

1964-65



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**

The Ricky-Tick, at the Plaza in Guildford (later 'The Drink' night club, opposite the Friary) was at first a beatnik hang-out, which then morphed into a 'mod' R&B venue.

Despite having a rather seedy reputation, I never saw any drugs there and I don't think it even sold alcohol (*my friends and I would race 200 yards to the pub for a pale ale in the interval*).

It seemed very civilised to me, with orderly queues each side of the doors, and a cloakroom staffed by mod girls that I fell in love with each week (*they never knew*). At other times of the week it was a Bingo Hall.

But to me it was a magical place. I saw music that mesmerized me. It began with the first wave of British R&B groups and later, featured the visiting American Blues stars, all at a affordable entrance price.

## Ricky Tick in Guildford

Sometimes I would see a group play live on ITV's hip programme 'Ready Steady Go' then see them play live at the Ricky-Tick later the same evening.

I would watch enviously as smart lads danced strange dances with beautiful mod girls. I was a scruff and didn't really aspire to be anything else.

When the groups came on I would position myself half-way up the stairs to get the best possible view. When the Yardbirds played, they would reach a crescendo in the middle of nearly all their numbers, and I would help them out by drumming my hands on the stair-rail. A primitive response to the driving rhythm!

The Rolling Stones played the Ricky Tick clubs thirty-nine times between 1962 and 1964. I only saw them once at the Ricky Tick, on 9th March 1963. I went with Jacqui Birchall and it was packed, hot and sweaty. Exciting!

**RICKY-TICK GUILDFORD**  
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 29th January..... 1st R # 1 ..... 7/6  
**georgie fame** a the Blue Flames  
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**guildford**  
 friday July 30th.....  
**BOND:** August 6th.....  
**GRAHAM**  
 Package\* featuring Long John  
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**PLAZA**  
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**FRI. 10 SEPT**  
**"EX ANIMALS MAN"**  
**ALAN**  
**PRICE**  
**SET** 7/6  


# My favourite groups that I saw most regularly at the Ricky Tick were...

**The Yardbirds** with Eric Clapton

**Graham Bond Organisation**  
with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker

**John Mayall's Bluesbreakers**  
with Eric Clapton



Above: John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton at the Ricky Tick, June 4 1965. *I was there!*

Below: The most Blueswailing Yardbirds, with Eric Clapton



Left:  
The Graham Bond Organisation from left:  
Dick Heckstall-Smith, saxophones,  
Graham Bond, organ and saxophones,  
Ginger Baker, drums,  
and Jack Bruce, bass

1964-65



**RICKY  
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1964-65



**RICKY  
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GUILDFORD**

*Me aged seventeen*



The poky little hall that was the Ricky Tick Club in Guildford was the launch pad for many musicians that would later on become very influential. Nearly all the groups that I saw there had someone that

## What a Launch Pad!

would become internationally famous. The following groups were ones that I saw, many of them several times. I thought they were all great, but I didn't guess the huge success they would go on to.

### **THE STEAM PACKET**

with **Long John Baldry, Rod Stewart, Julie Driscoll & Brian Auger.**

Long John Baldry went on to have a **number 1 hit record** with the ballad 'Let the Heartaches begin'.

Julie Driscoll had a **number 5 hit record** with the Bob Dylan song 'This Wheel's on Fire'.

Rod Stewart became... the unbelievably successful **ROD STEWART.**

### **THE ALAN PRICE SET**

Alan Price went on to have numerous hit records:

'I Put a Spell on You' No. 9.

'Hi-Lili, Hi-Lo' No. 11.

'Simon Smith & His Amazing Dancing Bear' reached No. 4.

'The House That Jack Built' reached No. 4.

'Don't Stop the Carnival' reached No. 13.

'Rosetta' recorded with Georgie Fame, No. 11.

### **GRAHAM BOND ORGANISATION**

with **Jack Bruce** and **Ginger Baker**

Jack and Ginger joined with Eric Clapton to form the supergroup **Cream.**

### **THE YARDBIRDS** with **Eric Clapton**

When Eric Clapton left to join John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, the Yardbirds replaced him with Jeff Beck & Jimmy Page, becoming **Led Zeppelin.**



*Right: The grotty exterior of the wonderful Ricky Tick Club at the Plaza, Guildford.*

*The Ricky Tick club circuit must have been good training, giving these musicians an opportunity to develop their skills and to be able to play with an integrity that would propel them to international success.*

## JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS

with **Eric Clapton**

Eric Clapton went on to form the two supergroups **Cream** and **Blind Faith**. He then had international stardom as a solo performer and is considered to be one of the world's best guitarists.

## THE SPENCER DAVIS GROUP

with **Steve Winwood**

Steve Winwood went on to form **Traffic** and **Blind Faith**. He then had huge international solo success with numerous mega-selling records.

