

zigzag 25

FIFTEEN
PENCE



Arthur Lee

His first
solo album
since he left
"LOVE"

WIND
44



RCA RECORDS
AND TAPES

"Nothing is more beautiful
than a guitar,
save perhaps two..."
CHOPIN

Together
Julian Bream
John Williams

SB 6862



Rather than do a question-and-answer thing, we thought we could make it flow better and compress more fax-and-info in if we edited our discussion into a sort of narrative style, with Elton explaining the downs and ups of his musical career.

PART ONE: PAYING DUES

1...On the road with Bluesology

"Bluesology, my first band, was a four-piece made up from people from the Harrow area, which is where I come from. There was Mick Inkpen on drums; Stuart Brown, from Northwood, played guitar and sang; Rex Bishop played bass - he was from Willesden; and I played organ. As a semi-pro group we got quite a bit of work, and we were ambitious and dedicated - to the point of taking the plunge and deciding to add a trumpet and a saxophone, which was partly because we wanted to expand our horizons and partly because of the emergence of Otis Redding style brass arrangements. You see, thinking that we were a cut above the average club band, we were concentrating on the rather more obscure material - things like 'Times are getting tougher than tough' by Jimmy Witherspoon, who was a sort of blues underground figure at the time.

"Our first sax player was unbelievable - used to travel down from St Albans for gigs - but he decided to go off and play in the Queen Mary band. . . you know, playing on transAtlantic crossings, and so we got in Pat Hicks on trumpet and Dave Murphy on sax. They were much older than us; sort of frustrated jazz musicians, but as a result of the changes, we were playing places like the Scotch of St James, which was THE discotheque.

"All this time, I was working as a tea-boy for Mills Music, the publishing company, and it was all glamour as far as I was concerned; I used to do things like take messages to Joe Loss, and think it was all happening for me.

"One Saturday morning, we did an audition at the Kilburn State and as a result we aroused the interest of Roy Tempest, who used to run an agency which brought in the big American stars to tour.

He saw us, liked us and said "how would you like to be in the big time, boys? How would you like to back all the American soul men?" Well, I simply couldn't dream of anything better; I was soul crazy at the time - used to spend all my money on soul records.

"Our first job was backing Wilson Pickett - can you imagine how we felt? He was such an important figure in the music we were playing, and here we were about to tour as his band! Well, we went to rehearse with his guitarist - but he didn't like our drummer, and he didn't particularly like the rest of us either, so that tour was blown out, and we were very brought down. A little later, however, we got offered the Major Lance tour, and to be sure of getting that, we went out and bought every record he'd ever made, we learnt every song and rehearsed to the point where he arrived and was so impressed that he didn't even feel the need to go through the songs making amendments.

"It was all happening for us, so I left my job and we started to work for Tempest full time. I was very starstruck; I used to idolise these stars, but with almost every one I was really disappointed and disillusioned once I'd worked with them and found out what they were really like.

"We backed Patti LaBelle twice - they were so bloody professional, but they were cows really - used to give us hell if we ever played even one chord wrong. They were good musically, but they were doing awful stuff like 'Danny Boy' and 'Over the rainbow'. Cindy Birdsong was in the group - they were called Patti LaBelle & her Bluebells, but some of the posters said Patti LaBelle & her Bellies.

"Then we did Billy Stewart, who was amazing - the only person I really felt a lot of respect for. We did a good job for him - brought out the best in us. He died in a car crash.

"Some of those singers who came over really got exploited; I can't believe how much work we did when I think back. Often the tour would start the day after the guy arrived in the country - so we only had about 6 hours rehearsal. Then we would hustle all over the place. . . . without any

roadies, I might add. I don't know how much they got paid for these tours, but just as an example in one day during the Billy Stewart tour, we played Douglas House, a US servicemans' club in London, at four in the afternoon, then rushed up to Birmingham to do both the Ritz and the Plaza Ballrooms, and then back down to the Cut Club in London at four in the morning. . . and we had to load, unload and set up all the equipment ourselves!~

"The saddest gig we ever did was the Ink Spots tour. They were old guys and should've been doing cabaret to audiences that had heard of them, but they were put on the ballroom circuit and all the kids would disappear back to the bar as soon as they started singing. They'd start up with 'Back in your own back yard', and the audience would just laugh and go out. The only places where they were appreciated were the Twisted Wheel club in Manchester, which was the grooviest gig to play in those days, and the Mojo Club in Sheffield, which was like the Fillmore of its time.

"After a while, we left Tempest to go with Marquee Artists, and we went on the Scotch, Cromwellian, Bag o Nails circuit again, as well as doing a month at the Top Ten in Hamburg, but troubles started within the group. The brass section was getting on at both the drummer and me and the only thing that kept us all together was the thirty quid a week we were getting. Anyway, Mick our drummer decided to leave (and was replaced by a guy called Paul, I think), and then our bass player went too - so only Stuart and me were left from the original Bluesology. We got Freddie Gandy in on bass; he was a gas - used to be with Twink in the Pink Fairies, or at least their predecessors - and we went off on a tour of France, which was followed by a month in a club in St Tropez. It was quite a nice time for me; I enjoyed all the travelling around on the Continent, and the money was quite good. . . I was growing up, finding out what life was all about.

"When we came back to England, I started getting really frustrated and complex ridden because I was extremely large; I mean, I'm quite large now, but then I was about 14 stone - and I was stuck behind a Vox Continental when what I really wanted to do was sing. There was no chance - we'd got into the rut of playing 'Knock on wood' and 'Shake' every night for about 4 years. We gigged around, did a tour of Sweden, and when we came back we had an offer to join up with Long John Baldry, who hadn't done anything since his days in Steampacket.

"Baldry's first move was to get Stuart to drop the guitar in favour of concentrating entirely on vocals, to bring in another singer called Alan Walker, and to turn it into a three singers up front sort of band. It started off well and we had a great time because Baldry is a lot of fun to work with, but then there was a big row over the brass section at Klooks Kleek one night and it ended up with one of them running off with the van or something ridiculous like that. . . so we decided to re-shuffle the band a bit.

"We got two new brass players, Mark Charlis and Elton Dean, Neil Hubbard in on guitar, Pete Gavin replaced this drummer called Paul, and so it wasn't a bad little band at that stage. A bit later, however, Alan Walker got the bullet and we auditioned potential girl singers, because Baldry had decided that it would be a good idea to get a bird out there in front too. He settled for Marsha Hunt, who, at the audition was frankly dreadful; I mean, so diabolical that even she laughs about it now - she sang something like 'Love is a many splendoured thing' unaccompanied.

Anyway, it worked out great - she looked good and got the blokes in the audiences going - but it was still down to the same old Wilson Pickett/Stax stuff.

"All of a sudden, out of the blue, Baldry got a number one hit record with 'Let the heartaches begin', which he had made separately with a big string backing. Within a fortnight, Stuart and Marsha had left, because it obviously wasn't worth John's while to keep them, and we were playing big ballrooms - the high spot of our act being where Baldry used to sing his hit to a backing tape that we had to mime to! It was a great time; I've got no unhappy recollections of working with him at all, but he could be such an idiot at times. Like I remember one gig at Haverford West; he was standing there in his smart suit, singing his big hit, playing the star bit to the hilt. All the chicks were screaming and grabbing for him, and he was loving every minute of it, but then one girl pulled the microphone cable and broke it - and instead of brushing the incident aside with a showbiz-star gesture, he got all serious and angry, and he said to this chick: "You've broken my microphone. . . . that'll cost you fifty pounds". . . . and then he walloped her on the head with the mike. He was really serious about the whole thing - took us ages to calm him.

"As Baldry's style changed towards the soft ballad stuff, we gradually moved into cabaret and. . . oh God, it was really beginning to bring me down. That Christmas, we were doing three gigs a night for a while - the Sheffield Cavendish, Tito's in Stockton and South Shields Latino; we were the night club entertainment to help the food go down nicely. Well, that was it; I began looking through the papers to try and find a job - I didn't care what it was. . . working in a record shop, anything.

2...Songwriting for Dick James

"I had to do something, and I didn't want to join another band because quite honestly, I wasn't that good an organist and I didn't look that good either. Really, I wanted to be a singer - but who would consider employing me in that capacity? Maybe Fred Bloggs & his Orchestra at Streatham Locarno or something of that sort. . . but nobody that I could enjoy working with. Although I didn't really want to write, I continued to toy with the idea because I thought that was the only way I'd ever get anywhere.

"I was sitting around, wondering what to do, when I happened to see an advert in the NME; Liberty/UA Records, having just gone independent from EMI wanted 'songwriters and talent'. So I phoned, got an appointment, and took a couple of songs along to a guy called Ray Williams, who thought they were "not bad, and not a bad voice". I was a little disheartened, because I thought they were knockout songs, but I explained that I wasn't too good at lyrics and that I was looking for a lyric writer to form a team.

"I didn't hear any more about that, but he did phone up and ask me to turn up at Regent Sound Studios in Denmark St to do an audition for Liberty. "Sing five songs" he said when I arrived, but I only had a couple prepared; I didn't know any others (except Baldry's stuff, which I did not know the words of), and so I ended up singing two Jim Reeves songs - 'He'll have to go' and 'I love you because'.

You see, before Bluesology, I used to sing in a pub, the Northwood Hills Hotel - I was at school and was trying to save up for an electric piano. . . and I sang stuff like that. Well, of course, the audition was just dreadful. . . . "you must be joking" they said, and I thought that my one golden chance of ever

THE ELTON JOHN STORY

getting anywhere had gone down the drain.

"As I was leaving the studio, really brought down, this Ray Williams happened to mention that he'd had some lyrics from a guy called Bernie, up in Lincolnshire somewhere, and would I like to see them. . . . so I had a look, and they didn't seem at all bad.

"Now this was around 1967, when soul music was dying out very fast in favour of the Pink Floyd/UFO type stuff. It was the Lemonade Lake era; all the groups (including Bluesology) were putting on their beads and kaftans and, although I enjoyed it at the time, I think that was one of the most hideous periods in music. Well, these lyrics of Bernie's were in this style, and I was quite impressed, because they were so much better and more poetic than anything I had been able to write. I tried to set some of them to music, and I came up with one I quite liked called 'Scarecrow', which I took along to Ray, who also liked it. Having already been turned down by Liberty, he took me along to a company he had associations with, which was part of the Dick James Music companies, and it was there that I met up with Caleb Quayle again.

"When I was at Mills Music, I often had to go to a collecting house in Old Compton Street called Paxtons - they used to get orders from people and buy music from the various publishers - and Caleb used to work for them. I used to hate him - he used to tease me about my being in a group - so I wasn't very pleased to find that he was the engineer in Dick James' 2 track studio. He didn't recognise me however, because I'd lost a lot of weight during the previous months, but when I told him, he collapsed with laughter and we became the best of friends.

"All this time, I was still in Bluesology - I was doing all these things behind there back, because I didn't want to give up a steady income until I'd sorted out an alternative income. So, between gigs, I would go up to Dick James Music and make demos of songs I'd made out of this Bernie guy's lyrics. . . it was just Caleb and me - Dick James wasn't aware of what was going on at all.

"One day, Ray Williams asked if I wanted to meet this guy who was sending all the lyrics in, and I said "sure I do". So in came Bernie Taupin, looking very green; it was only his second visit to London, and he was staying with his aunt in Putney. I played him the songs, none of which he'd heard, and he was knocked out, so we decided to keep going as a team.

"It was ridiculous how many people were making demos up at Dick James studio, but one day he discovered what was going on and had a big purge, finding out just who was using his facilities. "Who the hell are Reg Dwight and Bernie Taupin?" he shouted, and he got Caleb to play some of the stuff we'd recorded. I don't think he was very impressed, but he agreed to sign us because Caleb, who was his blue eyed boy, said he thought it was good.

"So, we signed with Dick James for three years or whatever, as songwriters, and he guaranteed us ten quid a week each. That was less than I was getting in the group, but it was all I needed; so I gave my notice in. I'd been turning up to gigs like a zombie - you've got no idea what it can do to you when you have to play a song like 'Knock on wood' or 'Mr Pitiful' every gig for 4 years. That was it; I left and Bluesology carried on with Baldry. Jimmy Horowitz, who married Lesley Duncan, replaced me, and Caleb joined them too for a while to replace Neil Hubbard, who had gone off somewhere (later to turn up in Juicy Lucy, and then Joe Cocker's band). Caleb was in turn replaced by Bernie Holland, who subsequently joined Jody Grind along with Pete Gavin, the drummer. The band carried on for about a year with Baldry, but then it just broke up and everybody drifted off in separate directions.

"You might imagine that a group that lasted as long as Bluesology would have made a lot of records; in fact, we only did 3 singles. The first was before we'd even turned professional - a song called 'Come back baby!', which I wrote while I was at Mills Music. In fact, I sang on the record, because it was too high for Stuart

THE ELTON JOHN STORY

ELTON JOHN ON RECORD:

with Bluesology #1; 2 Singles:
"Come back baby" & "Mr Frantic"
both recorded 1965, on Fontana.
with Bluesology #4; 1 Single:
"Since I met you baby" - Polydor 1968

Solo Singles (not on albums):
"I've been loving you" / "Here's to the next time" Phillips BF 1643
Produced by Caleb Quaye, late 1968

"Lady Samantha" / "All across the heavens" Phillips BF 1739 Jan 69
"It's not that you need" / "Just like strange rain" DJM 25, May 69
Both produced by Steve Brown

Albums (all DJM Records, except *):
"EMPTY SKY" June 68 DJM 403
"ELTON JOHN" April 69: DJM 406
"DUMBLEDOWN CONNECTION" Oct 1970: DJM 410

"17-11-70" April 69: DJM 414
"FRIENDS" * on Fontana Records April 69
"MADMAN ACROSS THE WATER" Oct 69: DJM 420

"HONKY CHATEAU" May 69: DJM 423

PLASTIC PENNY

Had a number one hit with "Everything I am" - broke up in 1969 as members wanted to break out of bubble-gum material

MICK GRAHAM guitar/vocals
PAUL RAYMOND organ/vocals
BRIAN KEITH vocals
TONY MURRAY bass
NIGEL OLSSON drums
To the Troggs
To the Troggs
To the Troggs

THE LAST SPENCER DAVIS GROUP

See forthcoming WINDWOOD/DAVIS family tree.

COCHISE #1

(also did gigs as Plastic Penny...naughty!) Started Aug 1969. See Zigzag 16.

MICK GRAHAM gr/voc
B.J. COLE pedal steel
RICKY WILLS bass
STUART BROWN vocals
WILLIE WILSON guitar/vocals
To the Troggs
To the Troggs
To the Troggs

COCHISE #2

Split up in 1972, after 3 albums on Liberty/UA.

MICK GRAHAM gr/voc
B.J. COLE pedal steel
RICKY WILLS bass
JOHN GILBERT vocal
ROY OTEIRO drums
To the Lee Riders.

BLUESOLOGY #1

Started as a semi-pro local Harrow area group around 1964

MICK INKPEN drums
REX BISHOP bass
STUART BROWN vocals/gtr
REG DWIGHT organ

In the usual inimitable frame manner, I left the construction of this chart until the very last minute - by which time Elton had gone off on his annual 2 weeks vacation. So a lot of the dates etc could not be verified. (Silly me)

BLUESOLOGY #2

Expanded line-up to include brass. Worked for Roy Tempest Agency mainly as backing group for touring American soul stars 1966-7

MICK INKPEN drums
REX BISHOP bass
STUART BROWN vocals/guitar
REG DWIGHT organ
PAT HIGGS trumpet
DAVE MURPHY sax

BLUESOLOGY #3

Still playing 'Knock on wood' throughout the flower power era, but working mainly on the continent. 1967

PAUL X drums
STUART BROWN vocals/guitar
REG DWIGHT organ
PAT HIGGS trumpet
DAVE MURPHY sax
FRED GANDI bass
to Geno Washington
to left music

BLUESOLOGY #4

Long John Baldry joined and took over during his hit single era - 1967

MARSHA HUNT replaced ALAN WALKER vocals
STUART BROWN vocals
REG DWIGHT organ
MARC CHARIG cornet/flugelhorn
ELTON DEAN sax
FRED GANDI bass
LONG JOHN BALDRY vocals (ex Steampacket)
PETE GAVIN drums
NEIL HUBBARD guitar (ex the Shades, the Shells, the Soul Rushers)
To the Misunderstood, Juicy Lucy, etc.

BLUESOLOGY #5

finally expired in summer 69, after backing unmentionable vocalists.

MAGNA CARTA

Two other guys

DAVEY JOHNSTONE guitar/vocals (ex Noel Murphy & Shaggy!) (He was Shaggy!)

ELTON JOHN GROUP #1

April 1970 to Jan 1972

NIGEL OLSSON drums
DEE MURRAY bass
ELTON JOHN vocals/piano
BERNIE TAUPIN lyrics

ELTON JOHN GROUP #2

Feb 1972 - still going strong! For full details of albums, see list above.

NIGEL OLSSON drums
DEE MURRAY bass
ELTON JOHN vocals/piano
BERNIE TAUPIN lyrics
DAVEY JOHNSTONE guitar

THE SOUL AGENTS

A good (says Toller) English soul band who started up in 1964, went through various personnel changes, and ended up as:

ROD STEWART vocals (for about a year. I didn't know that!) (See Zigzag 19)
PETE HUNT vocals now with Igubana
DON SHINN organ (e.g. James Taylor album on Apple)
IAN DUCK gr/vocals
ROGER POPE drums
DAVE GLOVER bass
Split up in 1968 and re-formed as Love

THE LOOT, who became HOOKFOOT #1

The Loot were Pope, Glover, Dave Wright (rhythm gr), Jimmy Baines (vocals) and Bruce Turner (lead). When the last 2 left, Caleb joined and Loot became session men (on Empty Sky for instance) & then Hookfoot in 1969. (Ian Duck was called in when Wright left in late 68). Made 2 albums: HOOKFOOT (May 71) & GOOD TIMES A COMIN' (Feb 1972)

IAN DUCK gr/harp/voc
ROGER POPE drums
CALEB QUAYE gr/keyboard/vocals
DAVE GLOVER bass
left music

HOOKFOOT #2

July 1972 - now currently recording new album.

FRED GANDI bass
IAN DUCK gr/harp/voc
ROGER POPE drums
CALEB QUAYE gr/keyboard/vocals
Thanks to: Elton John, Helen Walters + Hookfoot
Pete July 72

to sing, and Jack Baverstock, who was in charge of Fontana at the time, preferred my voice anyway. So though I never sang with the group on stage, I did on that record. The second thing we did was a really diabolical thing called 'Mr Frantic', and then a lot later, Kenny Lynch took an interest in Stuart and Marsha, and he produced a single for Polydor... it was a song he wrote called 'Since I met you baby'. And that was it - the complete Bluesology discography. We never recorded with Baldry, because he was too busy doing the big orchestra bit with Tony Macauley.

