with his **Sunbury Aztecs**:

JIM KEAYS: "A significant new development had taken place in Australian music at this time. Never in our career had



With the gravel-voice of "Angry" Anderson out front, *Rose Tattoo* typified the new rough-as-guts, blues/metal brand of rock music which emanated from the suburban pubs. (Courtesy of Alana Galea)

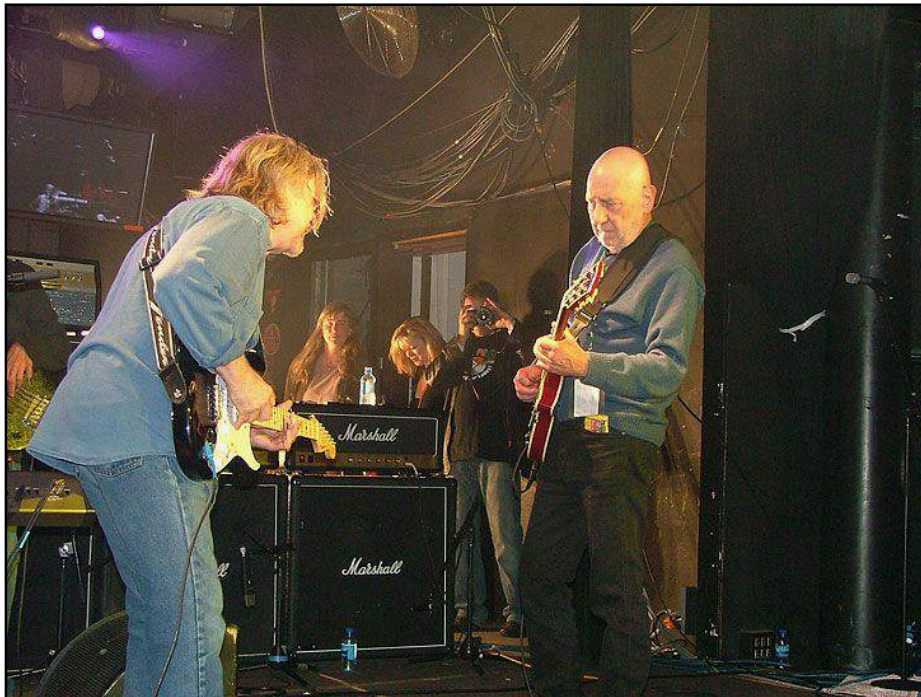
epitomised by **Skyhooks** and **Sherbert** found its niche in the music scene along with the vastly contrasting "Sharpie" bands and heroes like Loyde. **Stephen Cummings**, later to front **The Sports** and now enjoying a highly

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successful solo career states:

STEPHEN CUMMINGS: "Out in the suburbs Billy Thorpe had regenerated his career with The Aztecs in suburban beer barns like the Whitehorse Inn, the Village Green, the Croxton Park, the South Side Six and the Waltzing Matilda. I remember seas of tables littered with overflowing ashtrays and hundreds of jugs of beer." (Cummings, op cit, *The Age*, 18 February, 2002.)

Melbourne didn't have the large Leagues Club structure to draw in the crowds which the Sydney and New South Wales regional centres had had for some time. As a revenue-raising possibility, pokies and gambling had been a staple in these northern states' clubs for a long time. Melbourne's liquor laws were still archaic, lagging behind



Thorpie and Lobby –Aztecs and Coloured Balls – led the 'seventies charge into the pubs. The two rock veterans traded licks on stage once again in 2006 – for perhaps the last time. (Courtesy of Alana Galea)

and the ban on poker machines south of The Murray River did not look like changing in the near future - it was still some way off before legal gambling, other than betting on The Caulfield or Flemington races, the Sandown greyhounds, the Moonee Valley trots or Tatts Lottery, would find its way into this state. Melburnians had to be content with organising club weekend bus trips to the Murray River border towns of Albury, Echuca or Mildura to have a flutter on the pokies, a few drinks and have a fabulous weekend before they returned to the mundane routines of the working week. This became an increasingly popular activity with the over-fifties set. Certainly it was great business for the New South Wales' towns of Moama, Mulwala, Wodonga and

Wentworth which as well as supplying better average weather than Melbourne, could boast exceptionally large resort-type accommodation, entertainment and cheap meals all in the one package, mostly angled to entice Victorians over the border where they could legally gamble.