## ZOOT MONEY'S BIG ROLL BAND

with **Andy Summers**

Andy Summers joined Sting and Stewart Copeland to form the band **The Police**. Fan mania soon caught fire around the world, and they made many successful recordings from '*Roxanne*' onwards.

## CHRIS FARLOWE'S THUNDERBIRDS

Chris Farlowe had a massive number 1 hit record with '*Out of time*'.

## GEORGIE FAME and the BLUE FLAMES

Georgie Fame went on to have three number 1 hit records with '*Yeh Yeh*', '*Getaway*' and '*The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde*'. The Blue Flames drummer was **Mitch Mitchell** who became the drummer of the **The Jimi Hendrix Experience**.

## THE PARAMOUNTS

The Paramounts changed their name to Procol Harum and almost immediately had a monster hit with '*A Whiter Shade of Pale*'. They became one of the originators of the genre 'Progressive Rock'.

## ALEX HARVEY BLUES BAND

The Sensational Alex Harvey Band had a hit record with '*Delilah*' which reached number 7.

## THE MOODY BLUES with Denny Laine

The Moody Blues had a number 1 hit record with '*Go Now*'. Denny Laine went on to great success when he formed Wings with Paul McCartney. The Moody Blues went on to huge international success, selling over seventy million albums worldwide.

## THE TRIDENTS with Jeff Beck

Jeff Beck went on to become one of the world's most respected guitarists, playing with, among numerous superstars, Stevie Wonder.

## JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS

with **Peter Green** who went on to form **Fleetwood Mac**, one of the most successful and biggest selling supergroups in the world.

## THE ROLLING STONES

The Rolling Stones went on to become...

**THE WORLD'S NO.1 ROCK AND ROLL BAND !**

# 1964-65



## RICKY TICK GUILDFORD



1964-65



**RICKY  
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Right:  
My card and magazine  
page signed by  
Jack Bruce,  
Ginger Baker,  
Dick Heckstall-Smith,  
and Graham Bond,  
who also signed 'The  
Best of Luck to the  
Grapes of Wrath'.  
They were all extremely  
friendly and chatty.

The **Graham Bond Organisation** personnel had been together in Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated. They had decided to leave and form an independent group after one of Blues Incorporated's changes of musical direction.

Graham Bond was a charismatic character, well-suited to be the front man of The Organisation. He had a full-throated roar used to great effect on Ray Charles numbers, and he was a keyboard/saxophone maestro. He was tubby, a bit greasy, and was never going to be a matinee idol, but he had an enthusiastic and loyal club following.

Dick Heckstall-Smith was the saxophone player, and he had the air and appearance of an upper-class man who had fallen into the depths of bohemia. He was a complete jazz-man with cap and a goatee beard, crouching forward with his cap pulled right down

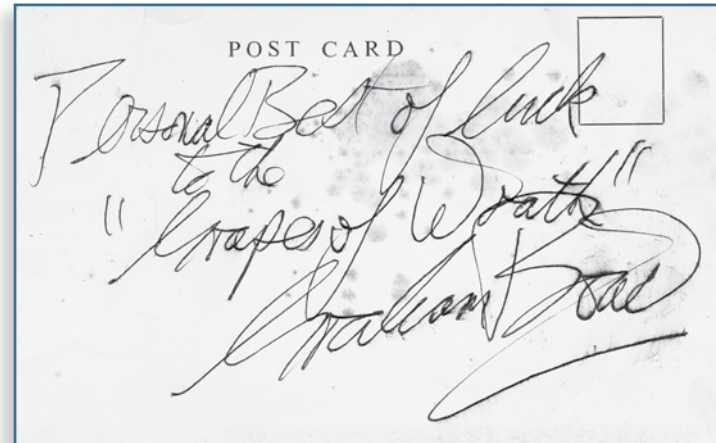
## The Graham Bond Organisation

to his horn-rimmed glasses. He would play two saxophones simultaneously, and when joined by Graham on third saxophone, the sound was extraordinary.

Ginger Baker, of course, became one of the world's best known drummers.

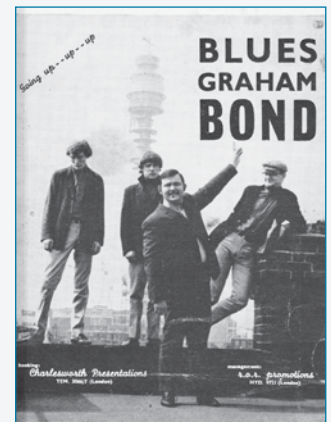
He would play drum solo's that would shake the small Ricky Tick club. At the end of one of their sessions, after the last beat, and while the audience were still applauding, he quickly plugged in his electric shaver and proceeded with his ablutions. Hardly bowing to show-business convention at all! I didn't guess he was on the way with Jack Bruce to international stardom with Cream!