"Back to where we were; I was still living at home, and Bernie was still living in Lincolnshire, which was obviously far from ideal, so he came down and moved in with my parents. I was leading a sort of double existence; I was playing piano on various sessions that Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway had fixed up for me, and Bernie and I were writing prolifically... total rubbish, but prolifically. I was doing demos of the songs, and we made them into an album, produced by Caleb on the two-track machine. There were songs on it like 'Regimental Sergeant Zippo' and 'Watching the planes go by', but of all the songs we wrote in that era, only a couple have ever seen the light of day; there's one called 'The tide will turn for Rebecca' - a Johnny Mathis type thing that Edward Woodward recorded - and the other was one called 'I can't go on living without you', which Dick James put in for the Eurovision song contest. It got to the last 6, the year that Lulu did the songs, and Cilla Black subsequently recorded it.

"Anyway, after making this album of our songs, nobody at Dick James wanted to know, and it was getting very frustrating to listen to Dick asking us to write commercial top twenty stuff, which we'd often tried but just couldn't seem to do. We pushed on regardless, and took the advice of Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway, who I'd known for some time; they said that the only way to make it was to work only as we found best... they wrote to a formula because that suited them, but they reckoned we should do what we wanted to, regardless of commercial considerations. So we did - and finally we made a single, called 'I've been loving you', produced by Caleb and released on Phillips, who had a licencing deal with Dick James Music before they started DJM.

3... Reg becomes Elton

"It was obvious that Reg Dwight lacked the right sort of ring for a singer's name, so we decided to change it to Elton John - the Elton bit was pinched from Elton Dean, and John I got from our beloved Mr Baldry. Anyway, the record, which was an Engelbert Humperdinck type ballad, came out and promptly died an abysmal



Elton, pre-May 1969.

death. Ironically, Roy Tempest rushed out a cover version by Edwin Bee on Deca, but both records failed abominably, I'm glad to say.

"At this point, Caleb, who wanted to get on to other things, was having violent ructions with Dick James, who just didn't want to know, and Caleb subsequently left, after having had a terrible argument with Johnny Franz of Phillips Records. That meant that there was nobody at Dick James Music who was interested enough to help us, and we went through a thoroughly depressing period until a guy called Steve Brown arrived as a plugger for the new DJM label. He listened to our songs and though he liked them, he said there was nothing there that knocked him out... in other words, they weren't very good. In fact, he was right - they weren't very good, but we didn't know that at the time and it really hurt us. He said the fault lay in the fact that we were doing things half and half... partly as we wanted, but partly as Dick wanted, and it was coming out as a mish-mosh. He told us to go and write what we wanted to - which was an incredible thing to say really, because he was only a plugger for DJM. He was right nevertheless, because in the meantime, two other projects had collapsed - I tried cutting a single produced by Zack Laurence... a total failure, and then I cut a Mark London song called 'Best of both worlds'... another miserable failure.

"So we went away, and during the few months which followed, we wrote all the songs on the 'Empty Sky' album, together with 'Lady Samantha', which Steve was delighted with - he said it was the first really good thing we'd written and that he would like to produce it. By this time, the studio had been converted to four track and Dick agreed to let Steve handle the production.

"I'll always remember that session; we hired an electric piano which was so abysmally out of tune that I had to play round a lot of the notes. After it was finished, I listened to it and thought it was awful; I told Steve that he ought to stick to plugging... I was really brought down. Steve played it to people around the BBC, however, and they liked it and as a result it got a remarkable amount of airplay and went on to sell about twenty thousand. From then on, I came to the conclusion that Steve Brown must have been completely right, and his faith in us and 'Lady Samantha' was what initially launched us and was a starting point as far as enthusiasm goes.

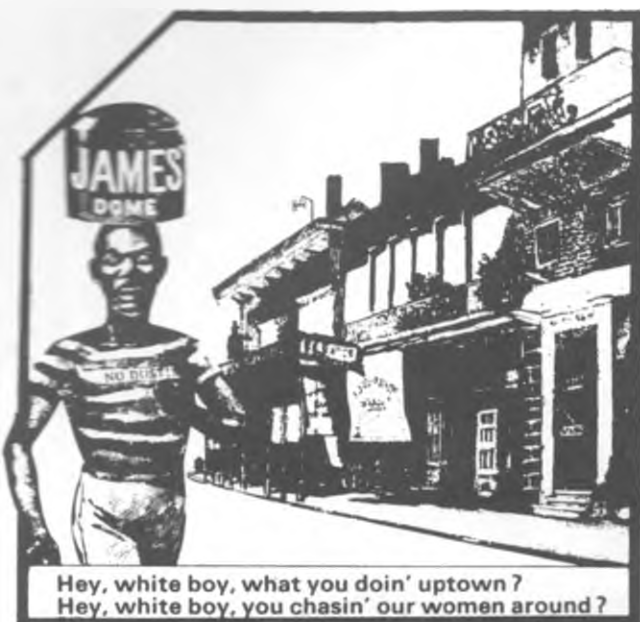
Elton John talking to our John

The concluding part of this article, covering Elton's albums and concert work, will appear in the next issue



I'M WAITING FOR THE MAN

based on the song
by **LOU REED**
& The
Velvet Underground



Son of
Schmilsson



Get your teeth into it

SF 8297

THE TRUE STORY OF THE FLAMIN' GROOVIES

"This is just like a night at the old Avalon" said John Ingham, native of San Francisco and one time art director of 'Who put the bomb' magazine, as he went on to explain the similarities between that flower-power palace and Dunstable's new Civic Hall, where about 1500 longhairs had gathered to see David Bowie climb another rung on the ladder to superstardom.

The audience, sitting all quietly and attentively on the floor waiting for Bowie, were apparently quite unprepared for the Flamin' Groovies, who, on their second English gig, were the support group. Out they came and CRUNCH... straight into rock'n'roll. I looked over to Tobler just as he was looking towards me, and we sort of nodded in approval as they roared into Chuck Berry's 'Little Queenie' - but the audience just sat there, hardly moving a sinew. Well, it's probably not surprising, I concluded; apart from the fact that people tend to reserve their energy for the main group, the Flamin' Groovies are hardly a fashionable band. Not only have they just arrived in the country virtually unknown after a six or seven year fight against obscurity and starvation in California, but they also got a vicious put-down in the Melody Maker when Roy Hollingworth, up to his neck in Bickershaw mud, decided to give them the vitriolic squirt treatment. (The MM, fearing for Hollingworth's life as leering Hell's Angels began to follow and threaten him, sent him to New York where he is currently hiding until things have cooled down a bit). As well as that, they play mainly old rock'n'roll songs, and who in today's audiences appreciate this noble and ancient art form?

Well, me and Tobler do for a start, but then we're just a couple of over-25 ex-greasy rockers. Ten years ago, fresh out of school, we discovered a common interest and spent our lunchtimes either reading 'Disc & Music Echo' in the creep infested Prudential Male Staff Rest Room, or else getting out in the Havelock in Grays Inn Road or the Globe on the corner of Hatton Garden. But either way, we

hardly ever stopped talking about rock'n'roll... Gene Vincent, Little Richard, Chuck Berry... and we wore £8 suits shoddily constructed from reclaimed wool, because we chose to spend our menial salaries on records and the pursuit of pleasure and sensation. And in the evenings and weekends, while Tobler was taking a succession of sordid pubescent women on the back of his scooter to see the Stones and the Yardbirds at Richmond Athletic Club, I was scaring the life out of any pedestrians who chanced to get in the way of my Vincent White Shadow, which I had built from a van-load of bits (so stuff that up your shirt Hunter Thompson!) Clad in black and red narrow striped jeans from Milletts, tucked into Hunter boots, and a studded Bronx jacket from Lewis Leathers, I inhabited a variety of youth clubs, dance halls and coffee bars... and the talk was always bikes, birds and rock'n'roll. My parents and other sensible people always prophesied that I'd soon grow out of it, but here we are in 1972 and I still spend most of my waking hours engulfed in rock. Good solid crunchy music. Can't beat it. Rock'n'roll—ing roll.

So anyway, there we were at Dunstable, marvelling at Cyril Jordan, who steers the Groovies like a captain runs his ship. He is lead guitarist/second vocalist, and one of the few guitarists who pay any attention to stance (in fact, Tim Barnes of Stoneground is about the only other one I can think of). Old Cyril has it down to a t (whatever that means); he has his guitar slung low - like Gene Vincent used to when he was good (check it out on the sleeves of his early Capitol albums) - and his rubber legged cavorting is a development of Eddie Cochran's classic style (did you ever see 'The girl can't help it'?).

So here I am, bleating about a group I like merely because of the guitarist's leg movements? Well, not exactly. I reckon that in 1980 or so, those of us who survive will look back and view 1968-72 as the years of sterility, mediocrity and excess. And among those who are smash-

ing into the apathy, and prolonging the myth of excitement through these dead old years of rock are the Groovies.

However, there are people besides Hollingworth who disagree. The bass player from one of my favourite bands thought that the Groovies' performance was 'atrocious', and a lot of the lifeless audience was grumbling too. But bloody hell - I started this magazine to write about bands I like, and I happen to dig 'em.

Mind you, there are some elements that could do with improvement; frankly I thought the rhythm guitarist, Jimmy Ferrel, was a bit lame, and the singer, Chris Wilson, as well as looking a bit of a prick in orange satin, was weak. He jogs about the stage like an unfortunate apprentice, deriving all his style from Jagger and Stewart, but he looks like Brian London next to Cassius Jordan's footwork. But what's the solution? What can a vocalist do? I suppose if he played a guitar it might help. (Another solution, of course, would be to get me and Tobler in to replace these two - then you'd have a rocking band on your hands!) Anyway, let's not be too harsh; the sound system was playing up so I couldn't hear them very clearly, and besides, these cats are no doubt suffering from the cultural shock of moving from San Francisco to bloody Chingford. They're bound to improve as they get used to the vagaries of our climate and customs.

Who haven't I mentioned yet? Oh yes, there's Danny Mihm on drums - he's a big (fat) powerful geezer with muscles designed to pound the life out of his kit (and he talks a lot too), and then there's George Alexander, who looks a bit like a Vietnamese escapee, on bass. (If he had shorter hair, he could pass for one of those shift b-film types who have knives concealed in every crevice of their clothing).

I spent a whole day sitting at my Bucks County Council drawing board, designing and executing that heading up there and I haven't even started on their true story, so I'd better get my finger out. (Maybe it's too late - you've probably all fallen asleep by now, but still... here we go).

** ** *

San Francisco 1965... a city on the verge of a few unexpected changes. It's still the Beatles, Stones and Beach Boys flying high nationally, and the plugged-in folkies are emerging too - Dylan, the Byrds and the Spoonful. But meanwhile, far from Gotham City, in a grimy Nevada Saloon, a motley quintet of oddballs and freaks from Frisco who call themselves the Charlatans, are pioneering a nice mellow drug-borne sound which will later be exploited and sucked dry by every newspaper, record company, radio station and TV channel in America.... the San Francisco Sound.

Cyril Jordan, my microphone in one hand and a half bottle of Teachers Scotch in the other, attempts, at my request, to give a nutshell history of the group, trying to slot it into some sort of time scale by referring to contemporary events. He fails. On listening to the tape, I can't make head or tail of how it all fits into place, but briefly the Groovies started sometime in 1965, when Cyril met Roy Loney (their vocalist for the first 6 years), George Alexander, and Tim Lynch (their first rhythm guitarist) in a billiard hall in San Francisco. (Such decadent behaviour). Nothing happened for almost two years.... nothing much, anyway; they jammed a lot, induced astonishing amounts of beneficial herbs and chemicals, and.... well "we didn't do any gigs - just got high and got our chops down".

Summer 1966; the band folded - Tim and Cyril took a charter flight to spend their school holidays in Holland, Roy got busted, the drummer (whoever he was) disappeared, and George joined a band called the Whistling Shrimp, one of the eight million bands that got lost in the rush.

Autumn 1966; the band reformed. Roy got off, Tim and Cyril returned, George came back, and Danny, the drummer from the aforementioned Whistling Shrimp, was persuaded to join. He dithered; wasn't at all convinced of the advantages of these funny cigarettes that were being passed around. You see, Danny was

- a) also invited to join Andrew Staples, yet another SF band perched on the verge of national adulation, and
- b) unable to reconcile his traditional American juvenile delinquent training with all this crazy drug abuse.

So what did he do? The logical thing; he joined Andrew Staples for a while, found they were "too weird" to ever make it, swallowed his pride, ate his apprehensions and agreed to become part of the Flamin Groovies.

It was ok - they'd still done nothing in his absence; nothing except jammed a lot, smoked a lot, etc. Two views of his joining. Cyril: "It took me eight months to get this lunatic to join. He was worried because we were stone freaks... we'd do a tune and then spend half an hour getting high". Danny himself: "I wasn't long out of reform school and used to spend my time beating people up or getting drunk. I just couldn't relate to this hippie/get stoned nonsense at all. I was scared... but in the end I joined".

Right. After that laborious preamble, we finally have the group sorted out, and they're ready to go.... or, at least, as ready as they'd ever be. All the many influences had been digested - the Stones, the Yardbirds, the Beatles, Them, and the rest, and they started doing gigs... playing R&B high school band standards, and slowly beginning to evolve direction, style and all those sort of things.

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Bang, crash, wallop - psychedelia and flower-power and hippies.... the whole shebang. Boom. It happened. But it



wasn't quite like that; you see the Groovies were then around 17 and 18, and what became the San Francisco scene was started up by older cats - 24 to 30, and it took a bit of time for even native San Franciscans to find out what was going on. The Family Dog had started to present rock concerts in October 1965 (with Jefferson Airplane), and Bill Graham ran his first event at the Fillmore in December 1965, but though the Groovies knew people who advised them to visit these places, it was not until late summer 1966 that curiosity got the better of them and they went down to take a look at this Fillmore that everyone was going on about.

What later became commonplace was, in those days, nothing short of spectacular, and the impact of first discovering this 'acid mania' was unbelievable. "I'll never forget the first time I went to the Fillmore; there was this guy in a big top hat and a cape, and everybody seemed to be crazy" recalls Cyril.

Danny: "The Trips Festival (January 1966) was even crazier. The Grateful Dead were playing and I saw this chick, who had candles in her hair, eating a snake, man. Things were so loose.... everyone was on his own trip, and an extraordinary number of people were just wiped out of their minds. But there were even sailors there, who were just walking around the town looking for some action and had wandered in. Acid was legal then, and they used to give it out on sugar cubes".

As the Fillmore scene gathered momentum, a lot of the original San Francisco bands got left by the wayside, maybe because they couldn't break into the 'in circle' or make the necessary connections and contacts. The Charlatans and the Mystery Trend, two of the first and very best, both got left behind... and the Flamin Groovies too. They attribute their lack of commercial success to their refusal to conform to the norm - long, drawn-out acid-centred jams.

In the early days, they reckoned, the Fillmore was full of dancing, whirling, hysterically happy people and the only ones who sat down and watched the bands were other musicians who were there to learn. "You'd be standing there, minding your own business, and suddenly someone would grab you and you'd find yourself

part of a long, snaking line of freaks. I remember being grabbed by this strange idiot in a gorilla suit with big rubber duck flippers on his feet, and then a bit later this guy dived off the balcony onto his head.... right in the middle of the floor. People were so high in those days, and the Merry Pranksters were always there, with their painted faces and everything. You never knew what to expect, but after the first six months or so, it began to lose its magic. It became "in", and as soon as that happened it started going downhill."

"The music deteriorated into ultra-long drawn out boring jams and the dancing stopped, and whereas the only people who had dared to go there (because the Fillmore was in the black ghetto area) were stoned freaks who didn't care, the place started to fill up with punks and tourists. See, Haight Street used to be really cool.... where the students from State College and UC lived in a sort of cheap rent community, and got high together, but pretty soon it became jammed with tourists. It got so bad that the service buses had to be re-routed, and there were so many people on the street that it used to take about an hour to walk six blocks".

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Scott McKenzie, where are you now?

"If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair." I've got to unashamedly admit that that is one of my favourite singles of all time - not the soppy message, but the production, melody, atmosphere, etc.... its fabulous, but you have to remember that part of the motive behind that record was the bread. In that summer of 67, the media completely gutted Haight Ashbury; every acid-struck kid from Tucson to Tucumcari, from Tehachapi to Tonopah set out to discover eternal peace and love. Not only that, but the Haight became blocked with reporters, TV men, camera slung tourists, sight-seeing coaches, souvenir sellers flogging glow-in-the-dark statuettes of Jerry Garcia and blow-up rubber reproductions of the naked Grace Slick, plastic flower stalls, hippie shops run by flash Jewish business men with neck bell factories... oh dear, oh dear, even now I dream about it.

Before they knew what had hit them, it was all over, but even as it was happening the San Franciscans were blissfully unaware that the publicity would leave desolation and disenchantment in its wake. "We were into the whole scene" says Danny, we took as much acid, got loaded as much, snorted as much coke, and believed all the flower power stuff, but we were more interested in listening to the Stones and the Kinks than the big local bands.... and our style developed out of that. We did short tunes instead of long jams - and so did some of the others.... like the Airplane when Skip Spence was still with them, but then they got psychedelic and too weird. It got to the point when the Dead would come on and only do two or three songs in a two hour set; they'd have someone giving out acid as they played and so threequarters of the audience would get totally wasted. Under circumstances like that, you could get up on the stage and snore - someone would still dig it."

"It was OK to begin with, but it got taken too far and it got to the stage where people would be turning up at the Fillmore so ripped out of their minds that they could hardly move. And over the next couple of years it changed from the audience going there and flashing and having a good time, to them arriving all smacked out, so full of reds that they'd bring sleeping bags and just settle down for the night.... and it became the norm for no-one to dance or even stand up."

A lot of groups got up on stage and assumed a 'don't-bug-me-man, can't-you-see-I'm-creating' stance, and audiences used to these postures were not only very bewildered but unmoved by all the Groovies' efforts to blow the roof off with their burning rock'n'roll. Their flashy clothes weren't "cool", their music lacked "depth, man", and all that sort of tripe.

** ** *

As soon as the San Francisco Sound had been "discovered", the mohair suited A&R men from Hollywood came loping up the coast brandishing fountain pens, contracts and cheques. Every label got its claws in, contracts flew, and all the bands were walking around with suitcases full of bread.... all except the Flamin Groovies, who were part of the San Francisco scene, but not part of the Sound.... "I like, we're looking for the, er, acid sound, man.... the long jams, man.... that sort of thing - like you read about in Time magazine".

Nuts to the lot of them, thought the Groovies, who went out and recorded, produced, and manufactured, distributed and sold over 5000 copies of 'Sneakers', a 10" LP on their own label, Snazz. (As it happened, this was a good move - lots of the signed up bands got messed around by the companies.... like the Charlatans, for example, a fabulous band whose album is still unreleased. We're leveraging Polydor, who have English rights, to storm the Kama Sutra vaults and release it - we'll let you know what happens). As a result, the record companies returned and started sniffing. Eventually, Epic signed them on an almost unprecedented basis; unlimited studio time and total freedom.