Without the drawcard of pokies at that time to entice punters in, Melbourne was quick to respond with the suburban pubs such as The Croxton Park, The Waltzing Matilda, The Whitehorse Inn, The Southern Aurora, The Village Green, Southside Six and many more where drinking became a top sport. Earlier, a number of these pubs had incorporated their own discos into the premises but as time went on, they simply opened up the whole venue to rock music. Music was the key attraction as well as the beer for a thoroughly great Friday or Saturday night. **Mike Rudd** of **Spectrum**, **Ariel** and **The Indelible Murtceps** described in a 2001 interview with **Steve Kernohan** of Radio 974, how rapidly the changes were taking place by 1975:

MIKE RUDD: "We were playing in discos and the occasional concert. And discos, or discotheques as they were known in those days, were actually unlicensed venues. No grog at all. So when pubs opened their doors the whole scene virtually changed overnight. And we found that we were left out in the cold because our kind of music wasn't appreciated by the pub-going punters. So we had to think real fast and we were either gonna demise rather ingloriously, or we were going to have to think of something different. And I believe our actual take on it was probably fairly unique for those days and probably still fairly unique now. We formed an alternative band which

was our pub-rock band, which was The Indelible Murtceps, which of course, as people are starting to realise – duh – is Spectrum back to front” (Rudd, op cit, www.milesago.com, 2001)

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Ah... the beer barns It's here, when rock 'n roll in Melbourne entered yet another energetic phase that we must close the story of the most prolific, vibrant and colourful era in this town's recent music history. At a time when the Babyboomers began to settle down and look towards middle-age, rock music was ready to move on too. Into the 'eighties another assemblage of 'teenagers to become known as "Gen-X" would carve out another episode in the story of Melbourne music at the suburban beer palaces... **Rose Tattoo, The Angels, Cold Chisel, Skyhooks, Hunters and Collectors, Sherbet, Australian Crawl, The Sports, Mi-Sex**, and live to reminisce about it ... but, that's another story altogether!

The Discos' Discography:

This book has been all about "doin' it live" in Melbourne in the period of the mid-'sixties to the mid-'seventies. Perhaps surprisingly, a number of live recordings emanating from the discotheques or dance venues of Melbourne and from the Sunbury festivals were released and remain to this day, tangible evidence of the music that was performed and actually recorded in these places. Other tapes, records, later re-issues and bootlegs exist.

Recorded live around Melbourne by Australian artists and released within the period - 1965 to 1977:

PROCESSION: *Live At Sebastians*

Recorded: 9 April, 1968 Released: 1968

Where recorded: Sebastians Disco, Exhibition Street, City

Label: Festival Stereo SFL 932903, Mono FL 32903 Format: L.P.

Track Listing:

Anthem (Peacock-Rogers)

Take Time (Rogers-Griffin)

Once Was A Time I Thought (Phillips assoc)

Penelope (Peacock)

Signature Tune (Griffin-Rogers)

Nobody Knows When You Are Down And Out (Cox)

With A Little Help From My Friends (Lennon-McCartney)

Cloudburst (Kirkland Harris-Hendrix)

Minuet For Moderns (Peacock-Rogers)

Siting In The Park (Stewart)

Hear Me Calling Your Name (Bruce)

THE SONS OF THE VEGETAL MOTHERS: *The Garden Party*

Recorded: 1970 Released: Private release, October/November, 1970

Where recorded: T.F. Much Ballroom, Fitzroy

Label: custom pressing Format: E.P. 33 1/3

Track Listing:

Side one: (Buff coloured label):

Love Is The Law (Wilson)

Side two: (Orange coloured label)

The Garden Party (Wilson)

Make It Begin (Wilson)

BILLY THORPE AND THE AZTECS: *Aztecs Live*

Recorded: 13 June 1971 Released: December 1971

Where: The Melbourne Town Hall, Swanston Street

Label: Havoc HST4001 Format: L.P.

Track Listing:

Somebody Left Me Crying (Thorpe-Morgan)

Time To Live (Thorpe-Morgan)

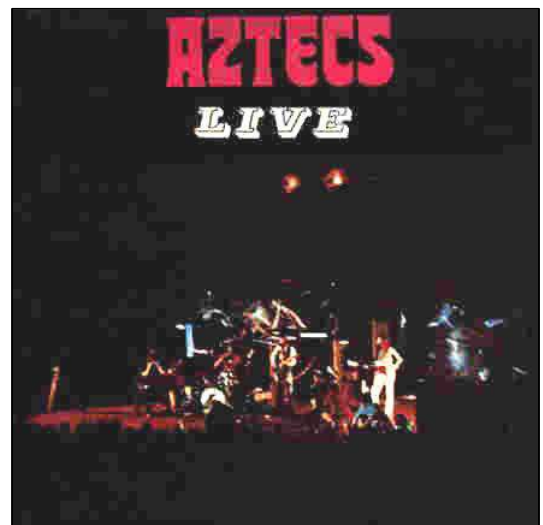
Be-Bop-A-Lula (Vincent-Davis)

Momma Part 1 (Thorpe-Morgan)

Drum Solo (Matthews)

Momma Part 2 (Thorpe-Morgan)

DADDY COOL: *Daddy Cool Live! The Last Drive-In*



Movie Show

Recorded: 13 August 1972 Released: September 1973

Where recorded: The Much More Ballroom, Fitzroy

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Label: Wizard ZL 202 Format: L.P.