It was a black day for Epic. They spent 80 thousand dollars on 'Supersnazz', (released in early 1969), an album which probably lost over 79 thousand dollars. A single 'Rockin Pneumonia', was released but Epic had such a pitiful lack of faith in its chartbound potential that they only pressed DJ and reviewers copies - none at all for the shops! When the single leapt into the US national (very rigged) charts at No. 27, the company was caught with its trousers down; no records to sell to clamouring hands. It's funny now, ludicrous in fact, but the Groovies were not amused at the time.

Epic, in those flower power days, was staffed mainly by "fools" and "ding-bats", the Groovies maintain. Whenever the band trooped in to talk business, they saw only fat men bellowing telephone requests for more roast beef sandwiches. Whether the Groovies were just a tax-loss or not, they never discovered, but when Epic wanted to re-negotiate the contract for their second album, they made an excuse and left.

** ** *

By mid 69, San Francisco was musically a ghost town. "All the junkies and LSD casualties had taken over the Haight, and it became a really bad place... really bad. The authorities put riot lights in the street so they could keep it under control.... so it's daylight now, even at night. The shops all closed, the traders moved out, and the people stopped smoking grass and flashing. Instead, they started taking reds and shooting smack, and that became the whole scene. Everyone was totally zonked out".

Not only that, but Bill Graham had the whole city sewn up gigwise. According to the Groovies, Graham made it's a beautiful day, Mala, Santana and various others who "wouldn't have done f.a. otherwise". It got to the stage where he controlled who appeared at every major venue in the area.

As well as that, the Fillmore scene



"Out of the last eight years, you could probably put together one week when we weren't high". The Groovies (left-right): Danny, Jimmy, Cyril, George and Chris.

was now no longer attracting the heads and hippies of 1967 - it was virtually taken over by the high school kids; "14 year old chicks and Chicano cats... the sort of people who'd cut your throat. It got to be all punks - and people like me and you, who just like to get high and rock out, they all split. The whole scene changed".

** ** *

Months later, when Graham abandoned the Fillmore West building, the Groovies rented it as a rehearsal hall. To pay the rent, they decided to hold dances and, for a while, the old spirit returned. All the hippies started coming out of the woodwork and turning up at the Fillmore again, and things were starting to look up. They were able to present bands like Hot Tuna, Alice Cooper and the Dead, who are about the only big group that still retain the old spirit. Bands like Quicksilver and the Airplane considered the gig too lacking in prestige and wouldn't do it.

What could've been a nice little renaissance was cut short by their manager's sudden decision to seek new pastures. I don't propose to go into detail about the sums of money and so forth, but if you want to hear about half an hour of very colourful and expressive language, you just ask Danny Mihm about their old manager.

** ** *

San Francisco is a beautiful place to live as regards scenery, sunshine, lack of smog, etc, but musically it had sadly degenerated into "an ungodly wasteland", so they set off on a long tour of inland towns and cities which had been starved of good music rather than being spoonfed the weekly excesses of the coast. They went down well at most of the places they played and pressed on, hoping eventually to get to England (didn't anyone tell them that after New York there's a 3000 mile tract of ocean?), but they found that their reputation had preceded their arrival on the East Coast to the extent that writer/A&R man/producer Richard Robinson was interested in signing them. In fact, he was more than interested: "He saw us and flashed - and he came straight round and said 'I can get you on Kama Sutra Records in 2 seconds'. So we said 'ok, let's go!'"

Back in San Fran, with Richard Robinson producing, they cut 'Flamingo', their first Kama Sutra album (released here as

half of a double album which also included their subsequent release, 'Teenage Head'). It didn't sell too well.

A year or so later, about the time they were recording the excellent 'Teenage Head', Tim Lynch was busted for dealing coke (I gather this didn't involve operating a Coca Cola stall without the requisite licence), and this was deemed a convenient excuse to bring Jimmy Ferrell in on rhythm guitar (though the album was completed before his arrival). In fact, Tim only sang on one track, played harp on another, and played guitar on three; Cyril played all the other guitar parts.

Shortly afterwards, singer Loney was successfully disposed of; not only had he become "the worst singer in the world", but he was trying to get the band to do songs "so lame that even James Taylor wouldn't do them". He chose to retire from the world of showbiz, so in came Chris Wilson, who was from Mike Wilhelm's current band, Loose Gravel.

** ** *

That brings us up to June 1971, by which time they'd had two highly praised flop albums on Kama Sutra. More colourful expletives can be readily provoked merely by enquiring as to the efficiency of Kama Sutra's promotional and administrative departments, but rather than invite legal action, I'll skip the details and merely mention that the Groovies were able to terminate their contract on the grounds that they'd never been required to put their signatures to it!

Now, loyal Zigzagers will be familiar with the name of Alan Lord, a San Francisco music expert/fanatic who wrote for us back in 1969. Well, Alan Lord was a pseudonym for Andrew Lauder, who hires and fires artistes for United Artists Records (I think that's what he does anyway), and Andrew has always had a hankering to get a real genuine San Fran band on the label. When he heard the Groovies were contractually free, he got in touch with UA's Hollywood office to see if they'd give them a listen, with a view to signing them up.

They took a tape along to Andrew's West Coast counterpart, who remained unimpressed. "UA, we found, was just as nudged out as all the other record companies in the States. The guy who listened to the tape said it was 'too vague'.... what a goddamn stupid thing to say. I hope he reads this, because he's nothing more than a @@@@ who ought to go back to jacking off on Sunset Strip".

That was the last straw - they'd had America up to here. They phoned Andrew, and Cyril came over earlier this year to check things out. The group followed a few weeks later and have now made their home in our glorious country.

Obviously, living in Chingford must be a pain in the arse after spending your life liggering around in the sight of the San Francisco Bay bridge, but the disadvantages, they say, are offset by the comparative freshness of the scene here. Both the record company and their management/agency are putting a lot of energy into getting them off the ground, and the people here are generally less blase.

A single, 'Slow Death', produced at Rockfield by Dave Edmunds is out now, and an album is being prepared. In the meantime, the Groovies will no doubt be visiting your area - so see them. What should you expect? Good fat-toned rock: "We want to play Chuck Berry type songs for all our friends - that's what it boils down to.... cool rocking songs. Forget image and meaning - it's just rock'n'roll. We're a loud juke-box - so dance, you motherf---ers!" Pete

THE MOTHERS

Since this interview was recorded – way back in December – Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman, after months of inactivity due to Zappa's Rainbow accident, have formed and recorded with another group; The Phlorescent Leech & Eddie. Though full details are not available, it is assumed that this is only a filler until The Mothers get going again.*

Anyway, to the interview. Rather than dwell on the Mothers/Zappa aspects for too long, we chose to delve into the Turtles a bit too – since they're one of our favourite sixties groups. The interview is between John on one side, and Howard and Mark on the other.

ZZ: When you were here in 1970, for the Bath Festival, you intimated that your association with Zappa would last only until your legal hassles with White Whale (the label for which the Turtles recorded) had been resolved, and you could start recording again.

Howard: That's true; but things have become a lot different since then. The White Whale trouble has now been resolved, but the Mothers is like a different group from the Mothers of 1970, when our relationship with Frank was very casual. I mean, when we walk on stage now, no-one expects to see the old Mothers anymore – so we're not living with that karma over us – but more than that, Frank's attitude has widened so that our projects and gigs are much more interesting now.

ZZ: But surely most of the creativity still comes from Frank.

Howard: Right; the Mothers' music, in terms of creativity, is not our music, and that's the difference between the Mothers and the Turtles right off the bat. In the Turtles, we created the music from start to finish; the five of us scrutinised and analysed everything, so that each person felt he had given his share to make the song. Here in the Mothers, you have a different thing; a composer who not only has the final say regarding the arrangement, but also the ability to let the ideas of the other members soak into his head and become altered and re-arranged to come out the way he wants. He uses us, but we're involved – he asks our opinions and ideas... whether he uses them or not. But we're in the Mothers because we enjoy it... we can be very loose and entertaining, and also get off.

ZZ: This particular set of Mothers has been relatively stable, hasn't it – since Jeff Simmons left.

Mark: Yes, and a lot less cynical. Jeff's animosity towards Frank used to create a lot of strain. I mean, Jeff Simmons is a beautiful cat and a really talented guy, but he had some problems of identity crisis...

it wasn't a question of playing comedy music as much as the 'I'm-not-taking-orders, man, we're-not-the-taking-orders-generation.... I've got a frizz haircut, and I deserve to go and sit on a trunk and play the blues if I want to'. You know the sort of thing? Anyway, he felt that he couldn't work with Frank and still be himself.

Howard: But we don't find that. The band has become a pretty unique comedic spring board for Mark and me, as well as a creative one.

ZZ: So you've no plans to resurrect the Turtles?

Howard: Actually, we have a lot of projects in mind, involving re-packaging and re-releasing Turtles material that came out incorrectly before. The first release will hopefully be next summer – a double album consisting of some of our hits on one record and maybe some new stuff on the other – done by the 4 of us who had made up our minds to stick it out.

Mark: You see, in England, hardly anyone got to know what the Turtles' music was about; you only got a couple of albums released here, whereas in the States we had 'It ain't me, babe' (Sept 65) 'You baby' (March 66) 'Happy Together' (March 67) 'Golden Hits' (Oct 67) 'Battle of the bands' (Dec 68) 'Turtle Soup' (1969) 'Golden Hits Vol 2' (1969) 'Wooden Head' (1970).

We were with White Whale for the whole of our 5 year existence, and they were a



HOWARD

very minor label who set up independent deals for England... first of all with Pye, then Immediate and then Decca. And each of these labels was only interested in releasing an album if we had a hit single. So the only ones you had were 'Happy Together' (to capitalise on the hits 'Happy together' and 'She'd rather be with me') and 'Battle of the bands' (because of 'Elenore').

ZZ: Do you feel like relating some of the history of the Turtles?

Mark: Sure, man, but it's a long story. To begin with, in 1965 we were very ambitious and very young, and we signed away a lot of stuff in our record contract. Looking at it now, it may seem that we were taken advantage of, but to us then, the biggest thing that could ever happen to us was to get signed to a record label and have them pay for us to record. It just happened that the night the guys came to see us and sign us, we were going to break up in dejection... but they signed us, we recorded 'It ain't me, babe', and it was a giant hit in the States.

Howard: And they always made us feel that we were their boys, and that they were guiding us on a path to hit records... but at the same time, we went through seven managers and were involved in up to three law suits running simultaneously – including one for 4½ million dollars.

Mark: In 1967, we had a road manager who went to our record company and took an advance on our royalties, bought out our contract from our first manager and then skipped off with 80,000 dollars; the proceeds of a six week tour we'd done at a very prime time in our career... and the record company claimed management as a result. In the interim, we'd been obliged to sign with a New York management company because this roadie, unbeknown to us at the time, had sold half our contract to them for 13 thousand dollars, which he told us was an advance against an agency change. Then our original manager, who's contract had apparently been breached by this roadie, sued both us and the record company... and he finally agreed to take us back. But not before we'd been through two other managers, both of whom had promised to extricate us from this mess but failed.

All this time, the record company had been pressuring us for singles, because we were their bread and butter; we were the only successful act they had in the 5 years we were with them. We had about 8 top ten hits, but around 1967 we started getting closer to our music; expanding our ideas and music to the point where we felt happy... but they kept screaming 'C'mon you guys, let's have another 'Happy Together'!'

We were pretty content with the 'Battle

JUST BAND

of the bands' album (and so were White Whale, because 'Elenore' was a hit), but over here, Decca really messed up the sleeve so as to destroy the whole point of the album. We had a fold out sleeve which showed us in 12 different guises, to represent the styles of the 12 songs. Decca did it to cut costs, I suppose, but what a stupid thing to do.

Then we cut 'Turtle Soup' with Ray Davies producing, but the company had a hard time pushing the album because there wasn't a sure-fire hit to shoot up the charts.

Howard: Well, by this time, we were going bananas. It's hard to explain the insanity that can come as a result of pressure coming from all those areas at once. The 5 of us had been trying desperately to keep it together but eventually, in 1970... well, that was it.

ZZ: I can't understand why you aren't a lot more bitter.

Howard: Well, if we really took it too seriously, it would be terribly depressing to examine those five years, which is why we've come to treat the whole music business as a satire... just like watching TV commercials. Which makes it easy for us to be in the Mothers; we're not having to try really hard to "make it" but yet remain cool, creative and full of integrity, which is how we felt in the Turtles. Now, we know exactly what we are doing, where we're going, the costs that are involved, what the deal is... there are no contracts to stick to, and it's a very honest, straightforward relationship.

Mark: One of the only good things that came out of all that shit is the fact that we now own all our old Turtles' masters, and that means that we can lease them to whatever label we want. We're considering doing separate deals on the stuff that has already been released, and the unreleased stuff. And there is also talk of Howard and I signing up a solo deal, apart from the Mothers. (Which they have now done).

ZZ: Would you say that '200 Motels' is in any way representative of life on the road?

Howard: Well, that kind of thing is what the road does to you – if you don't like the movie, the chances are that you couldn't make it in a rock'n'roll band. The fact of the matter is that '200 Motels' should be taken for what it is; a real diverting piece of culture, spawned from youth rather than rock... it's just a non-linear piece of entertainment, and depending on how deeply you get into it as an art object, that's how much you'll be offended or amused.

ZZ: You never filmed as the Turtles...

Mark: Only films of various songs for TV shows. You don't really see that sort of

JUST BAND

thing too much anymore, but in those days as soon as a single looked as if it was shaping up to be a hit, you made a film to promote it, and they ran it on all the pop shows like Shindig and Hullabaloo and even Top Of The Pops, over here. They were made for a number of reasons; you were frightened that a live performance wouldn't sound right, or you wanted to be freaky, or you wanted to imitate what the Beatles were up to... you know. There were a lot of those shows for a while, but they closed up pretty quick, and the people that ran them are scrambling to get into video-cassette before they have to sell the Free Press on a street corner to get a living. It just changes... you have to change too, or you die.

ZZ: Your English tour was a bit strange, wasn't it? They paraded you around like The Monkees or something.

Howard: Yes, it was really weird... we played the Speakeasy one night, then some skating rink the next, then some huge hall... it was chaos. We were trying too hard to sell ourselves, and it just wasn't worth the effort – but that's the sort of tour that record companies sent you on; "You won't make any money this time, boys, but it'll promote you records so that the next time you go..." You know the sort of thing. Anyway, we came over on 'Happy Together', which was a number 12 record here, and as a result, 'She'd rather be with me' did considerably better... and if we'd come over again, we could've kept it going maybe – but the record company over here was just fumbling around; they



MARK

never had a programme to work to, and for all they knew or cared, we could've been the Fortunes.

Mark: But since we've been with Frank, we've met a lot of fanatics – people who were really into what the Turtles were doing; some here, but mostly in the States – and it's really gratifying. It's like the odd underground press article we see, which says "Wow, we've finally figured out what the Turtles were up to". It ties in with what we're doing now; in fact it's a logical pattern unless you were so out of it that you thought of the Turtles as "commercial" and the Mothers as "underground", and us as having merely swapped from "above ground" to "underground". If you'd seen the Turtles live, and seen what they were doing, you'd have gotten the flash – just like Frank did.

ZZ: Doesn't it choke you off to think that business hassles finished off a good group?

Howard: Listen, man; it doesn't matter. We profited from it in the long run, we're still alive, and we're ok... if anybody cares.

ZZ: Do you see your work with Zappa as an extension of the Turtles?

Howard: Well, things certainly aren't as bizarre as they seemed to us a year ago; the normalcy has revealed itself to us and now it just seems to be the Turtles a little weirder – or the Mothers a little straighter. The Mothers is an entertainment organisation rather than a straight rock'n'roll band... we don't just exist to play music – we go out to create an environment on the stage. Frank tried for a long time with just his music, but now, through his music plus the acting and dialogue, he's creating this environment and, as a result, he's reaching a wider audience. He felt that it was silly to have just a small band of committed, active followers when, by changing his approach just a bit, he could attract a larger audience... then, when they're not looking, he can give them what he wanted to play in the first place. As well as keeping most of the hard-core Mothers' audience that he already had, Frank has now got a larger, younger following; when Mark and I joined the group we were playing 2000 seater halls, but now we're selling out places with a capacity of 10,000.

Anyway, what Mark and I began as a temporary thing which we intended to last only until we'd finished making '200 Motels', has turned into something a lot more permanent, and as long as it stays this exciting and enjoyable, we intend to stay.

* See page 18

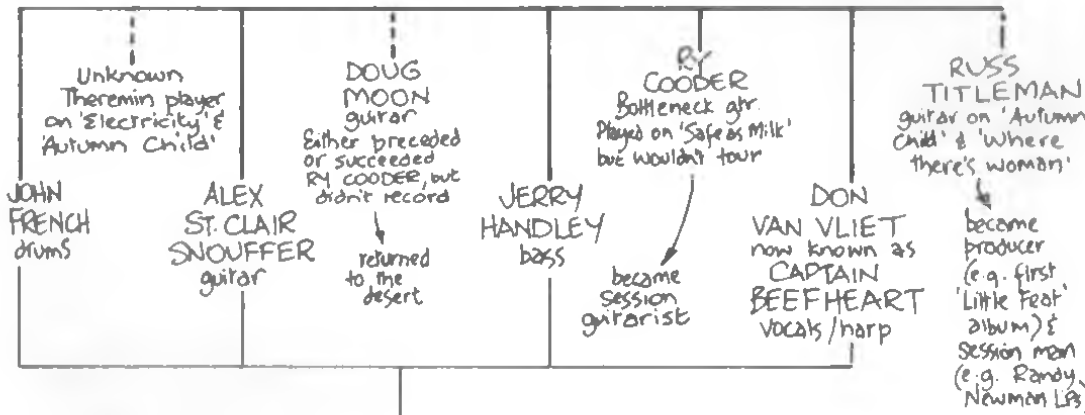


I had intended to make this a small, uncomplicated history of the Mothers, but, as usual, the more I got into it, the bigger it became. Until it practically got out of hand. Anyway, I've tried to bash it into shape, and I hope it's not too unintelligible.

JUST A FEW MORE BANDS FROM L.A.

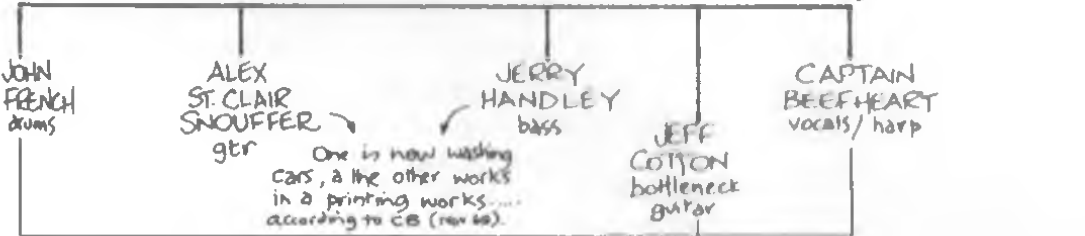
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND #1

4 tracks for ASM Records. 'SAFE AS MILK' album on Buddah. BDS 5001. (Payroll here). Due to Beefheart's hazy memory, historical accuracy is impossible, but this band lasted from some time in 1964 until some time in 1965.



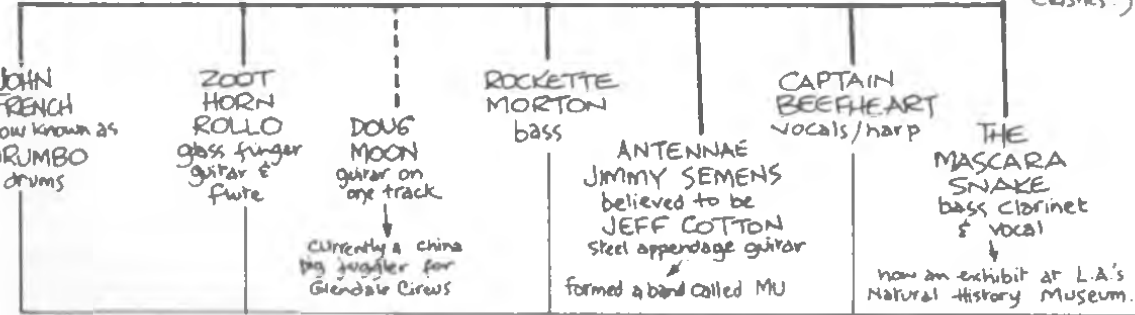
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND #2

Albums: MIRROR MAN. Polydor/Buddah 2345 002. 1965 until early 1969. STRICTLY PERSONAL. Blue Thumb BTS 1. (Released here on Liberty).



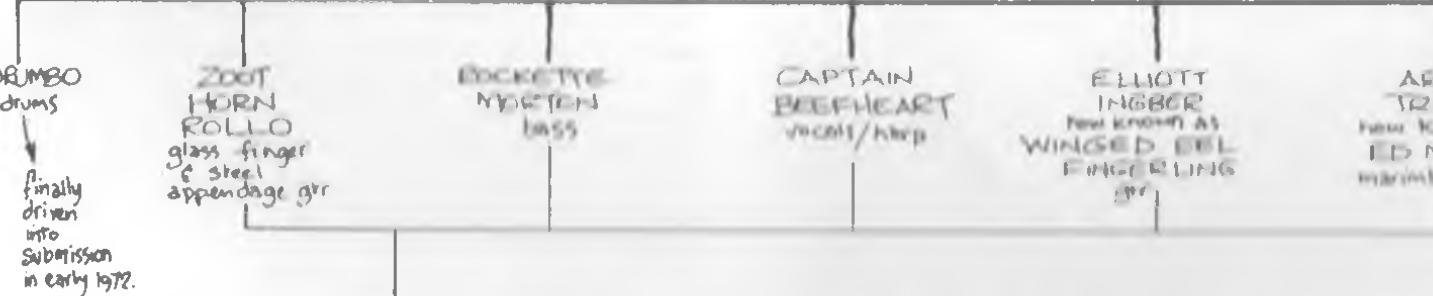
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND #3

Album: TROUT MASK REPLICAS. Straight FTS 1053. This band lasted from Spring 1969 to some time in 1970. (Rockette Morton & Jimmy Semens had personality clashes).



CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND #4

Albums: LICK MY DECALS OFF BABY. Straight FTS 1063. THE SPOTLIGHT KID. Ramsey K 44162. 1970 - Spring 1972. Arthur Tripp III and Elliott Ingber join the Magic Band - and Beefheart alters their names!



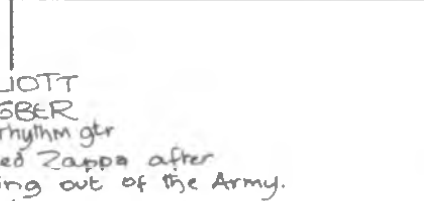
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND #5

Spring 1972 - now. In this form, the magnificent band toured England in March 1972. (Do you see them? Where'd they great?). Beefheart is currently preparing a new album (possibly called 'BACON STAIN') containing tracks like 'Big Eyed Beans from Venus'. The best interview he did here was with Steve Black in Sounds, April 1st 1972.



THE MOTHERS #1

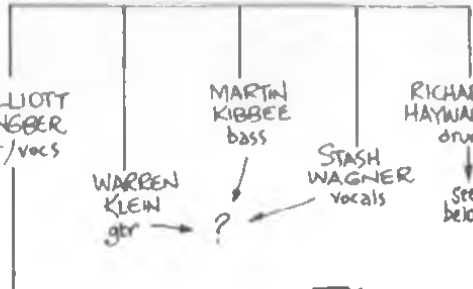
Late 1964 - Late 1966. Album: 'FREAK OUT' (recorded early 66) first released in August 1966, & re-released here on Verve 2683 004.



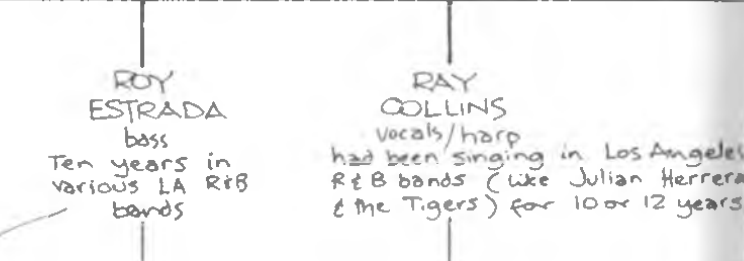
When our mate Connor McKnight interviewed Estrada during the Beefheart tour, he declined to say anything about Zappa (or the birth of the Mothers) with the tape recorder switched on. He merely rolled his eyes and wagged his paunch. The MM had a good interview however, around March 72, and Disc had a good piece about the early band in the August 29, 1970 issue.

THE FRATERNITY OF MAN

Flower-power group, most celebrated for 'Don't bogart that joint', which was used in 'Easy Rider'. Made two albums (neither released here, of course): 'FRATERNITY OF MAN' ABCS 647. 'GET IT ON' DLP 25955. Both were produced by Tom Wilson, and the second included help from Bill Payne & Lowell George (later in Little Feat). Broke up in 1969.

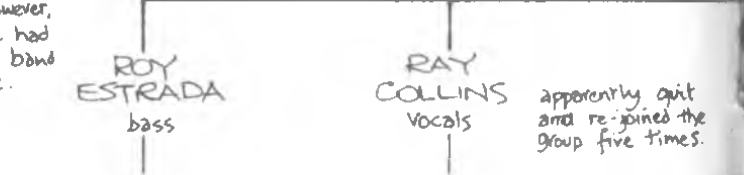


The Mothers ('of Invention') was reputedly added by the record company, who were dubious about calling such a bunch of hairy freaks 'the Mothers'. It is rumoured to have grown out of Zappa's previous group... Captain Glasspack & his Magic Mufflers, about which, nothing is known. (A likely story!!!)



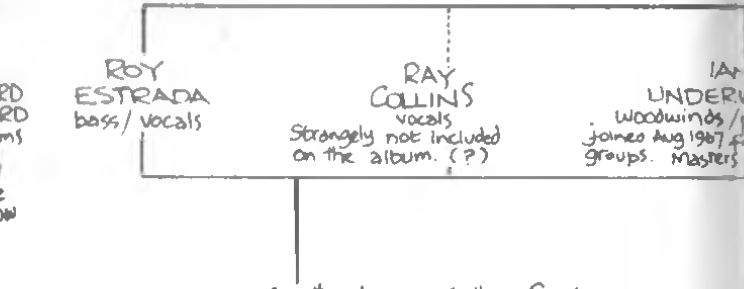
THE MOTHERS #2

Late 1966 - Summer 1967. Album: 'ABSOLUTELY FREE' recorded late 1966, released May 1967. (Producer again Tom Wilson). Re-released here recently on Verve 2317 034.



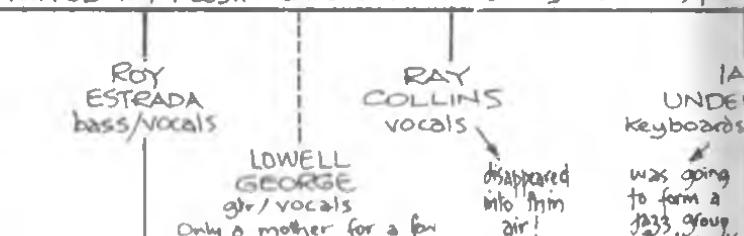
THE MOTHERS #3

Until late 1967 album 'WE'RE ONLY IN IT FOR THE MONEY' (Recorded Aug-Oct 1967) released Jan 1968. Produced by Zappa himself. Just re-released here on Verve Select 2317 034.



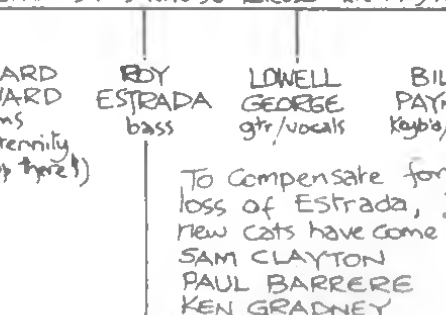
THE MOTHERS #4

The last of the first series of Mothers. Late 1967 - October 1969. Album: MOTHERMANIA (BEST OF) 1970, re-released here on Verve 2352 017. RUBEN & THE JETS - 'CRUISING' (Nov 68). So far not re-released, and consequently their rarest album. UNCLE MEAT (April 69) Record Oct-R&B. Released on Transition here (Pye wouldn't touch it because the word 'fuck' was used). BURNT WEENY SANDWICH (1970) The last concept album by the group. WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH Remnants recorded during 1967-69, packaged up & released in 1970.



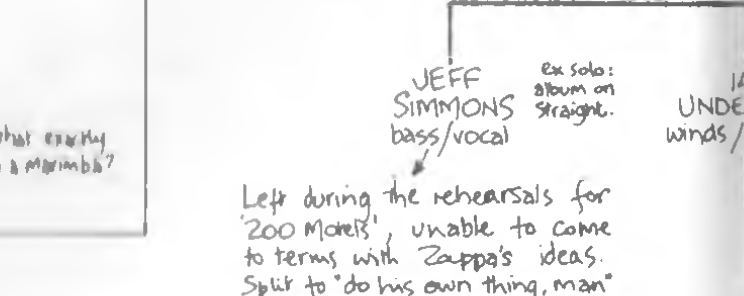
LITTLE FEAT (Excellent group)

Albums: 'LITTLE FEAT' WS 1090 (available on import only - a shame, it's fabulous). 'SAILIN' SHIPS' K&B 016. Released here May 72.



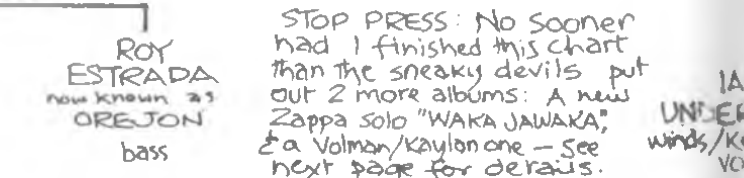
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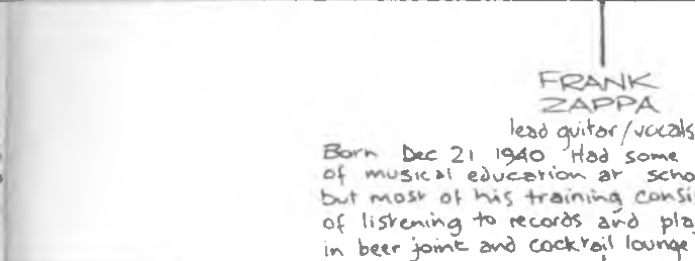


THE MOTHERS #6

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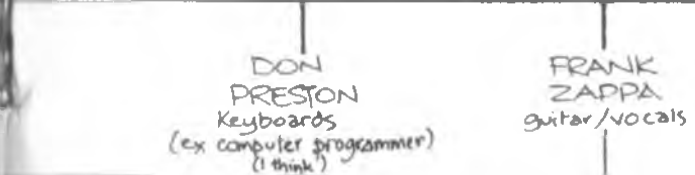


In those pre-hair days of 64-65, they were not only musically outrageous, but only the first outdid them as regards visual bizarreness. And, as Suzi Creamcheese says on the sleeve of 'Freak Out': 'One day wearing heads, and they all smell bad'.



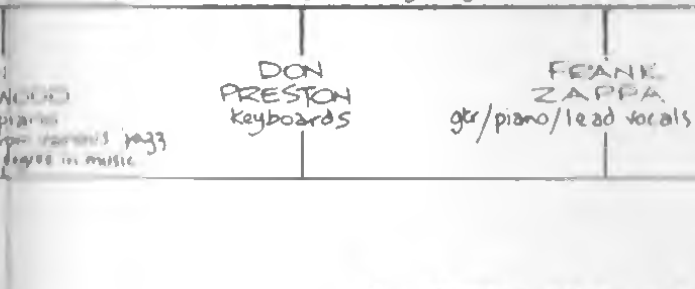
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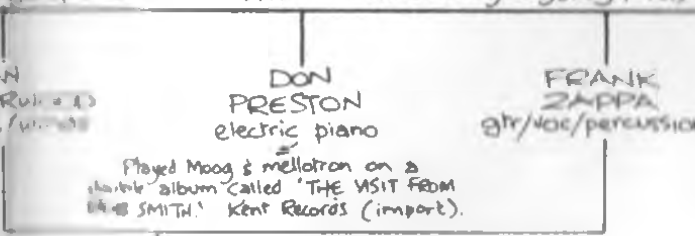
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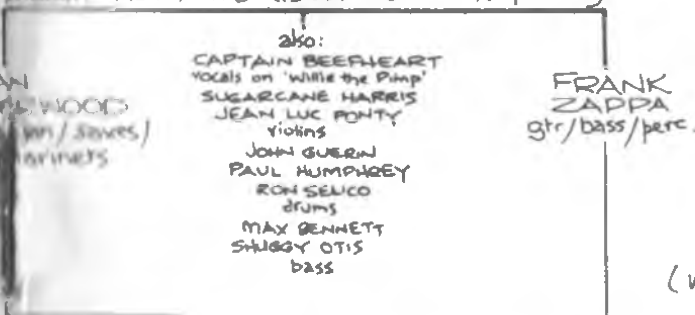
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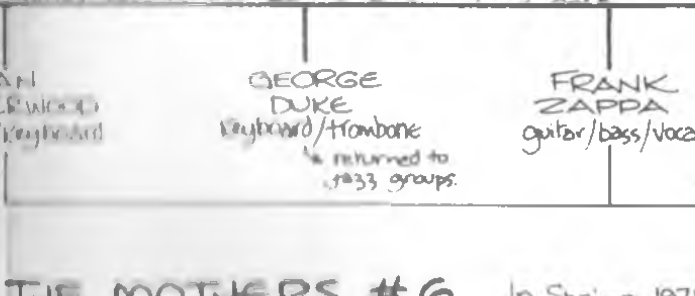
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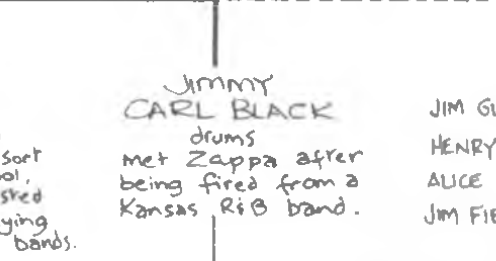


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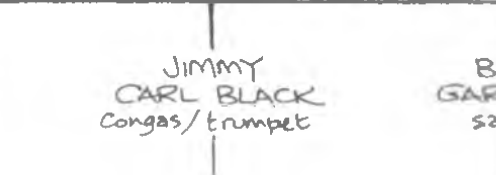


Said a Los Angeles disc jockey at the time: 'I'd like to clean you boys up a bit and mould you. I could make you as big as "the Turtles".' Previous, or temporary members of the band:



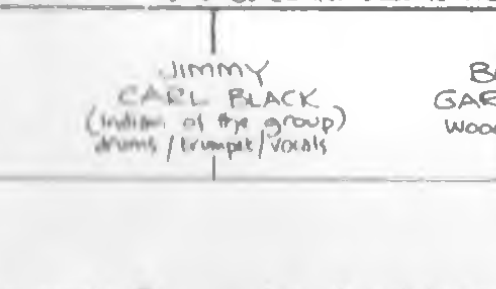
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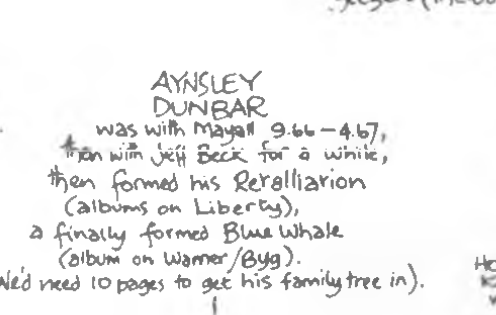
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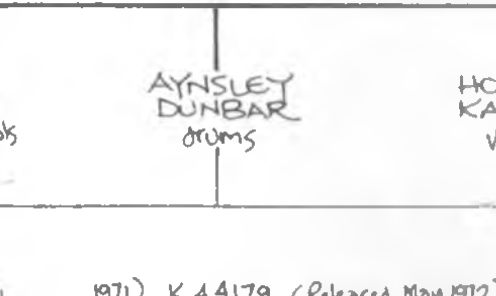
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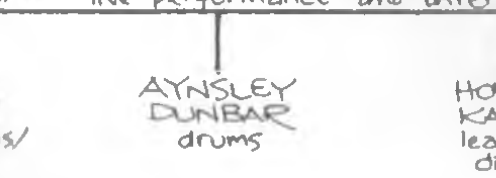
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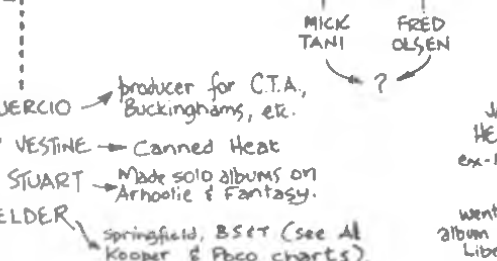
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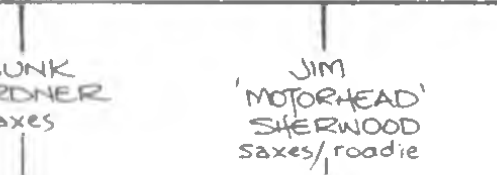
LAMP OF CHILDHOOD