Re-released: 1982 as *Daddy Cool Live!* – (Different Cover)

Track Listing:

That'll Be The Day (Holly-Petty)
Zoom Zoom Zoom (Hayes-Jackson)
Cherry Pie (Marvin-Johnny)
Sh-Boom (Keyes-Feaster-Feaster-McRae)
Little Darlin' (Williams)
Guided Missile (Gaitwood)
Duke Of Earl (unknown)
Roll With Me Henry (James)
Momma Don't You Tear My Clothes (trad. arr. Wilson)
One Night (Bartholemew-King)
Come Back Again (Wilson)
Flash In My Head (Hannaford-Smith)
Teenage Blues (Wilson)
I'll Never Smile Again (R. Lowe)
Boy You're Paranoid (Wilson)
Shake, Rattle'n'Roll (C.Calhoun)
Daddy Cool (Slay-Crewe)



BLACKFEATHER: *Boppin' The Blues*

Recorded: September 1972 Released: December 1972

Where recorded: The Q Club, Kew and The Melbourne Town Hall, Swanston Street

Label: Infinity INL34731 Format: L.P.

Track Listing:

Pineapple (Johns)
Gee Willikers (Johns)
Own Way Of Living (Johns)
Red Head Rag (Johns)
D. Boogie (Mama Roll) (Johns)
Get It On (Johns)
Boppin' The Blues (Perkins-Griffith)
Lay Down Lady (Johns)

SPECTRUM: *Terminal Buzz*

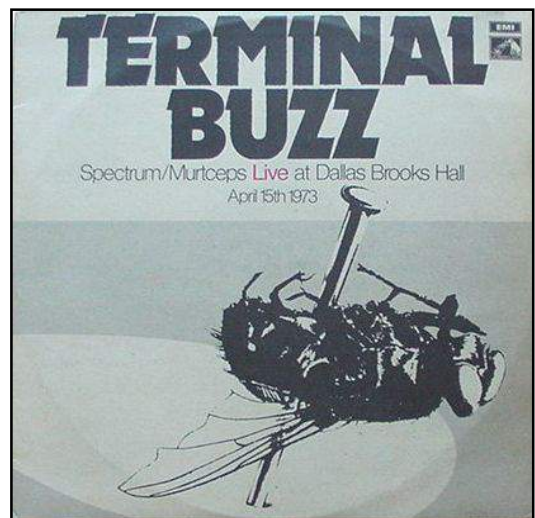
Recorded: 15 April, 1973 Released: December, 1973

Where recorded: Dallas Brooks Hall, East Melbourne

Label: EMI EMC 2503 Format: Double L.P.

Track Listing:

Crazy Song/Goodbye (Rudd)
Essay in Paranoia (Rudd)
I Want to Know (McLeod)
I'll be Gone (Rudd)
Superbody (Rudd)
What the World Needs (Is A New Pair Of Socks) (Rudd)



VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Garrison – The Final Blow, Unit*

1

Recorded: June 1973 Released: 1973

Where recorded: Garrison Disco, High Street, Prahran

Label: Mushroom SMX43191 Format: L.P.

378.

Track Listing:

Bumper Bar Song (Madder Lake) - Madder Lake

When is a Mouse (Madder Lake) - Madder Lake

Rodney's Birthday (Madder Lake) - Madder Lake

Covered Wagon (D. O'Keefe) - Ray Brown's One Ton Gypsy

Lady Montego (D. Maguire) - Ray Brown's One Ton Gypsy

Freedom Train (C. Tumhai) - Friends

Boy, You Shot Me Down (One Ton Gypsy) - Ray Brown's One Ton Gypsy

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Garrison – The Final Blow, Unit 2

Recorded: June 1973 Released: 1973

Where recorded: Garrison Disco, High Street, Prahran

Label: Mushroom SMX43193 Format: L.P.