a short lived 1960 group about which I know nothing



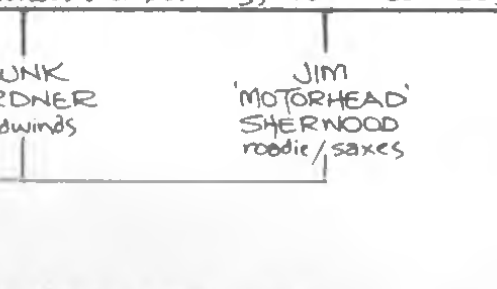
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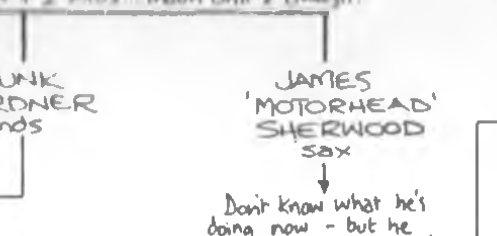
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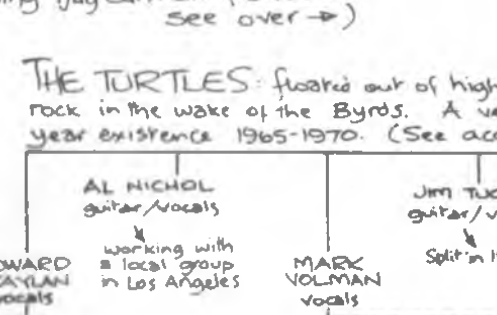
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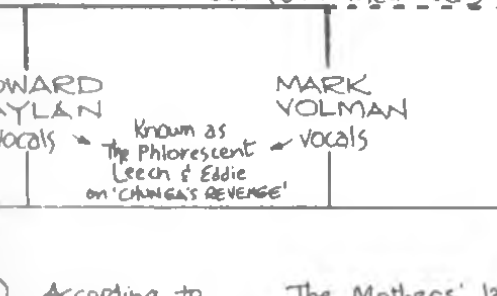
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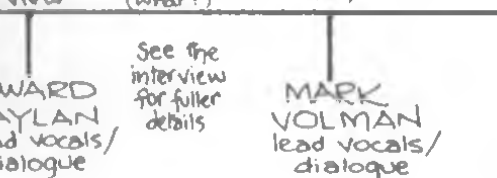
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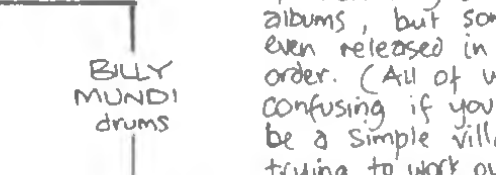
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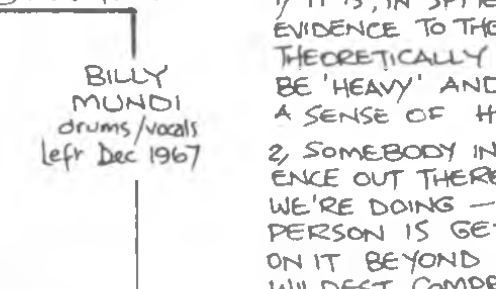
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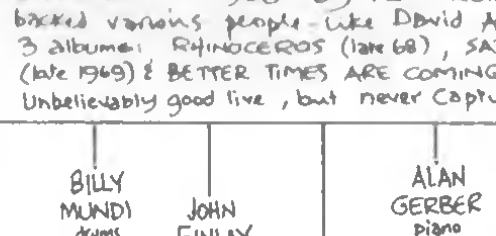
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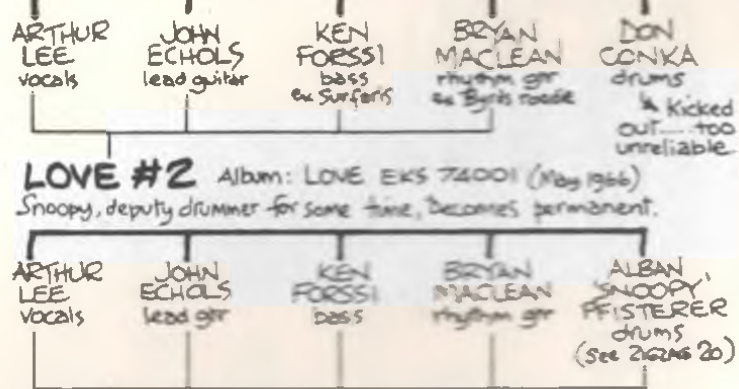


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GRASS ROOTS became **LOVE #1**
Formed in L.A. in 1965. If you've read 'Snoopy in Love' & all our articles, you'll know the history.



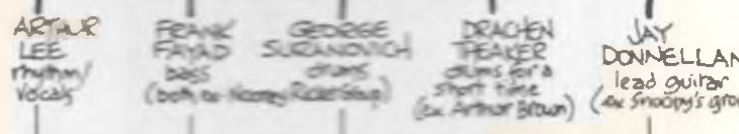
LOVE #3 Album: DA CARO EKS 74005 (March 1967)
Arthur wanted to expand the scope of the group - got Tjay in on sax, moved Snoopy to keyboard and got Mike Stuart, a technically better drummer from Sons of Adam.



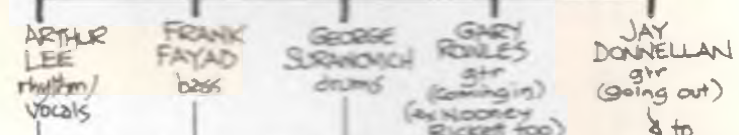
LOVE #4 Album: FOREVER CHANGES EKS 74013 (Feb 1968)
The masterpiece album. The group, through various problems, broke up in early 1968.



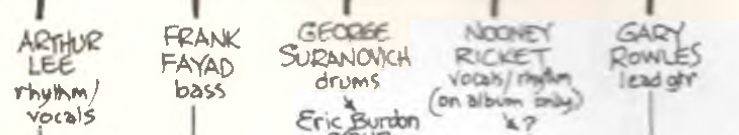
LOVE #5 Album: FOUR SAIL EKS 74049 (early 1968)
Arthur forms new LOVE with six members of NOOZY RICKET Group.



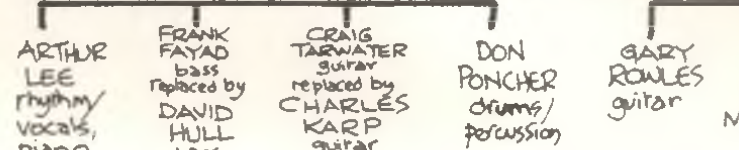
LOVE #6 Album: OUT HERE BTS 0000 (December 1969)
Arthur becomes disenchanted with Jay Donnellan, and brings in Gary Rowles.



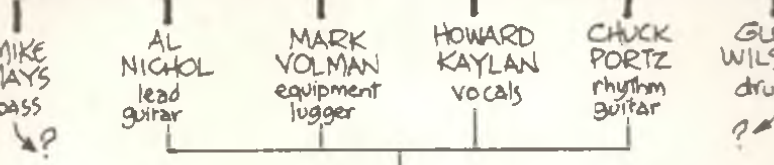
LOVE #7 Album: FALSE START BTS 0002 (Summer 1970)
This, the last LOVE, toured England in February 1970. (without Noozy).



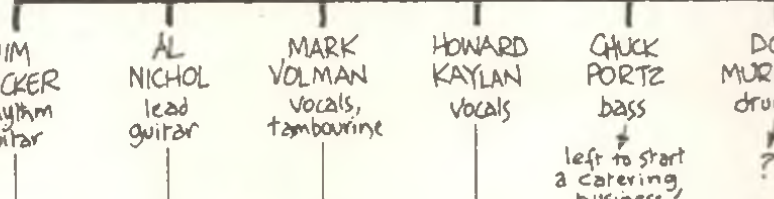
ARTHUR LEE & BAND AID Band formed Spring 72. Album: "VINDICATOR" Released August 72 on A&M.



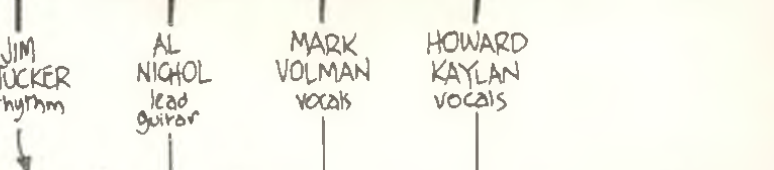
THE NIGHTRIDERS Formed around 1963-4
A Los Angeles high school group, inspired by Beatles boom.



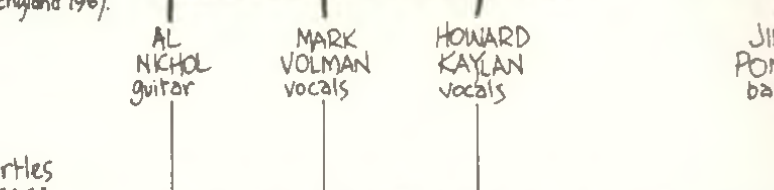
THE CROSSFIRES became **The TURTLES #1**
Changed their name when they signed with White Whale, early 1965



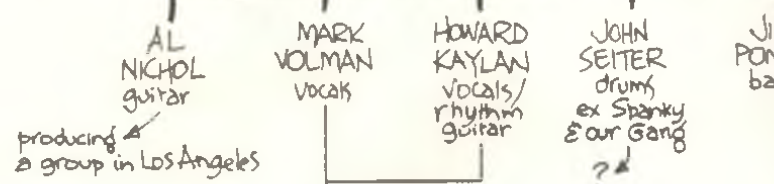
THE TURTLES #2
Around the 'Happy Together' era... late 1966



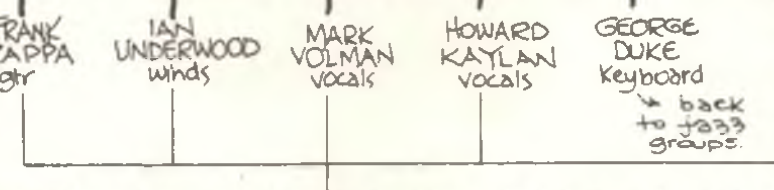
THE TURTLES #3
Early 1967 until early 1969



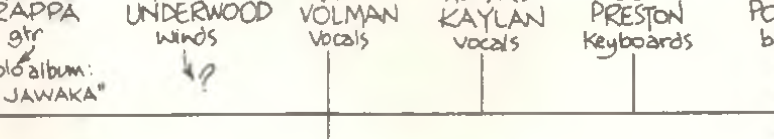
THE TURTLES #4
Early 69 until their demise in 1970.



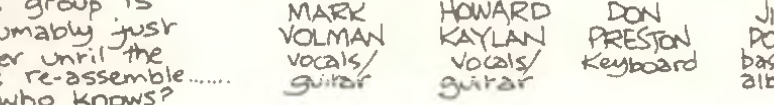
THE MOTHERS #5 For full details, see Mothers' chart over.



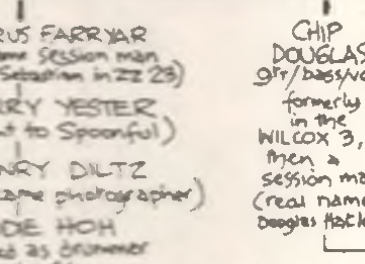
THE MOTHERS #6 Came to a temporary halt in December 1971 after Frank's accident.



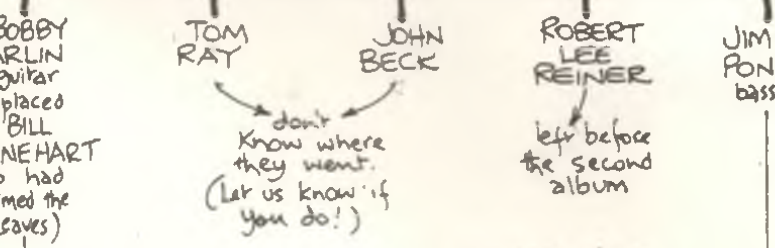
THE PHLORESCENT LEECH & EDDIE Formed Spring 1972. Album released July 1972 / Reissue MS 2059



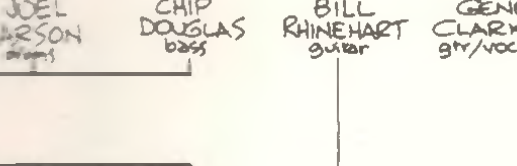
M.F.Q. (Modern Folk Quarter)
Early 60's folk group. Went electric under Phil Spector's guidance - then folded.



THE LEAVES Early 1960s Los Angeles group - had a hit single: 'Hey Joe'. 2 albums: 'HEY JOE' 8/66 on Mira, & 'ALL THE GOOD THINGS HAPPENING' early 1968 on Capitol.

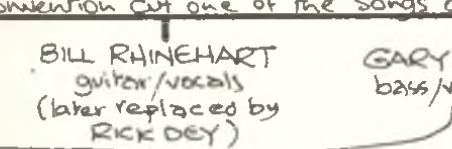


GENE CLARK GROUP
Lasted for awhile in 1966, after he'd left Byrds.



Made a solo album on U.S. Columbia, which has just been re-mixed and re-released in USA. Good album - hope they release it here. After that, he re-joined the Byrds for 3 weeks, then started Dillard & Clark, and is now solo again. Good album released last year on A&M Records.

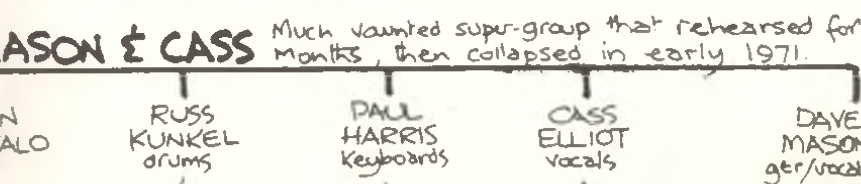
MERRY GO ROUND
Made a nice album on A&M (11/67) - not released in England. (Fairport Convention cut one of the songs on their Polydor album).



Went solo:
① Scalent 1st album on Dunhill
② An old-tracks LP on A&M
③ A 2nd Dunhill LP 'Mirror'

EVEN MORE BANDS FROM LOS ANGELES
Just as I'd finished that Mothers' chart, Volman & Kaylan announced their new band - and that necessitated another chart in this interminable series. Thanks to Andrew Lauder and Alan Berrock for information. Feb 72.

MASON & CASS Much vaunted super-group that rehearsed for months, then collapsed in early 1971.



You must wonder the reason for this unhealthy obsession with Los Angeles groups... well folks, it's all leading up to the MONSTER BYRDS CHART - so huge that you'll be able to paper your bedroom wall with it! (if it ever gets done).

"VINDICATOR", the new Arthur Lee album.

Maybe our old friend Arthur Lee is trying to vindicate himself after three comparatively ordinary albums - 'Four Sail', 'Out Here' and 'False Start'. He seems to have got rid of the last formation of Love in favour of a whole bunch of new people that I've never heard of before. From his old group, George Suranovich went to join Eric Burdon's latest effort, and Gary Rowles (as you can see in Pete's chart up there) has teamed up with what appears to be a 1970s Turtles, but Frank Fayad, it appears, hung around for a bit longer... long enough to feature on 3 of the tracks here.

Arthur calls his new band Band Aid, but they certainly get second billing to their leader, who's name is emblazoned across the sleeve in inch high capitals as opposed to the band's name being squashed down below in the fine print. Not only that, but Lee calls himself "Dr Hyde" when he assumes the role of producer.

Apart from the man himself, the only constant element in Band Aid is a drummer called Don Poncher (doesn't that almost rhyme with Conka? Maybe it was signed DP), and three tracks are by what must have been an intermediate group consisting of Lee, Poncher, Fayad and a guitar player called Craig Tarwater - all of whom are assisted by organist Clarence McDonald on one cut, 'Find Somebody', which has a vaguely '14 and 14 is' type ending.

The later Band Aid has David Hull on bass and Charles Karp on guitar (Karp is also co-writer of one track), but to answer the question that is no doubt on your lips; "no". Or at least, "not yet". Maybe Lee was caught on a very up day, because too much of this album is express train stuff. Karp is an adequate guitarist in the white blues/speed freak field, and it's all fairly well recorded, without too much gimmickry - but again, without the original thought we expect from Arthur. We didn't want a soul record, or a blues record, or one which would constantly remind us of other bands - the point about Love is that, at their supreme best, they were a bloody sight better than the people they copied from; Lee plundered his influences willy-nilly, but he usually transcended their efforts. Not so with Band Aid; most of the tracks sound weaker than the influences... and the production could also be better. It sounds like a live in the studio recording, with none of that ingenuity and clarity which characterised 'Forever Changes'.

The English sleeve is not a fold out like the American one, but still has some fascinating shots of Arthur in the early stages of recovery from a Lol Coxhill hair cut. (Maybe John Echols looks the same these days, who knows?) You can also see him in a blond wig. All very weird. There must be a large number of you



who, like me, will get this record purely because it's Arthur Lee - so whatever I say isn't really going to affect you, but I can't see this moving 'Forever Changes' off your turntable for long. You can't turn back the clock, but wouldn't it be something if Arthur could find another band like his old one... and the inspiration to match it? I live in hope. John

I'd have thought that Zigzaggers would have had their fill of Arthur Lee and his deeds by now, but not so; judging from the letters we get, Lee appears to have emerged from the heap as THE charismatic mystery man of the rock age... and I've got to admit that I find his work continually fascinating.

Like John, I was anxious to get me grubby hands on 'Vindicator', not only to see if his magic had miraculously reappeared, but to examine the cover for clues and evidence of his recent behaviour. It's a pity that A&M, in their economic wisdom, have decided to castrate the fold-out sleeve because it's full of interesting grist for the Love addict.

The pictures show Lee over several months apparently (in fact, several years - there are snaps of him as a baby); the most sinister, almost terrifying shot, is of him looking like a shorn escapee from Angola Prison Farm, just surrounded by savage flesh-eating alsatians and re-captured after getting caught up in the barbed wire outer fence. Then there's a photo of him sitting beside a blow-up painting of that Love logo... a sad reminder of better days.

But musically, this is a truly unremarkable album. If these were the good takes, what must the bad ones have sounded like? 'Everybody's gotta live' isn't that bad, but or most of the rest he either sounds like one of those singers who grapple with the mike-stand, or else a wooden re-incarnation of Hendrix. The last track on side one is, I think, most indicative of the depth of his present abyss - wailing histrionics, and lyrics plucked from nowhere important or even interesting.

As for Band Aid... well, what a bunch of bunglers. The lead guitarists might've been strapped into a rigid framework by Lee, but even so, they're very limited and seemingly without either flair or invention... they don't fall far above village hall standard, I fear.

When you remember (and how can we ever forget) what our Arthur was into five years ago... that mellow blend of perfection - the strummed acoustics, delicate and thoughtful electrics, the songs themselves, the strings and harmony... it makes you think. But don't give up the ship, folks; he may be down, but he's not out... he's not finished yet.