Track Listing:

Snatch It Back and Hold It (Jnr. Wells) - Chain with Matt Taylor

Now I'm Free (El Sid) - Sid Rumpo

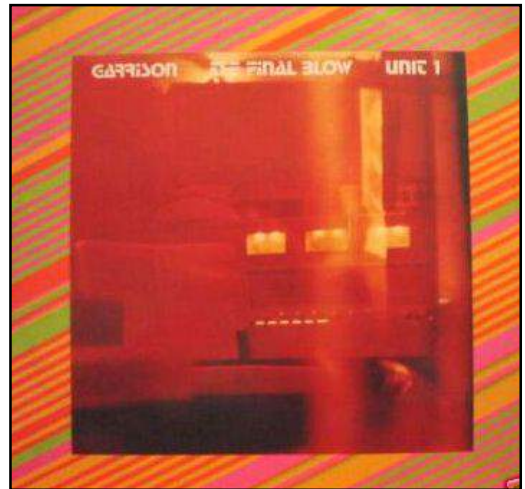
Forty Days and Forty Nights (Morganfield) - Sid Rumpo

Sweet Marie (D. Tilders) - Dutch Tilders

Do What You Wanna Do (Sullivan-Morgan-Harvey) - Chain

Roberta (M. Taylor) - Matt Taylor

My Soul's On Fire (Harris-Lagos-Mandel-Reswick-Conte) - Alta Mira



JOHNNY O'KEEFE: Johnny O'Keefe At The Waltzing Matilda

Recorded: 1971 Released: October, 1973

Where recorded: Kortum's Waltzing Matilda Hotel, Springvale Road, Springvale

Label: Calendar/Festival SR66 9900 Format: L.P.

Track Listing:

Keep The Customer Satisfied (P. Simon)

To Love Somebody (B&R Gibb)

So Tough (G. Mears)

I'm Counting On You (A. Evelyn)

If I Had a Hammer (L. Hays-P. Seeger)

Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down (K. Kristofferson)

Sing (And tell the blues so long) (Whyche-Kasha-Wilson)

Swing Low Sweet Chariot (Arr. J. O'Keefe)

She's My Baby (Turnbull-Moffat-Finch)

She Wears My Ring (F.B. Byrant)

Shout (Part 1) (Isley Brothers)

Let It Be (Lennon-McCartney)

Shout (Part 2) (Isley Bros)

MACKENZIE THEORY: Bon Voyage

Recorded: 15 May, 1974 Released: 1974

Where recorded: Dallas Brooks Hall, East Melbourne

Label: Mushroom L35276 Format: L.P.



Track Listing:

Clouds (R. Mackenzie)
 The A Thing (R. Mackenzie)

379.

The C Thing (R. Mackenzie)
 Supreme Love (R. Mackenzie)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: A-Reefer-Derci**Recorded: 30 December, 1975 Released: 1976****Where Recorded: The Reefer Cabaret, Ormond Hall, Prahran.****Label: Mushroom L45657/8 AUS. Format: Double L.P.****Track Listing:**

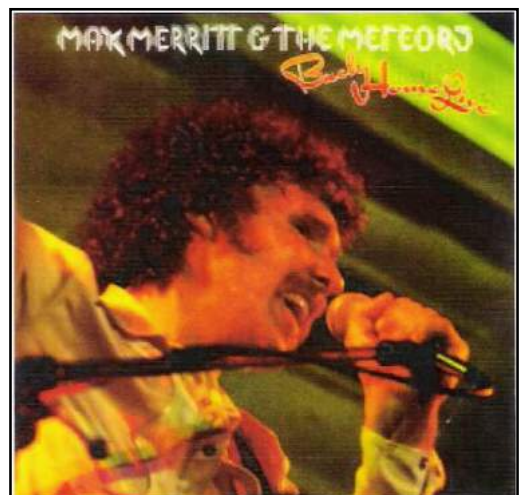
It's A Man's Man's World (Brown) Renee Geyer Band
Amy (Judd-Finn) Split Enz
Lovey Dovey (Judd-Finn) Split Enz
Time For A Change (Judd-Finn) Split Enz
Boogie Woogie Waltz (Zawinal) Ayers Rock
Gimme Shelter (Jagger/Richards) Ayers Rock
I Can't Say What I Mean (Rudd) Ariel
Rock'n'Roll Scars (Rudd) Ariel
Roll That Reefer (Flett-Conway) Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band
The Prefect (Flett-Conway) Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band
Out In The Suburbs (Conway-Olbrei) Captain Matchbox Whoopee Band
Revolution (Macainsh) Skyhooks
Smut (Symons) Skyhooks
Saturday Night (Macainsh) Skyhooks

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Live At The Station Hotel**Recorded: March 1976 Released: 1976****Where recorded: Station Hotel, Prahran****Label: LAMINGTON LAM 332 Format: L.P.****Re-released: 1981, Missing Link ING 004****Track Listing:**

Ballad Of The Station Hotel (Lookin'For Love) (C. Myriad) Myriad
Rock 'n Roll Highway (C. Myriad) Myriad
Glenrowan (C. Myriad) Myriad
Marijuana Hell (R. Nagle-J.Blakeley) Dingoes
 Mark's Rave – Mark Barnes
When A Man Loves A Woman (Lewis-Wright) Dingoes
Up Against The Wall Redneck Mother (R. Wylie Hubbard) Saltbush
Stay All Night (B. Willis-T.Duncan) Saltbush
What Am I Doin' Here? (Elliot-Townshend) Wild Beaver Band
How Come All You Dudes Look Like Cowboys? (Elliot-Townshend-Brunel) Wild Beaver Band
Messin' Around The Town (Elliot-Townshend-Brunel) Wild Beaver Band

MAX MERRITT AND THE METEORS: Back Home Live**Recorded: June 15 & 16 1976 Released: 1977****Where recorded: Dallas Brooks Hall, East Melbourne****Label: Arista 134 Format: L.P.****Track Listing:**

A Little Easier
Wrong Turn
Coming Back



Ain't You Glad You Came
Try A Little Tenderness
Slipping Away

380.

Find A Home
Long Time Gone
Let It Slide
Fanny Mae
(Merritt/Wood/Campbell/Connelly/Glascoe/Lewis/Levy.)

ARIEL: *Aloha Ariel*

Recorded: 31 August 1977 Released: October, 1977

Where recorded: Dallas Brooks Hall, East Melbourne

Label: Image ILP 775 Format: L.P.

(Re-released with *Live! More From Before* as *Live in Concert* - double L.P. August, 1980

Image L45883/4)

Track Listing:

All I Need is a Change (Slavich)
Amazon (Mason)
Disco Dilemma (Rudd)
Hollywood (Rudd)
I'll Be Gone (Rudd)
Illitcit Love (Rudd)
It's Gonna Get Worse (Rudd)
It's Only Love (Mason)
King's Cross Crusader (Slavich)
Party's Just Begun (Slavich)
Where Do You Go (McLennan)
You Keep Me Moving (McLennan)

ARIEL: *Live! More From Before*

Recorded: 31 August 1977 Released: August, 1978

Where recorded: Dallas Brooks Hall, East Melbourne

Label: Image ILP795 Format: L.P.

(Re-released with *Aloha Ariel* - double L.P. August, 1980 Image L45883/4)

Track Listing:

Coral Queen (McLennan)
Dark Side of Yeppoon (Rudd)
I'll Take You High (Rudd)
It's Time we Said Our Goodbyes (Rudd)
Jamaican Farewell (Rudd)
Red Hot Mamma (Rudd)
Rock & Roll Scars (Rudd)
Some Good Advice (Rudd)
We Are Indelible (Rudd)

Recorded live at Sunbury:

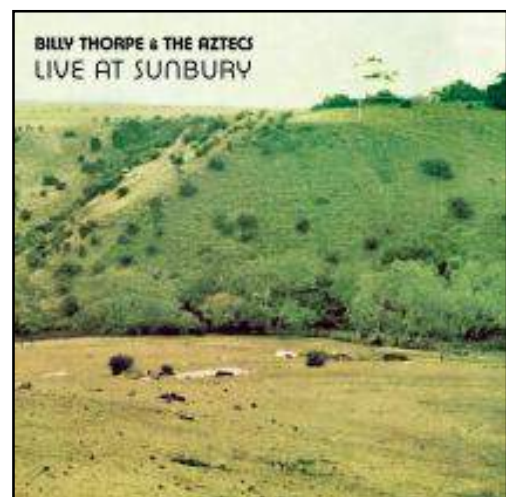
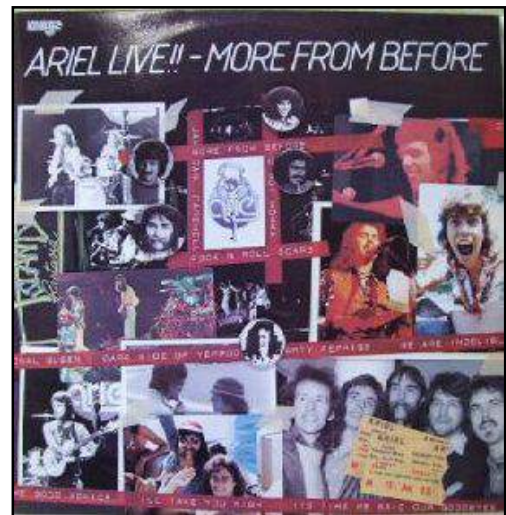
BILLY THORPE AND THE AZTECS: *Aztecs Live At Sunbury*

Recorded: January, 1972 Released: 1972

Where recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Havoc 4003/04 Format: Double LP (Re-released 1980's MLR 2320.)