All the same, I think I'll sail off to Chile for the winter. Mac

ELTON JOHN



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Elton John

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Madman Across the Water

DJLPH 420



Honky Chateau

DJLPH 423



INTRODUCTION

We've often featured articles on the San Francisco psychedelic eruption, but we get loads of letters asking us to explain how the "underground movement" started up in Britain - with particular emphasis to the rock aspects. Obviously, you could fill a book (and indeed many people have) if you wanted to explore every nook and cranny, detailing how the feeling grew out of a wide variety of influences - poets, protest, folk music, the Fugs, playwrights, authors, CND, student revolution, Provos, Peace News, marijuana, Lysergic Acid, publishers, bookshops, Kesey & Leary, Kerouac & Ginsberg, Quicksilver & the Dead - and for a much more complete history, I would refer you to certain tomes on the subject (see reference list at the end).

As far as rock is concerned, however, I think we can cram it into a concise 4 page nutshell, providing we don't try to dig too deeply. It'll be enough to be getting on with, anyway.

PREFACE (you can skip this bit if you want to... you won't miss much).

I lay back in the sumptuous luxury of velvet upholstery and gazed across the panoramic skyline from the penthouse suite of the Blackhill Enterprises Mayfair offices as a gorgeous nymphet poured coffee into bone china cups and offered After Eight mints. I casually mentioned the Pink Floyd, and the words seemed to cut through the vapid atmosphere like razor blades. Jenner's face, his clean cut features aglow with interest, paled as he ground his cigar butt into the big diamond studded ashtray resting on the polished mahogany desk. "The Pink Floyd?" he repeated, as he casually straightened his tie and picked a stray hair off his mohair suit...

That had you all going, didn't it? In actual fact, the way it happened was a little different. I had stumbled up to Blackhill's crumbling Bayswater office to meet Peter Jenner as arranged, but had to wait on the doorstep for almost an hour before Jenner (half of Blackhill Enterprises) and Andrew King (the other half) arrived, as usual, on their tandem. As Andrew began to unload rain-sodden contracts and documents from the panniers, Peter hustled me through the chaotic mountain of strewn papers into "the back room", where he invited me to make myself comfortable on one of the most astorically designed wooden chairs in the history of furniture. He disappeared, leaving me to stare out of the window at the mass of leaking drainpipes clinging to the wall of the tenement block which backed on to the yard, and returned with a cracked Woolworths mug of tepid radiator flushings; "here's some coffee" he grunted, plonking it down on the formica kitchen table which

served as his desk. He took a worn tobacco tin from his pocket, selected the half-smoked remains of a Park Drive tipped, and peered at me through his cracked national health spectacles. "Now then" he wheezed with considerable hostility, "... what is it you want? Make it snappy... I'm a busy man".

"It's the Pink Floyd" I stammered. "I want to know how the Underground started... I was told that no-one in England knew as much about it as you do; that you're the acknowledged authority on the subject".

His chest swelled with pride below the holey vest which hung on his bony frame, as his disposition changed to one of great charm. "They say that, do they? Well, er, yes, of course I'd be delighted to tell you all about it... but it's a long story".

"That's ok" I replied, "just give me all the facts as well as you can remember, and I'll go back home to distort and rehash your words into a vaguely coherent article".

THE LIST OF PLAYERS

Mr Underground..... John Hopkins
An underground journalist..... Miles
A shady LSE drop-out..... Peter Jenner
A pirate disc jockey..... John Peel
A psychedelic music ensemble.....
the Pink Floyd
An unemployed person..... Andrew King
A finger in various pies..... Joe Boyd
An East End pixie..... Marc Bolan
All other parts played by Mick Farren.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE PINK FLOYD

If you can cast your mind back to the dying days of 1965 (which most underground stalwarts find impossible because their drug-addled memories can't remember further back than last week), you'll recall that the chartboard sounds were "We can work it out", "Eve of Destruction", "Get off my cloud" and "Turn Turn Turn". Around that time too, Smithy had just declared UDI in Rhodesia, President Johnson was showing his gall bladder operation scar to the waiting world, the Post Office tower had recently been opened, and the Government had just abolished the death penalty.

Right, now that we've established some sort of departure point we can begin our narrative.

Peter Jenner had been set for a very distinguished career in the field of education; an assistant lecturer in the Dept of Social Administration at the London School of Economics.... but he was bored with that. He was also a passionate avant garde jazz freak.... but he was bored with that too; "most of it was becoming so unpleasant on the ear that I just couldn't get off on it.... John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman were the last two to really interest me". His tastes changed towards R&B (of the Bo Diddley type) where they re-

mained for some time... approximately up until this end-of-65 period.

Apart from music, his head was buzzing with ambitious notions of founding a free school and a record label, on which to record his freaky-jazz musician mates whose virtuosity offended the ears of all civilised record company executives. His partner in crime in cooking up these wild schemes was a bloke called John Hopkins (later to be known as Hoppy), who he had known for years. Now, Elektra Records had just set up an English office under the astute auspices of Joe Boyd, who Hoppy got to know, and a deal was worked out whereby Elektra would assist them in matters of finance, pressing and distribution. Subsequently, an album by AMM was released (on the Elektra label rather than their bizarre DNA label, the logo for which, Mike McNinney, later a well known poster artist, had taken great pains to design), featuring Keith Rowe, Cornelius Cardew and various other musicians in the "avant garde/classical/weirdo scene.... and it was a very very good, far out record".

It sold about a thousand copies, but nevertheless turned out to be the first and last album they made. However, not only did it re-open the madcap Jenner's head to electronic music, but it also set his economics oriented mind to work on the facts, figures and percentages of the record industry. He did his sums and came to the momentous conclusion that the only way to come out of things with a profit was to get hold of a smash hit - and even a person of his musical illiteracy (he could hardly differentiate between the Dave Clark Five and the London Symphony Orchestra) knew that freaky sax-blowing weirdies were not about to set the singles chart on fire. The problem caused a great deal of anxiety and he was on the point of consulting a psychiatrist, when it happened.

At 3am one morning, it came to him in a blinding flash. He threw the blankets from the crude framework of his camp-bed and rushed downstairs to make a drink. He could hardly control his excitement as his trembling hands cupped the steaming Bovril..... "a pop group", he finally ejaculated (not a pretty sight).

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The fact had been staring him in the face for several months, but it was not until early 1966 that he recognised it.... the ideal vehicle to strap his energies to. The previous summer, one of his closest friends had been Eric Clapton, but Jenner at that time was totally disinterested in English pop music; compared with jazz and bona-fide American Blues, it was just a load of trite, ephemeral rubbish - and, to a degree, I suppose his bigotted opinion was just about right.... there was very little integrity in pop.

Clapton (though this has nothing to do with our story) had suddenly decided to leave John Mayall's Bluesbreakers (in August 66, though he rejoined 3 months later) and had formed a new band which he was going to take to Europe to get it together in a Greek country cottage, man; there was Jake Milton on drums (now in Quintessence), Ben Palmer on piano (later Cream's roadie), a sax player called Bernie, a bass player who subsequently became leader of the Communist party in Birmingham, and John Bailey (who was in McGuinness Flint for a while). They all went off from Jenner's flat in a big American car.

Anyway, to revert to the main body of the narrative, Jenner began to look for a tasteful pop group. No, that's a lie.... he wasn't that enthusiastic. He still had his secure job at LSE and he merely decided to wait until the right group presented itself to him.

His first probings were abortive - and little wonder. Hoppy had got hold of a tape of one of the Velvet Underground's first gigs in New York and it was concluded that if the Velvets played their cards right, they could enjoy the patronage of Messrs Jenner and Hopkins. Such naivety! (this story is true, by the way). They phoned New York and spoke to John Cale, who tactfully pointed out that a Mr Warhol was already handling their affairs.

Now inevitably the sequence of events is going to get a bit blurred and jumbled if we don't stick to the music, but let me just mention a few other things. In these early months of 1966, the thoughts of various poets, painters, writers, musicians, etc, were all funnelling in the same direction.... the seeds of the Underground were sown and everybody was waiting for the harvest, so to speak. The Free School idea had taken root and was being set up in Notting Hill, and the All Saints Hall was becoming the central meeting place during this fermentation period. To finance the school, which was run on donations, it was decided to put on a few concerts, and these developed into the odd gig at the Marquee in Wardour Street.

Jenner: "It was in June, I remember, because I was in the middle of the crucifixingly boring chore of marking examination papers; I always used to leave it until the last minute so that I'd be impelled to rush through them rather than go through the laborious agonies of wondering if a paper merited an A or a B+. Anyway, I decided to pack it in for the evening and go along to this mad gig at the Marquee, which was being run by people like Steve Stollman (who's brother had started the ESP label in New York) and Hoppy. Well, I arrived around 10.30 and there on the stage was this strange band, who were playing a mixture of R&B and electronic noises.... and I was really intrigued be-

cause in between the routine stuff like 'Louie Louie' and 'Roadrunner', they were playing these very weird breaks; so weird that I couldn't even work out which instrument the sound was coming from. It was all very bizarre and just what I was looking for - a far out, electronic, freaky, pop group. . . . and there, across the bass amp, was their name: "The Pink Floyd Sound".

HOW TO MAKE A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A BLACKHILL

"I didn't know anything about pop music" recalls Jenner. "I just can't tell you how little I knew. . . . I mean, I hardly knew about the Beatles even, and I didn't know anything about the Stones - and it was only at that time that I started trying to become aware of what was happening in pop music. Anyway, after thinking about it, I decided I'd like to record these Floyd geezers, and I finally tracked down Roger and Nicky who were living in an obscure flat in Highgate. It was the typical student scene - they'd bought a £20 J2 van and some gear with their grant money but were on the point of splitting the band because 1/ they weren't getting any gigs, 2/ they were going off on their summer holidays, and 3/ it was interfering with their studies; Roger and Nick were training to become architects, Rick was going to a music school and Syd was at art school and more interested in painting than music".

Peter merely introduced himself, said hello, and said he'd be interested in talking to them when they re-convened after their holidays, and it was only at this stage that he discovered what an amateur set-up the Pink Floyd was; no contracts, no agency or management, no gigs, and very little gear, most of which was either extremely decrepit or else encased in home made cabinets - but still, the seeds were there.

Enter Andrew King, a lifelong friend of Jenner's, who had resigned from his position as an educational cyberneticist (I don't know what one of them is either); he too had become bored and found it much more gratifying to hang out on street corners. He entered into loose partnership with Jenner and jointly, as Blackhill Enterprises, they took on the management of the Floyd, which was more than they'd planned to do because the original idea was merely to find a group for their label idea. . . . but now they determined to go the whole hog and make the Pink Floyd into a top band.

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Carnival time arrived at the Free School and part of the festivities included a rock concert at the All Saints Hall - and what better choice for the group than. . . . the Pink Floyd. As well as that, some American friends of Hoppy's came along and projected coloured slides on the group

as they played - not moving whirlpools of colour; just static slides, but it was the beginning of the "mixed media" idea, and it started Jenner thinking. Snippets of information about the San Francisco scene had been filtering over the ocean; the West Coast psychedelic scene was much more together and advanced than its Notting Hill counterpart, so why not try to find out about the sophistications such as acid, light shows, peace and love, flowers and all the rest of the paraphernalia and implement some of them here?

The light show idea really appealed, but as no-one could tell them about the refinements, they had to improvise. Peter and Andrew, a right pair of mechanical duffers, took instruction on the way to hold a hand saw and constructed a very primitive, Heath Robinson device consisting of domestic spotlights from British Home Stores, operated by domestic light switches, shining through coloured perspex pinned to this crude framework they'd nailed up out of lumps of wood. (This remarkable triumph of carpentry skill is now an exhibit in the sculpture hall of the National Museum of Early Psychedelic Art in Chicago).

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The Floyd needed help. They needed encouragement, equipment, rehearsal, roadies, work, recording contracts, direction and all the rest of it, and their new managers didn't have the first idea about the roles and attitudes of the established managers, but they waded in at the deep end. Now, there's an old adage which says: "fools rush in, and get the best seats" - and that, by a strange quirk of good fortune, is exactly what happened. . . . over the next few months the Floyd seemed to waltz into the charts, onto the television and into clubs and theatres without any problems at all.

Here's an example of their luck: Peter was still at work, so Andrew did most of the day to day management and also, from the remnants of an inheritance, paid for a thousand quids worth of gear. . . . which was promptly stolen. So they had to get another load of new gear, this time on hire purchase.

By this time, things were happening fast. In October 1966, the International Times (later abbreviated to IT) was launched and the Roundhouse was taken over for a celebration party, where 2000 odd people (most of them were odd) were given free sugar cubes and assailed with the raw sounds of the evolving Underground's two top groups, The Pink Floyd and the Soft Machine, both of who's reputations had spread via regular gigs at the All Saints Hall. All the different factions of the underground were represented and it was as if the net had suddenly tightened round all the loose ends, bringing them together,

literally under one roof.

"At that time, the Roundhouse hadn't ever been used as an entertainment venue and it was just FILTHY. On top of that, there was virtually no electricity other than an ordinary domestic supply and wires dangled here and there. . . . so our puny light show looked magnificent in all the darkness".

Celebrities abounded; Antonioni was there, Paul McCartney was there - to name but two, and it was "an incredibly fashionable affair. . . . probably the most epochal party you could ever see, and the bands got noticed, particularly the Floyd who blew up the power during their set and consequently ended the evening's entertainment. That in itself, to be cut off in the middle of 'Interstellar Overdrive' was a bummer, but at the same time it was incredibly dramatic".

The Floyd had, by this time, dropped most of their R&B repertoire in favour of the more electronic/freaky stuff and I, in my blissful ignorance, had assumed that this was a result of acid experimentation and the like, but this was not so. It was done at Jenner's insistence; he directed them off the 'Louie Louie' trip towards the 'Saucerful of secrets' style, and it turned out to be the perfect managerial move - although it was done largely out of ignorance. . . . Jenner merely thought the electronic stuff sounded better than the American imitations which he'd never really been keen on. Also, thinking that there was nothing difficult in composing new numbers, he impressed on them that they should write more original material of a "weird" nature but, at the same time, bearing the requirements of the singles market in mind. So, their style evolved to the satisfaction of their managers, who thought it was good but had no idea how radically different it was from anything else that was happening in pop music.

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IT rapidly became the official organ of the Underground (supplemented by Oz which started up a couple of months later) and then, in December 66, Hoppy and his associates opened UFO, the first regular Underground club (and the best). Here's a brief description of what went on, borrowed from IT/29 and written by Miles, who's interviews and reviews had become so influential:

December 23rd saw 'Night Tripper' at Tottenham Court Road, advertised by a poster and a display ad in IT/5. There was no indication as to who would be there performing, the audience attended because they 'knew' who would be there and 'knew' what was happening. The name-change to UFO occurred the next week and the first UFO advertised the Pink Floyd, Fanta and Ood, the Giant Sun Trolly and Dave Tomlin improvising to government propaganda. UFO was created by and for the original 'underground', posters

from messrs. English & Waymouth and an IT stall by the cloakrooms. The first UFO also had a Marilyn Monroe movie, Karate and light-shows. It was a club in the sense that most people knew each other, met there to do their business, arrange their week's appointments, dinners and lunches and hatch out issues of IT, plans for Arts Lab, SOMA, and various schemes for turning the Thames yellow and removing all the fences in Notting Hill. The activity and energy was thicker than the incense. . . .

Miles also ran Indica Bookshop in Southampton Row, a veritable goldmine of goodies; a whole new world to be discovered by emerging hippies (like me). . . . full of books, underground papers like the San Francisco Oracle and the East Village Other, magazines, posters, marvel comics. Phew! And the International Times was born out of and published from their basement, which for a while was the nerve centre of the Underground.

By the beginning of 1967, UFO was already bulging to the walls with freaks - and the Pink Floyd, their music becoming increasingly stranger by pop music standards, were the big musical draw. Jenner: "At the first two or three UFOs, the Floyd were on 60% of the gross to provide music and lights, and my first managerial blunder was allowing that to be altered so that we got straight bread instead of a percentage, because the place instantly became very fashionable - I've never seen anything like it, before or since. And the band had become even more fashionable; without any records or any exposure outside of a couple of places in London, we got a centre page spread in Melody Maker".

If you know anything about the workings of the pop music industry, you'll know that any manager or publicist would sell his boyfriend to get a centrespread in MM, but Jenner wasn't at all surprised. . . . he assumed that this was the normal routine thing to happen to any band. But the Floyd were becoming red hot; the word was spreading like a forest fire - all the record companies were interested and suited executives were lured into the addict infested filth of UFO to see the band in action. Eventually they signed with EMI who offered them the best deal, including an advance of £5000, which was just unbelievably astronomical in those days; more like a telephone number than a sum of money - and, surprisingly, EMI really got behind them and did an incomparable promotion job.

1967. . . WHAT A YEAR!

Back to the scene in general. The media was latching on to the more sensational aspects of hippieism/flower-power/beautiful people, and what was going down in San Francisco was now on everybody's lips. There were more gatherings here too; on January 29th, IT

sponsored an Uncommon Market spontaneous happening thing at the Roundhouse and a little later came THE ULTIMATE in drawing together the Underground. . . . the 14 Hour Technicolour Dream, held at Alexandra Palace. The Uncommon Market's main attraction was a 56 gallon jelly (if you rolled around naked in jelly, you were considered very far out and groovy and gained great esteem and fame), but the Dream, which took place during the night of April 29th and was originally to be a benefit for IT which had been busted for obscenity the previous month, not only attracted 5000 longhairs, but featured almost every underground group in England.

I remember it well; the whole thing just burned into my memory for ever. . . . it hit you as soon as you walked into the place - lights and films all over the walls and blitzing volume from 2 stages with bands playing simultaneously! On one stage you had the completely unknown Arthur Brown, this crazy whirling painted lunatic accompanied by a hunched up speeding organist and a thrashing drummer, and on the other you had the Soft Machine, with Daevid Allen wearing a miner's helmet and staring like a weird zombie and Kevin Ayers wearing rouge on his cheeks and a black cowboy hat surmounted by giant model glider wings. I just couldn't believe it; outside, the straights of Wood Green were watching their tellys and sipping their tea, and inside this huge time machine were 5000 stoned, tripping, mad, friendly, festive hippies. . . . talk about two different worlds!

At the time, one of the things that impressed me most was the lack of any sort of physical or mental barrier between performers and audience; when a band finished its set, the members got off the stage and wandered into the crowd to sit on the floor. It was all so very unlike the usual pop gig where a group arrived on stage via a back passage, played and went off by the same route - never mixing with the inferior rabble.

What else did I see? The Purple Gang, with mandolins, washboards and amplification troubles, bashing out their 'Granny Takes A Trip' - one of the early hippie classics, Dick Gregory and Pete Townshend and Yoko Ono were there, Savoy Brown, the Social Deviants with Mick Farren singing Chuck Berry standards against a monstrous cacophony of discordant rock, and Denny Laine was there too - but, though he had his guitar and Viv Prince with him, he didn't play (which was sad, because 1967 was his supreme year of creativity).

Hoppy was there, never without a smile and Suzie Creamcheese, and they were giving out free bananas (because it was around the time of the US underground

great banana hoax; they conned everyone into believing that you could get high by scraping the skin from the inside skin, baking it and smoking it).

As dawn started to shine a shimmering eerie light at the windows, the Pink Floyd came on. "It was a perfect setting" says Jenner. "Everyone had been waiting for them and everybody was on acid; that event was the peak of acid use in England. . . . everybody was on it - the bands, the organisers, the audience - and I certainly was". Of course, the Floyd blew every body's mind.

But this was a special occasion; the Floyd, though "the psychedelic band", were not really into psychedelics at all - they were much more booze oriented. . . . and this was generally the case with the early underground bands; it was the pop groups

of the time, the teenybop raves like the Small Faces, who were doing the drugs.

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Around this time, the pirate radio stations, whose lifespan was already being limited to months by the Marine Offences Act which was being rushed through the Commons, were at their most influential in shaping the pop charts: "We start 'em, others chart 'em". Radio London, by far and away the best, refused to play 'Arnold Layne', the Floyd's first single, because it was about a transvestite, but Radio Caroline, once the payola had been handed over, got behind it and supplemented EMI's big promotional campaign. Before long, it had got to number 23 in the national chart, which, of course, was no surprise to Peter Jenner who thought it was only natural for a single to go into the charts, but due poss-



compulsive listening. It was for me anyway; I used to lie there listening to the Doors, the Incubates, Donovan and all the others, and arrive at work the next day with great bags under my eyes - and he used to get hold of imports and play unheard of grist like Catatin Beefheart & his Magic Band and Country Joe & the Fish. It was an amazing period - one I wouldn't have missed for the world.

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By the time June rolled around, the unity of the Underground was already disintegrating, with the different sections criticising the ethics of each other, and the bread minded entrepreneurs had begun to step in and promote flower power festivals and happenings on a very obviously commercial basis. There were no so many 'Underground bands' that you couldn't move for them, but the thing that caused most discomfort to the hard core of the old school was the arrest and sentencing of Hoppy for dope possession; he got nine months.

Though many avant garde musicians (not to mention people in other spheres) had been smoking marijuana for years, the public image of drugs was the wicked black man prosecuted for selling reefers to unsuspecting teenagers. But all of a sudden, all the mods were gulping down handfuls of pills, and the longhairs were either getting stoned or else trying out this incredible new acid stuff which had newly arrived from the laboratories of America, where it was still legal until late 1966. The Sunday papers feared for the future of the nation's youth, the police got pressured into paranoia and they went berserk with their arrests; Jagger, Richard, Lennon, Georgie Fame, Joe Cocker, were all busted for possession, but the first really big purge came in the early hours of March 3rd 1968, when 150 police suddenly plunged into the depths of Middle Earth, which had opened as a rival to UFO in early 67. They took 5 hours to search 750 people and made only eleven arrests, though one heard grapevine reports of the vast tonnage of hash that was swept up from the floor afterwards.

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Back to the Floyd, who were now just about world famous due to a combination of luck, talent and a miraculous series of events. 'If we had started out with just any old banger group, we'd have been finished within a year, because we had so little idea of what we were doing, but fortunately, the Floyd had all this talent. Andrew and I just played everything by ear; goodness only knows what the established record-biz people must've thought about us.... I suppose that when we left their offices they just looked at each other and collapsed in disbelief at our naivety! They cut their first album in studio 3

at EMI whilst the Beatles were constructing 'Sgt Pepper' next door in studio 2, and that sold well too - so everything was going along smoothly - but at the London School of Economics, where Peter still taught, he was one of the junior staff in favour of the student revolution which was beginning to erupt and he eventually got a sharp reprimand; either he curbed the nature of his extra-curricular activities or else he could tender his resignation. So he compromised, and took a year's leave of absence.... which has so far extended itself to 5 years.

It was around this time that the pressures of the world started exerting themselves on Syd Barrett, who was really the genius of the group; he was writing, arranging, creating the sounds, singing, but he was, as everybody who ever followed the Floyd knows, cracking up a little. Peter accepts some of the responsibility for what was happening; he was always demanding greater effort, more productivity, more songs for future singles and so forth, but the gig scene was probably more to blame. In the London long hair haunts, everything was fine - perfect vibes between audience and group - but once they got out into the world they found that their music had hardly been accepted; gigs were disastrous. Kids who turned up purely to hear a 'top twenty group' could not come to terms with feedback and the like - so they booed and threw pennies.... Jenner's face contorts in agony as he recalls the general miseries of touring in that summer of 67.

Finding a suitable chantbuster to follow 'Emily' proved impossible; loads of material (much of it amazing classics like 'Scream your last scream old woman with a basket' and 'Vegetable Man' which have yet to be released) was recorded, but no obvious single surfaced to keep them buoyant, and a tour interrupted the proceedings. It was an epic theatre package tour of the type we'll never see again - seven groups in one show.... and they did two shows a night! A roadie's nightmare! Jimi Hendrix had 40 minutes, the Move had 30, the Floyd had 17, Amen Corner 15. The Nice 12, and so on, and it was all bound together by compere Pete Drummond, who's main success lay in alienating the fans.

That tour did wonders in popularising them, but a subsequent tour of America was decidedly very strange; they'd arrive at a gig and someone backstage would invariably induce them to sample the latest line in synthetic drugs and some extraordinary music would ensue. One of the aims of the early Floyd was to achieve the San Fran/psychedelic stance, which they thought they were doing quite well, but it transpired that their music was far removed from anything the Americans had ever seen before. With few examples of the

West Coast sound to take their lead from, they had just guessed and assumed what the more progressive groups might be trying, and in doing so had evolved a style entirely their own.



THE END OF AN ERA (AND THE START OF ANOTHER)

Within a year of the first stirrings of love, peace and brotherhood, the Underground had passed through its period of togetherness.

UFO, under the control of Joe Boyd, had closed down, and Hoppy, just out of prison, was now much quieter and there was no-one to assume his pivotal role as coordinator of underground activities. Jenner: 'I think it was a tragedy for the hip community when Hoppy was put in jail and I don't think it ever recovered, because it was his energy which fired so many schemes.... he held everything to-

gether and helped to maintain a unity'. Everyone withdrew into his own camp rather than think about the underground as a whole.... a very narrowing bandwagon period during which hypocrisy was around on a very big scale.

Meanwhile, the Floyd was falling apart too; the pop press were coming out with rapturous accounts of how Syd would do a whole number strumming just one chord, but the other three weren't so much amused as troubled, and they decided to make a few changes because they could never be sure if Syd was suddenly going to change the rhythm or structure of a piece - and things stretched just a little too far....

Syd stayed with Blackhill, who had plans for a solo career, and the Floyd recruited Dave Gilmour and went off to a new management in March 1968. The end of an amazing, but very weird era.

'We were always convinced that they were going to be as big as the Beatles - we were sure of that - but the way we ran things was so hap hazard. For instance, at one time we had the 4 Floyd, Andrew and me, June Child (who worked in the office and later became Mrs Bolan), 2 roadies and 2 lights people - they were all on salary, and we didn't keep any sort of control over expenditure.... ludicrous amounts were spent on ridiculous things, and the money scene got very unstable as a result of no hit record and no gigs, a situation which had arisen because of the reputation they'd gained for being unreliable.'

'Basically, the Floyd left us because they thought we'd have no confidence in them without Syd, which was true, even though it was a mistake for us to think like that. We just couldn't conceive how they would be able to make it without Syd, who put all the creativity into the group'.

So off they went, leaving the financial position approximately as it had been 18 months earlier.... everybody was broke. Jenner: 'If I'd known then, what I know now, things would've been very different.... the Floyd would have made a lot of money much sooner than they did, and I'd be a very rich man'.

By this time, however, Blackhill had just taken on the management of an unrecorded duo who had no gigs and survived mainly because of John Peel's interest and help.... they were called Tyrannosaurus Rex, but that's another story altogether.

References:

For a fuller picture, read 'Play Power' by Richard Neville and 'Bomb Culture' by Jeff Nuttall. Also see Glen Sweeney in Zigzag 4 and Mick Farren in Zigzag 5. Old copies of IT and Oz are interesting, and a snoop around Compendium Books in Camden Town is always worthwhile.

Great moments in rock history; number 27

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A lightning interview attempting to cover the entire history of the Doors; Robbie Krieger, Ray Manzarek & John Densmore.

ZZ: Before the Doors, you were in Rick & the Ravens... yes?

Ray: Right. That was me and my brothers, neither of whom are doing much at the moment - just hanging around Los Angeles. ZZ: There was also mention of a female bass player.

Ray: She was really unknown - nobody knows who she was; I certainly never knew her name. Will the lady bass player step forward please? It's like that Russian crown princess who claims to be heir to the throne - Anastasia or something. maybe she's the lady bass player.

ZZ: Who was on the six track record you cut at World Pacific Studios? (see ZZ16)

Ray: Me, John (Densmore), that lady bass player, Jim (Morrison), and my brothers. John: Ray was singing harmony on that record, though he was always the piano player when the Doors started. In Rick & the Ravens, his brother was pianist.

ZZ: Is that album still around anywhere?

Ray: Yes, but only about 2 or 3 copies; you see, it was only a demo record, made to get us a recording contract. I have a copy, so has John, and maybe Billy James has the other. We walked the streets of Los Angeles with that - went to the record companies and said "here are six songs - we have many more". Almost every one of them said "No, that's terrible. ... oh no, it's just awful", but one guy at Columbia Records, Billy James, said "I dig it". He was the only one. I remember we played 'A little game' (which was later part of the 'Celebration of the Lizard') to this guy at Liberty, and he nearly exploded. "You can't do stuff like this. ... you can't!"

ZZ: You met John and Robbie at one of the Maharishi's meditation centres, right?

Ray: Yeah, and they already knew each other. ... they were in a band together.

ZZ: Was that the Psychedelic Rangers?

John: Yes, but we never recorded, I was in Terry Driscoll & the Twilighters before that.

ZZ: According to the story, you met Jim on a beach, and he said "Let's swim through the ocean, let's climb through the tide" - and you said "Wow!"

Ray: That's how it happened.

ZZ: Why wasn't that song on the first album then, instead of the second?

Robbie: Actually, that was the first song we recorded as the Doors, but it was also the weakest, so we left it off, and then re-recorded it later.

ZZ: I gather that by the time you recorded, you already had sufficient material for two albums.

John: Yes. That was because we rehearsed for 7 or 8 months, and then we went around town scrounging around for any gig we could get. We didn't go into a studio for a further 5 months, by which time we had those two albums wrapped up.

ZZ: What happened with the Columbia deal - after Billy James recommended they sign you up?

John: Well, we just stuck around, because although they didn't give us any money, it was a privilege to be with a company at all. Fortunately, we got some instruments out of them; Billy James called up the Vox man and said "I'm sending these guys over. ... give them some equipment!"

Ray: We got a Vox organ - that was great - and a couple of amps. But we never saw a studio or a producer in the 6 months we were with them. ... but maybe that was just as well, because I saw their 'drop list'. Columbia, being as big as they are, have a pick-up list and a drop list; there were about a dozen on the way in, and 18 or so on the way out. It was sort of like "move 'em in, move 'em out", and it got us pretty depressed to see that sort of thing

The Doors in a nutshell; 64 quick questions

happening. We were glad to get out of it; it was such a giant corporation and we were scared of being lost in the shuffle.

ZZ: Can you tell us about this club that you used to play - 'The London Fog'?

Robbie: It was about as big as this room (40'x15') and held about 75 people.

John: I'll tell you how we got booked into that place; we went down there on audition night with about 50 of our friends in the audience. They applauded frantically, of course, and the manager thought 'My God, they must be good'. He hired us, and then couldn't understand why the club was so empty every night afterwards.

ZZ: Is it right that you were doing stuff like 'Louie Louie', 'Money', 'Hoochie Coochie Man', 'Gloria', 'Little Red Rooster' and 'Who do you love'?

Ray: Yes, as well as things like 'Feel it' and 'In the midnight hour' - but even so, we played mostly our original material.

John: You see, some of the audience was straighter people who liked to gyrate about on the floor (what there was of it), and so we had to drop in things like 'Louie Louie' to satisfy them, and thereby keep the job.

ZZ: Apparently, at your last night at the 'London Fog', Ronnie Haran chanced to see you and got you booked at the Whiskey.

Ray: Yes, she came by - it was the last night because the club closed down.

ZZ: How long were you at the Whiskey?

John: We were house band there for at least 6 months.

ZZ: Who did you support? People like the Turtles, Them, Love and the Seeds?

Robbie: All those except the Seeds, who we did back up a couple of times around LA and Santa Barbara. They were pretty good, but not very popular, I believe. We had a real good time with Them, though.

Ray: Wasn't that our first gig? With Van?

John: No, I think the Buffalo Springfield was the first one, and then it was Them. We were so nervous when they came in; you see, we'd say to each other "right, we'll blow this lot off the stage" about most groups, but we approached Them with a little respect - but as it happened, we had a great time with them.

ZZ: Them went down well over there...

Robbie: Fairly well, even though a lot of them were drunk all the time.

John: They were pretty spaced out. We played 'Gloria' for about an hour - both bands at once.

ZZ: So we come to the point where Jac Holzman sees you at the Whiskey, but is not convinced until he's seen you several times.

Ray: I guess so. ... I don't know.

ZZ: He'd snapped up Love, but it took him longer to appreciate the Doors?

Robbie: I don't think it took him long to want to sign us - it just took a long time

to work the deal out to the satisfaction of both parties. I think he decided that he wanted us the first time he saw us.

ZZ: Jim said that if Elektra was good enough for Love, it was good enough for the Doors, because Love was a big band.

John: Right. We felt that if Elektra could make us as big as Love, that'd be fine.

ZZ: In fact, Love was only big in LA, because he wouldn't tour...

John: That's right, and that's my theory as to why Arthur Lee isn't the biggest thing around, because he's so enormously talented but wouldn't leave his house at all. He's recently signed with A&M and he's got a new album coming out. I saw him at A&M studios and everyone there was knocked out with his stuff.

ZZ: I read in a press release that 'Light my fire' sold 12 million. That can't be!

John: It sold a couple of million.

ZZ: It says on the sleeve of the first LP.

Ray: Yes, I played keyboard bass on every track, but it didn't record very well, which is why we didn't use it again. It works ok live, but on record it doesn't have any definition.

ZZ: Whos choice was 'Alabama Song'?

John: Ray instigated that one.

Ray: I had this record at home of Brecht and Weill songs, and that was one of them. We liked the song and gave it a try.

ZZ: I thought it an odd sort of choice for a single.

John: It wasn't a single. ... oh yes, that's right, it was in England. Yes, that was weird - but none of our singles did very well here except 'Hello I love you'.

Robbie: And most people thought that was the Kinks.

John: We'll crash this market. ... England is a challenge for us.

ZZ: To get back to 'Light my fire', was it done live or built up slowly?

Robbie: Everything but the vocals was done at once.

John: Second take. The whole album was done very quickly; it only took two weeks because we'd rehearsed for so long.

ZZ: The single was a chopped down version of the album track...

Robbie: It had to be in order to get radio plays - we often have to do that, but we do the editing ourselves.

ZZ: Where did you get 'Backdoor Man' from?

Robbie: Funnily enough, I got the idea for that from a John Hammond album.

ZZ: Who wrote 'The End'?

Ray: The lyrics are Jim's, but the song evolved over quite a long period.

ZZ: Do you have Weberman-type figures who analyse your songs?

Ray: Yeah, quite a few. I've seen more than one Volkswagen vans with 'blue Bus' written on the side too.



ZZ: Can you tell us who actually wrote all the songs on the first album?

Robbie: Jim wrote the words for 'Break on through', 'Soul kitchen', '20th Century Fox' and 'Crystal Ship', and we all sort of did the music. I wrote 'Light my fire', and the rest were Jim's lyrics and our music.

ZZ: What about the second album?

Robbie: 'You're lost little girl', 'Love me two times' - they were both mine, the rest were by Jim.

ZZ: Doug Lubahn plays bass on the 2nd album - did you meet him when he was in Clear Light?

John: Yes. Paul Rothchild brought us together. He was recently in a band called Dreams for a while, but I'm not sure what he's up to now; we've been thinking of looking him up.

ZZ: How did you get that wind effect on 'Horse Latitudes'?

Robbie: Bruce did that. ... it was phasing.

ZZ: On to 'Waiting for the sun'... who's this Kerry Magness who plays bass?

John: He was in The Daily Flash.

Robbie: No he wasn't; he was in Popcorn, which was some of the ex Daily Flash. ... he's from Seattle.

ZZ: Leroy Vinegar played with Shelley Manne, didn't he? What was the idea of having him on 'Spanish Caravan'?

John: Well, we're all old jazzers, dug jazz a long time - thought he'd be nice.

ZZ: The stereo gunshot on 'Unknown Soldier' was a nice touch - who's idea?

John: Paul Rothchild's - he thought of all the marching firing squad going across and firing towards the other speaker, and he got all that victory parade crowd effect and bells together.

ZZ: How did you get the gunshot on stage?

John: Dropped a reverb unit - that worked ok.

ZZ: When you were in England around the time of that 3rd album, you got the reputation of being the most awkward band to photograph.

Ray: Oh yeah? Well, cameras suck your soul, you know.

John: Trap your psychic energy.

ZZ: Let's leap on to 'The Soft Parade'; I gather it took ages to make and got out of hand.

Ray: It took a long time, yes, but we like it. ... though nobody else does it seems.

ZZ: You never play any tracks live?

Robbie: We used to.

Ray: We used to do 'Soft Parade' live, and 'Wild Child' and 'Touch me'.

ZZ: Harvey Brooks turns up on bass this time - how did you know him?

John: Paul knew him, and we wanted to use him. He was really good to work with, but he was also pretty hard to track down. He's producing a bit now.

ZZ: What about this sax player, Curtis

Amy?

John: He's Merry Clayton's husband and works a lot with Ode Records. He's an old West Coast jazz player.

ZZ: George Bohanan?

Ray: He's a jazz trombone player. ... was with Chico Hamilton, but now he's with Curtis - working around A&M/Ode.

ZZ: Champ Webb?

Ray: He's an American English-horn player. ... a classical cat - did the solo on 'Wishful Sinful'.

ZZ: Jesse McReynolds?

Ray: Oh, Jim & Jesse - they're famous country musicians.

Robbie: That shows just how ridiculous we got on that album; we imported these guys from North Carolina, just to play on 'Running Blue'.

John: We had a great time making that album though; we probably spent more than it made - 80 thousand dollars. We were making our 'Sgt Pepper'.

ZZ: Did you decide not to use any brass again after that?

Robbie: Well, after listening to the record a number of times, I concluded that it would probably be just as good without the brass - though it was fun at the time.

John: Paul Harris, who's now with Steve Stills' Mannassas, arranged all the horns.

ZZ: Then came 'Morrison Hotel' - who is Ray Neapolitan?

John: A Fender Jazz bass player - he's played with Don Ellis, Ohio Knox, and loads of other people.