Track Listing:



CC Rider (Rainey)
Be Bop A Lula (Vincent-Davis)

381.

Mamma (Thorpe-Morgan)
Rock Me Baby (Josea-King)
Most People I Know (Thorpe)
Time To Live (Thorpe-Morgan)
Jump Back (Thomas)
Ooh Poo Pa Doo (J. Hill)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Sunbury*

Recorded: January 1972 Released: October 1972

Where recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: EMI SOXLP 7561/2 Format: Double LP

Track Listing:

Morning Good Morning (Key-Borich) The La De Das
Roundabout (Key-Borich) The La De Das
Gonna See My Baby Tonight (K. Borich) The la De Das
Soul Sacrifice (C. Santana) Pirana
Some Good Advice (My Crudd) Spectrum
I'll Be Gone (Rudd) Spectrum
We Are Indelible (Rudd) Indelible Murtceps
Be My Honey (My Crudd) Indelible Murtceps
But That's Alright (Rudd) Indelible Murtceps
Try A Little Tenderness (Woods-Campbell-Connolly) Max Merritt & The Meteors
Fanny Mae (Glascoe) Max Merritt & The Meteors
You Touch Me (?) Max Merritt & The Meteors
Roly Poly (Doran-Lake) SCRA
Momma (Thorpe-Morgan) Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Summer Jam*

Recorded: 29 January 1973 Released: 1973

Recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Mushroom L25073 Format: LP

Track Listing:

Help Me (Williamson-Bass) / *Rock Me Baby* (King-Josea) - Billy Thorpe w.Leo De Castro/Lobby Loyde/Coloured Balls
Going Down (D. Nix) - Lobby Loyde/Colored Balls
G.O.D. - Lobby Loyde/Coloured Balls (L. Loyde)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Sunbury*

Recorded: January 1973 Released: 1973

Where recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Mushroom DJ11 Format: Sample for radio EP, 331/3rpm

Track Listing:

La La Song (L. DeCastro) - Friends
Down The River (G. Ratzinos) - Madder Lake
Silver Spurs (G. Quill) - Country Radio
High Rollin' Man (N. Diamond) - Johnny O'Keefe
Harry Rag (R.& D. Davies) - The 69ers
Australia (G. Cardier) - Glenn Cardier

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The Great Australian Rock Festival 1973, Sunbury*

Recorded: January 1973 Released: 1 April, 1973

Where recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Mushroom/Festival MRL 1/3 Format: Triple L.P.

382.

Track Listing:

High Rollin' Man (N. Diamond) – Johnny O'Keefe
Bird On A Wire (L. Cohen) – Friends
La La Song (Friends) – Friends
Harry Rag – (R. & D. Davies) – 69ers
Johnny B. Goode (C. Berry) – Coloured Balls
Down The River (G. Ratzinos) – Madder Lake
12 lb Toothbrush (Madder Lake) – Madder Lake
Messing With The Kid (M. London) – Band Of Light
Goin' Back Home (Thorpe) – Aztecs
I'm Going To Love You (Blackfeather) – Blackfeather
Friday Night Groove (Carson) – Carson
Sunset Song (Mighty Mouse) – Mighty Mouse
Erection (Healing Force) – Healing Force
Silver Spurs (G. Quill) – Country Radio
Brisbane To Beechworth (Taylor) – Matt Taylor
Sailing (Elsid) – Sid Rumpo
New Song And.. (R. MacKenzie) – Mackenzie Theory
Australia (G. Cardier) – Glenn Cardier
Living With A Memory (M. Versohuer) – Bakery

BLACKFEATHER: *Blackfeather Live! Sunbury*

Recorded: January, 1973 Released: 1974

Where recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Infinity L25095 Format: L.P.

Track Listing:

Boppin' the Blues (Perkins-Griffin)
Get It On (Johns)
I Just Love to Rock 'n' Roll (Johns)
I'm Gonna Love You (Johns)
Let's Twist Again (Mann-Appell)
Slippin' & Slidin' (Penniman-Collins-Smith)
Still Alive & Well (Derringer)

CARSON: *On The Air*

Recorded: Sunday 27 January, 1973 Released: April, 1973

Where recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: EMI/Harvest SHVL-611 Format: L.P.

Track Listing:

Dingo (Carson)
Laid-back Feel (Carson)
Dust My Broom (E. James)
Hey Joe (B. Roberts)
Boogie (Carson)
Sunberry Jam (Carson)

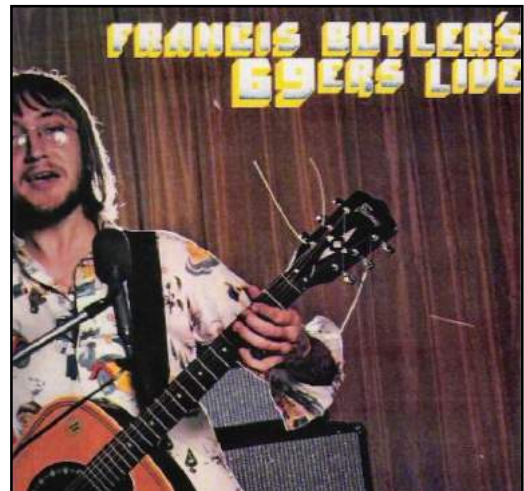
FRANCIS BUTLER AND THE 69ERS : *Live*

Recorded: January 1973 Released: January 1974

Where Recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Festival/Infinity L25096 Format: LP

Track Listing:



Round and Round (Panama Jug Band)
Let The Boy Rock and Roll (Sebastian-Butler)

383.

Hello Hello (MacNeil-Kreemer)
Lovin' You (Sebastian)
The Mighty Quinn (Bob Dylan)
Jug Band Music (Trad arr. Francis Butler)
You Ain't Goin' Nowhere (Bob Dylan)
Sarah Jane (T.Garrett-J.Fuller)
Harry Rag (R. & D. Davies)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Highlights Of Sunbury '74 - Part 1*

Recorded: January, 1974 Released: 1974

Where Recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Mushroom Anti-Ripoff L25122 SMX44093 Format: LP

Track Listing:

Lizards (Madder Lake) - Madder Lake
I'm A Dingo (R. Wilson) - The Dingoes
I'm Gonna Miss You Babe (Chain) - Chain
Big Shake (R. Wilson) - Daddy Cool
Hi Honey Ho (R. Wilson) - Daddy Cool
New Orleans (Guida-Wilson) - Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs
Hey, What's The Matter (G. Macainsh) - Skyhooks
Roll Over Beethoven (C. Berry) - Buster Brown
Buster Brown (Buster Brown) - Buster Brown

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Highlights Of Sunbury '74 - Part 2*

Recorded: January, 1974 Released: 1974

Where Recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Mushroom Anti-Ripoff L25123 SMX44095 Format: LP

Track Listing:

Payday Again (K. Tolhurst) - The Dingoes
Morning Magic (Burton) - Ayers Rock
Supreme Love (R. McKenzie) - Mackenzie Theory
Love On The Radio (Macainsh-Hill) - Skyhooks
We'll Never Do The Same Again (Chain) - Matt Taylor
Wang Dang Doodle (Dixon) - Sid Rumpo
Sweet Home Chicago (Johnson) - Sid Rumpo
Freedom Jazz Dance (Harris) - Full Moon

BILLY THORPE: *The Billy Thorpe Rock Classics*
(Side 2 only - live from Sunbury)

When recorded: Sunbury 1974 Released: 1974

Where Recorded: Sunbury Rock Festival

Label: Mushroom

Formats: L.P. : MLX 064

Cassette: M7C 7064

Track Listing (for Side 1):

Somebody Left Me Crying (Thorpe-Morgan)
Be Bop A Lula (Vincent-Davis)
Dawn Song (Thorpe-Morgan)
Most People I Know Think That I'm Crazy (Thorpe)

Track Listing (for Side 2) Live At Sunbury:

Oop Poo Pah Doo (J.Hill)

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I would like to extend Special Thanks to the many people for their memories, their support and encouragement as well as their photos, newspaper clippings, interviews, handbills and posters.