ZZ: At this stage, there were rumours that Lonnie Mack had joined the Doors.

Robbie: I don't know who spread them.

John: All that happened was that with him being on Elektra too, we kept running into him here and there, and he just dropped by one day and played bass on a song or two.

ZZ: Who's this mysterious G. Puglese?

John: That's John Sebastian. His real name is Giovanni Puglese.

ZZ: It's odd to have a track 'Waiting for the sun', a couple of albums after that was conceived as the third album title.

Ray: We like to relate back - it's like 'The Lizard', which eventually came out on the live album.

ZZ: Are there any tracks you feel should have been on '13' or 'Weird scenes', but weren't?

Ray: No, but we never wanted those compilation albums released at all.

John: We're not into those albums - that's Jac Holzman's little trip.

ZZ: You can't blame him - everybody else does it.

Ray: Sure, but we had nothing to do with it - that's what I'm saying.

ZZ: It was said at various times that the Doors were anxious to do a live rock'n' roll album. 'Absolutely Live' is partly rock'n'roll, but by no means all.

Ray: I don't think we were ever pressing to do a rock'n'roll album. We wanted to do a live album, however. It took a lot longer than we thought, and came out a lot later.

ZZ: Were no live tapes done earlier?

Ray: Not really. Not of sufficiently good quality anyway. It's too bad.

ZZ: 'LA Woman' next: Why did you sever your relationship with producer Paul Rothchild?

Robbie: It was a mutual thing. We found that after 4 or 5 albums, one knows just exactly what one wants to do, and Paul didn't have anything to contribute that we hadn't already thought of ourselves. So he wasn't really a necessary factor any more - and he didn't feel he was doing enough to warrant his being called producer on the albums anymore. You see, he's one of those producers who really has to get his trip onto a record - put all his energy into what he's doing, and, as I said, by this stage, we knew just what we wanted.

John: On top of that, we didn't want to be tied down by anyone. That's why 'LA Woman' came out so fresh - because we felt a bit freer. We're still good friends with Paul; it's just good to get away for a while.

ZZ: How did Marc Benno get on it?

Ray: He's a friend of Bruce's (Botnick).

ZZ: And Jerry Scheff?

Ray: He's a studio bass player, who plays with Elvis. Really excellent musician; I'd like to play with him all the time, but he's too busy.

ZZ: And Jack Conrad's the new bassman?

John: Yes, Bruce brought him in for the 'Other Voices' album. He's real busy now; works with Helen Reddy and writes a lot of stuff.

ZZ: Is he now a permanent Door?

Robbie: Not really, but about as close as you can come. He's done the last three tours, as has Bobby, our rhythm player.

ZZ: Where did he come from?

Robbie: He's an old friend of ours from Los Angeles. He played bass with Donovan for a while - was on 'Sunshine Super-

man', and was in the Mamas & Papas road band. Hopefully he's going to make his own solo album pretty soon.

ZZ: When Jim was in the group - did you feel your guitar had to be kept in the back ground? Like, you seem to have come a lot further forward on 'Other Voices'.

Robbie: Oh, I don't know. ... it's true that when Jim was in the group it was like the band with the voice of God up front, and everybody seemed to be overshadowed by the voice.

Ray: I think the audience felt that more than we did, mind you. The involvement of the four of us was equal; it was really very democratic the way we did everything even though Jim's voice was out front. In every relationship there is strain, but we got on well with him. ... there were some really great times.

John: He was a pretty smart person, which is maybe why he had so many ups and downs.

ZZ: Is your relationship with Elektra a good one?

John: Yeah; as far as record people go, Holzman is one of the better. We can talk to him.

Robbie: Jac is as far as you can go with being a big executive and still being able to talk to the guy and get on well with him.

John: He digs the music.

Robbie: That's one of the reasons we signed with Elektra - Jac always had taste. ... always the best folk acts.

ZZ: How much longer are you with them?

John: It's a three year contract.

ZZ: Do you like LA - feel happy there?

Robbie: I can't stand the oxygen level, but yes, I live there because I love it. ... LA Woman is a kind of compliment song.

Interviewer. ... John.

STUFF & NONSENSE

from the pen of
John Tobler

Considerably older since the last issue - so there's a lot to talk about. Let's go.

I've managed to get to many a live gig during our little break, and usually I've been pretty pleased by what I've seen. I felt that the festivals would be too damp, so I was lucky enough to be in the front row for the Beach Boys Festival Hall concert instead. They're positively excellent from close up, and all those immaculate harmonies on their records were reproduced really well. I'm not the most avid latter-day Beach Boys fan, so it pleased me that they went through all their older stuff, as well as throwing in a couple of recent songs. A few gripes though; poor old Dennis Wilson seems to be having a tough time of it, and I feel really sorry for him because it looks as if he may be getting pushed out. The new drummer had the affrontery to say that he didn't think being in the Beach Boys was a big deal. He must be totally empty below his trendy haircut if he thinks that. The new guitar player is ok, but he's a bit too much into the BBKing mould. (BBKing meets the Beach Boys? No way). Darryl Dragon (what a hard name) is excellent.

While we're on the subject, there's a rather fine harmony group called Capability Brown (remnants, I believe, of Tony Rivers & the Castaways) who have made a nice album which Beach Boys fans should check out.

Then there's the Doors, for me the ultimate group of all time. It was rather amazing to discover what a fine group they are, even without the late very great Jim. Densmore is an ace drummer, and Robbie Kreiger is just the most tasteful guitarist I've seen since Clapton with Mayall.

Which brings us to Eric, who's 'History of' album is worth your notice if you don't already own all the tracks. 'Layla' will probably be a hit single by the time you read this. Among other albums by my personal favourites, there's Al Kooper (in his withered petrol pumper's guise), Blood Sweat & Tears Greatest Hits, 'Golden Butter' (ditto of Paul Butterfield), and a coming soon import of Judy Collins' best tracks.

New names to be added to my list are Harry Chapin, Smith Perkins & Smith, Marlin Greene, Harvey Andrews, and... Slade, who played at one of the most exciting press receptions I've been to; they were boogie-ing at a volume designed for deaf people. Seriously, I find them far more enjoyable live than any of the latest trends, including D.Bowie, who makes nice records but who has so far failed to convince me live.

A few re-issues for your notice: a Manfred Mann on MFP, Georgie Fame on Starline, Jimmie Rogers on both Roulette and RCA, the strange Jimmy Driftwood on RCA, Ian & Sylvia on Vanguard, the Ex-cello Story on the now extinct Blue Horizon label, and two heady little episodes by Tony Scott on Verve.

New albums from recognised good guys and gals: Carly Simon's second album, 2 slightly disappointing things from the Everly Brothers accompanied by the massed superstars and the once-excellent Cree-dence. A final mind blower from the good

old Burritos, Richard Thompson's solo and also the clompety-clomp 'Morris On'. Stoneground's 'Family Album', Bridget Street John, Manassas (on the right track again), Joan Baez, and Help Yourself's 'Strange Affair'.

Good causes: the two Woody Guthrie memorial albums, proceeds from which will go towards investigating the disease that killed Woody, and the Greasy Truck-ers, who are providing a lot of good music at reasonable cost. (See the ad elsewhere).

Nearing the end of this super-plug... a trio of singles I'm fond of: 'California Man' (which is currently the brightest thing on the telly), 'Tallahassee Lassie'/'Slow Death' by the Flamin Groovies, and Hawkwind's 'Silver Machine'. (Can you see Hawkwind on 'Top of the pops'... it may be reality by the time you read this).

A plug for a paper: Blues Unlimited. Its editor is Mike Leadbitter, the most knowledgeable music man I know - has the whole history of the blues at his mental fingertips. Worth reading.

Another paragraph for Elton John. I thought I was a magpie as far as collecting records goes, but Elton's collection makes mine look like a beginner's. His collection is unbelievable, his hi-fi staggering, and his knowledge of the music refreshingly full. A fascinating guy to interview too.

A quick zoom to Elvis. The 'Rock and Roll' album has been re-released and is incredible (and essential). Less so, but still good is 'Live at Madison Square Garden' which should be investigated by James Burton freaks. I also recommend Jerry Hopkins' book on Elvis - he's a good writer, and his next book is going to be on Jim Morrison. Something to look forward to.

As are the following: Kevin Coyne is going on the road and the radio. Check him out if you get the chance, and give his forthcoming Dandelion album an ear too. Andy Finney, Radio London's 'Fresh Garbage' disc jockey, is soon doing a couple of programmes on the Elektra label; among the voices you'll hear are those of Clive Selwood, Jac Holzman, Paul Butterfield, Paul Siebel and me. It should be of interest to Zigzaggers (I hope).

Another of the things I've been getting involved in lately is assisting Polydor in their re-issue programme. If things go right, you may soon be able to enjoy old stuff by the Spoonful, Sopwith Camel, the Charlatans (their Kama Sutra album which has never been released anywhere in the world), Bruce Palmer (ex Springfield), the Au GoGo Singers (with Stills and Furay), and loads more. We'll also be sorting out some vintage rock'n'roll including Ronnie Hawkins, Ral Donner, Alan Freed compilations, and so on. Keep your fingers crossed, and write if you have any suggestions on the subject.

A few quickies to finish off: David Ackles is a very nice man who likes dogs. His album's good too. Loggins & Messina are coming - you should try to see them. A long time dream fulfilled; I stood about two yards from Jerry Lee Lewis as he bashed out 'Whole lotta shakin'... could hardly believe it.

Until the next time, take it easy and keep rockin'. John

Back again! Yes folks, Zigzag is alive and well and living in the barren wastelands of Bucks County. Not only that, but monthly publication is about to commence. Yes, it's true folks, we're back on the road with a vengeance.... spurred on by all manner of strange urges, extra-terrestrial phenomena, spiritual inspiration, and oodles of Rivendell fresh fruit 100% goats' milk yoghourt ('makes your tummy sit up and beg for more'). So, to all the telephone enquirers whose "is that Zigzag?" was met by a dejected "yes.... what's left of it" - fear no more: Cast all baleful misery out of the window and rejoice, for Ziggyzag is not dead.

Alright, alright, alright.... what happened to the Byrds' issue? Well, it's a long story. The fact is that it's going to take a lot longer than I anticipated; it's all written, but subsequent interviews with relevant parties meant that I had to keep re-writing it and expanding it. Three of the 24 chapters are laid out and ready (covering their career as far as December 1966... 16 pages) and we're pressing on whenever time allows. Hopefully it should be finished long before the Byrds return to our sceptred isle - in January, as far as I know.

And what about the other promises? What about Pete Townshend Part 2, and what about Hawkwind, and Bridget St John and the rest? Well, you know how it is; this mental inflexibility and instability we suffer from out here in the thin air of Nth Marston. As far as Pete Townshend is concerned, Connor McKnight (who did the interview with John) is putting the entire thing into one magazine for publication in the months to come... should be a gas. He also spent many hours with Beefheart and his merry men and a further mag will be devoted to him. Keep your eyes peeled, folks, and watch this space for further news.

Talking of Pete Townshend, the interview we published last issue turned up in a Dublin paper called Gun... attributed to one Lyndon Barry. Not a mention of Zigzag anywhere. Then, in the subsequent issue of Gun, they reprinted our Humble Pie article - again credited to "our man in London... Lyndon Barry". Well, blow me, what a bloody cheek. Our articles get reprinted all over the globe, translated into every language from Japanese to Finnish, from German to Brooklynese... but at least the people have the courtesy to ask our permission - and they do credit the source. So listen, you bunch of thieving Paddies - you better print an explanation and an apology in your next issue, or we'll ask Rory Gallagher to drop in on you the next time he goes home, to kick the life out of you. So don't say we didn't warn you when Rory bursts in, clad only in a Batman mask and a surgical appliance... waving a large shillelagh (or whatever you call it).

The summer has started (though you wouldn't have thought so) and with the sun comes the stream of American visitors, attracted to our pleasant countryside (rain-sodden hay, grey skies, and brick factory chimneys belching out black muck). The first one this year was Alan (Barney to his mates) Betrock, from Jackson Heights, New York. He's a nice cat - knows a lot about rock - and he brought me a copy of 'Bears', a rare single by Quicksilver, and 'Cherry Pie' by Skip and Flip. He runs a magazine in the States called 'JAMZ', which I recommend - particularly if you're into English groups 1962-68. Send 5 international reply coupons (available from any post office for



a few coppers) to Jamz, 37-06 89th St, Jackson Heights, USA, and he'll lob off some copies to you.

The next visitors we had were Mitchell Kapor (a 'progressive music DJ') and his girl, Judy Vecchione - but one of our dogs bit young Judy, so they didn't stay. That's English hospitality for you!

One of the reasons for Zigzag's recent erratic irregularity is that I've been incarcerated in a job since last October. The financial situation got so depressing that I was forced to hire my skilled services to Bucks County Council, who in return paid me a miserable pittance and left me chained to a drawing board until my brain had vegetated to the required level. Fortunately, I was able to effect an escape in early July, but not before my faculties had been grossly impaired by the daily brainwashing I was forced to endure. Luckily I was able to retain a modicum of sanity by doing intermittent work on the magazine - like the Byrds issue was totally sorted out from a box full of interviews, cuttings, fragments, photos and assorted bits. And you might notice that a lot of the headings in this issue are executed by hand - that was me, whiling away a few more hours.... it was either that or staring out at the beautiful pylons beyond the stark horror of the multi-storey car park. My God, I'm glad to be out of that place; it's like a huge, ugly concrete/glass phallus sticking out of Aylesbury's dreary skyline; a monstrous eyesore - and the windows are adjusted so that you can't open them more than 6 inches (maybe to prevent hapless inmates from hurling themselves to their death on the pavement below). Consequently, in hot weather, the sun shines through the glass like a greenhouse and, unable to obtain enough cooling breeze, I was ripening up like a flamin' tomato! What a place! Totally designed for robots - even the water coming out of the single-tapped wash basins is set at a pre-determined temperature.... and it's usually like ice in cold weather, and in boiling hot weather, when you feel like washing the streaming perspiration off your face with some nice cool water, it spurts out of that tap like a bloomin' geyser.... boiling hot. Ah, its good to be back in my roomful of music.

Well, it's Tuesday evening; I sit here scratching my freshly cut locks and doodling with my quill as I listen to John Peel playing Rod Stewart's new album. He's got good taste, Rod Stewart - I think that's one of his greatest assets; his choice of songs and the thoughtful arrangements.

Good album. And what about John Peel then? Where would we all be without him? There's a handful of people without who's encouragement this magazine would have plummeted into extinction years ago - John Peel sits at their head. He took me and Carole out for a feed too.... a very posh Indian place it was. I'd never set foot in an Indian restaurant before, and there were these Kaffirs (I do hope that's the correct term of endearment) bringing on all sorts of exotic gear.... I didn't know whether to attack it with fork, fingers, cocktail stick or spoon. Then Carole went and spilt wine all over John Walters' best Carnaby Street satin loons. Blimey, it was like a couple of yokels who'd won a competition in Tit-Bits.... "first prize: a look round the BBC, including a chance encounter with the glazed-eyed Dunkley, a tour of the corridors to see all the maroon-suited record pluggers with their neat little suitcases, followed by a slap up lunch with a top disc-jockey". (Note from Carole, typing all this baloney: I was more embarrassed by Frame going beetroot and spluttering mumbled apologies on my behalf than I was spilling the wine. Anyone would've thought I'd broken wind in front of the queen, the way he went on. Both Johns behaved with the equanimity of gentlemen, and ignored the stream of vino trickling over their vitals). While we were waiting, a pigeon shat on Carole's head, but it was a very nice meal, and it certainly lifted the grey skies which had descended on our rotting thatch.

The more observant among you will have noticed that this is a biologically clean issue, free from any impurities like naughty little words. The reason for this is rather complex, but I'll try to explain: this issue was all ready to be printed in July, but two printers refused to soil their hands with it because "some of the matter does not fall within the category of that which we are prepared to print" (said one) and the Flamin Groovies article was "one of the most objectionably tasteless pieces of journalism I've seen" (said another). Well, I'm only interested in the music - I don't care what some hypocritical bigotted pig thinks about the question of censorship - but until we can afford our own presses, we're in their hands, so all the nasty bits have either been removed or re-written so that our nice kind new printer will get a move on and get this thing into the shops before Christmas.

If you happen to be one of the 67859 people who are still waiting for a reply to a letter you sent six months ago, we can only grovel in abject apologies and

assure you that you'll be hearing from us very soon, now that we've sorted out a lot of our troubles.

(This is called a Space filler -



So, on to some records. Ignoring the obvious goodies, let's have a look at some of the more obscure releases:

The first album by EAGLES is very good, as is the last by the BURRITOS. 'Naturally' by J.J. CALE is worth a listen and I really like 'Hobos Lullaby' by ARLO GUTHRIE, who I had previously dismissed as a creep possessing only the minutest fraction of his old man's genius. JOHN HARTFORD ('Aeroplane') used to be a clean-cut folksinger, but he's been through a few unexpected changes judging by the sleeve and the songs. 'Sailin' shoes' by LITTLE FEAT has some excellent stuff on it - try 'Willin' - and debut albums by both JACKSON BROWNE and RICHARD THOMPSON are easy on the earole. The next one by MOTT should be their best yet - they're bound to scoot over the hump into superstardom this year. Rumour has it that Commander CODY and His Lost Planet Airmen (I couldn't put all that lot in capitals) are coming over here soon, and I understand that their album (which EMI has denied me the pleasure of) is full of juicy jelly. And, just as everyone else is writing off the Mothers, I find that the 'Just another band' album is finding its way on to my dusty turntable a great deal.

And what about John Stewart? For a moment, I thought that the Melody Maker was going to discover him and bring his music to English ears, but their article turned out to be a most uninformative bummer.... so Stewart remains in the caverns of obscurity. What a shame! Briefly, John Stewart was with a fifties American folk group - the Cumberland 3, then he was in the Kingston Trio, then he replaced John Sebastian in the Spoonful, and now he's a sort of American counterpart of Mick Softley. He's an excellent writer and performer, but all his solo albums lack consistency; there is no single album I could unreservedly recommend, but his first is probably the best. It came out on Capitol over two years ago and has now reached the deletion racks - so you may be able to find one cheap. It's called 'California Bloodlines'. Very good. He seems to get a raw deal.... never any publicity. Too bad.

And where would we be without all you dear loyal readers - thanks for sticking with us.... and don't forget to look out for the next issue of Zigzag, the original rock magazine, created and assembled with love, for people who care. And who knows.... one of these days the Zigzag Band will work up the guts to actually get up on a stage (instead of hiding its inhibitions behind biro pens, drawing boards and Olivetti typewriters). Anyway, ta ta for now.... see you next month. Pete

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Pete Frame/John Tobler/Carole Watts
Mac Garry/Ian Mann/Mike Simmons
Bridget Long/Jefferson Claves/Pippin

20,000 miles of tyres and a lot
of footwear went into this album

MICK SOFTLEY
ANY
MOTHER
DOESNT GRUMBLE

64841



Mick Softley is one of the  music people