THE CAST AND CREW: CORRESPONDENCE, INTERVIEWS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORABILIA:

The Punters:

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Jill Braithwaite - email correspondence, 1 November, 2004
Mark De Carteret - email correspondence, 1 August, 2005
Paul Close (Perth) - email correspondence, 22 July, 2004
Barry Davidson - correspondence, 9 April, 2005
Graeme and Nerida Dennett - email correspondence, 29 December, 2004
Kaylene Deppeler - email correspondence, 14 January, 2005
Tony Dew - email correspondence, 26 December, 2004
Michael Edmunds (Sydney) - email correspondence, 12 December, 2004
John "Fitzy" Fitzgerald - email correspondence, 30 August, 2004
Ron Govatt - email correspondence
Bruce Heritage - email correspondence 14 January, 2005
Kevin Hoffman - correspondence, 1 February, 2005

Kerri Hooker - email correspondence, 15 November, 2004
Judith McCarthy (Tasmania) - correspondence 19 November, 2004
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Bani McSpedden - venue operator/performer - telephone interview, 14 March, 2006
Hugh McSpedden - lighting technician/performer - email correspondence, 15 December, 2004
Don Muir (Echuca) - television cameraman, correspondence, 26 December, 2004
Cliff Nash - venue employee, email correspondence, 27 November, 2004
Ed Nimmervoll, journalist, rock historian, Melbourne - interview, 23 September, 2005
Suzette Pedersen (nee Jauhari) - interview 22 November, 2005
Billy Pinnell, broadcaster, journalist, rock historian - interview 19 September, 2005
Geoff Roberts - (New South Wales) Pastoralist and Festival Site Owner
Ken Sparkes - Radio personality and DJ, author's correspondence, 2 May, 2006

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Folks, you were all just wonderful, keep on rockin' forever...

Epilogue:

There is no guarantee that I have got this all correct. There have been some difficulties in gathering satisfactory credible information from a vantage point which is now some 30 years down the track. Much of the information I received was passed on to me verbally and there is bound to be some conflicting memories and recollections which may surface from time to time. The truth had to be established, not guessed at and this I attempted to do at all stages along the way. Therefore, readers may probably still notice some discrepancies, omissions or oversights on my part. I have tried, through cross-checking where possible, to establish the accuracy of the information and include it as fact, within the parameters that I set myself for this task.

I have also tried to correctly credit all writers, authors and photographers where possible.

If there are errors in my work, please let me know. I will be quite appreciative of your input.

Conclusion:

This book has been a “labour of love” for me. Long ago, I recognised the extensive contribution to our musical heritage that these venues (and the multitude of artists who performed there) made – even though those who ran the businesses, worked or played there, would not have recognised the heritage they were creating at the time. Most would have considered it ephemeral – passing by – not really worthy of preserving. The Melbourne venues, city and suburbs - offered the bands and artists who were pushing the musical envelope with new wave of trends such as progressive, psychedelic or garage rock - places to get up close and personal with the seething crowds of young people who wanted to experience them live – places which reeked of atmosphere. For a short time – perhaps seven or eight years – these venues were the most exciting, stimulating, yet exhausting places in which to spend a few weekend hours rubbing shoulders with those who entertained with their guitars, drums, keyboards, harmonicas etc. taking Aussie rock music into uncharted waters – and the fans loved them for that!

In my efforts to carry out the research for this book, I found that precious little documentation remains, except that which still exists in the memories of those who were there in those days. This is what I really wanted to place in print – the stories, memories and recollections of those who were there and to balance this carefully with the fabric and events of the time. There is little point in just printing stories, no matter how interesting or important these are, unless these can be placed in the context of the life and times of those of us who were youngsters in the milieu of mid-twentieth century Melbourne.

About the author..

Jeffrey Turnbull has been a keen student of music and music history for many years and has spent much of his time researching and writing on this and a number of other interest areas. He has written small articles, papers and reviews and has had these published over time.

He has never been involved directly in the music industry and his writings come from the perspective of a fan of rock and pop music. Therefore he has been able to combine his love of music and his professional research skills to complete this, his first book on one of his great loves, Melbourne music.

A teacher since 1974, he graduated with a Bachelor Of Arts and then completed his Bachelor Of Education, both at Monash University, Melbourne. He taught History, Geography and English at many Government and Catholic secondary schools in Melbourne, until deciding to take early retirement in mid-2005.

During his last few teaching years, he successfully developed a History course at middle-secondary school which linked the events of the decade - 1960 to 1970, to the music trends that emerged throughout that era. Entitled, "The Sensational Sixties" he wrote, resourced and taught this course at Mater Christi College in Belgrave, Victoria.

Jeffrey has been happily married to Kaye for over 35 years and they have three adult children. Living in Glen Waverley, Victoria, his time is now spent assisting with grandpa-type duties as well as writing and collecting - mainly music memorabilia. He has maintained a great love of live music since first seeing and hearing Johnny O'Keefe in concert around 1961 and continues to visit Melbourne's many live music venues, when time permits.

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