Jack used to play fast rumbling bass, very much like a lead instrument, and he also played harmonica and sang. I was thrilled one time when he lent down and asked me the time. He was always very chatty after the gigs. He once asked Eric and I what we thought of 'Tammy' their latest single. We had to admit we found it very disappointing.





*I went to see The Graham Bond Organisation six times in 1964.*



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I frequently saw **The Yarbids** with **Eric Clapton** at the Ricky Tick in Guildford.

One exciting highlight of their act was a crescendo in the middle of a lot of their songs. The beat would be doubled by the drummer and then the guitars would pick up speed until the whole group would be thundering along to a rapid climax. Suddenly, it would stop, and without a break, the original riff of the song would be picked up again. Very exciting!

# The Yarbids



Keith Relf, with his Brian Jones type hairstyle, was a good singer and harmonica player.

Eric Clapton eventually left and was replaced by Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page. The group later became the New Yardbirds and then morphed into Led Zeppelin. Sam Samwell-Smith, the bass player went on to become a successful record producer.

Their live album, below left, was one of the best attempts to get the exciting club atmosphere on record.

# YARBIDS



**Georgie Fame and The Blue Flames** were top of the Mod's live music choice. They were jazzy, sharp and cool.

Georgie (Clive Powell) had adopted Mose Alison's laid-back vocal style, and his repertoire included R&B, Ray Charles numbers, Bluebeat and Ska which I had never heard before.

One evening at the Ricky Tick, Georgie and the Flames were setting up to play on the stage, and I noticed familiar faces also setting up ready to play at the other end of the club. This was quite unusual as the groups tended to play all night there, and did not have support groups. It was local heroes Phillip Goodhand-Tait's Stormsville Shakers, who were also regular performers at Georgie Fame's home

## Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames



club, the Flamingo. It was a fantastic night as the two bands competed to put on the best performance.

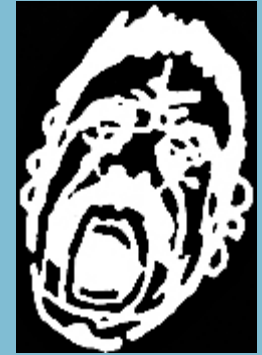
The Blue Flames had been the house-band at the Flamingo All-Night Club in Soho for a long time, and Georgie had picked up all these music styles from US Servicemen visiting the Flamingo to let off steam.

I did manage to get to the Flamingo once for an all-nighter, although the Blue Flames were unfortunately not playing that night, but I did experience the atmosphere.

I have continued to enjoy his music throughout my life, and have seen him perform many times, including recently, and he's still singing fantastically at the age of seventy six!



1964-65



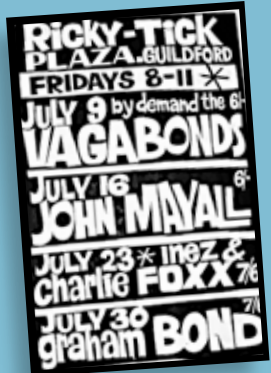
**RICKY  
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1964-65



**RICKY  
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I saw **John Mayall and his Bluesbreakers** several times at the Ricky Tick Club. His musicians changed from time to time as the group evolved, but my favourite line-up was the classic ensemble of John Mayall, Eric Clapton, John McVie and Hughie Flint.

I bought the 'Beano' LP (*right*) on the day it came out. It simply changed the way guitars sounded on record. Previously, the sound engineers would aim for a clean sound like that the Shadows were famous for, but Eric Clapton insisted that his amplifier was turned up to the maximum, as it was in the clubs, distorting the recording equipment, and a new

## John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton



*Eric Clapton*

vibrant, searing sound was born. It changed the direction that guitars in rock and pop were going, and guitarists both sides of the Atlantic sat up and said 'What is *that!*'

John Mayall was never my favourite singer, but he was an extraordinary band leader. The Bluesbreakers were like a nursery school for new guitar talent:

**Eric Clapton** (Cream) was followed by **Peter Green** (Fleetwood Mac) who was followed by **Mick Taylor** (Rolling Stones), and I was lucky enough to see all three guitarists doing their apprenticeships with John Mayall. John McVie went on to join Fleetwood Mac and Hughie Flint to join McGuinness Flint.

*I was lucky enough to be in Spirit Level playing support band to John Mayall's Blues Breakers at Windsor. Their guitarist at that time was Mick Taylor, soon to join the Rolling Stones as replacement for Brian Jones.*

*My 1964 drawing*





I invited Jacquie Birchall to see **The Rolling Stones** at the Ricky Tick Club in Guildford on the **30th March 1964**. I had seen them just six weeks previously, when they had played the Guildford Odeon for the second time, and it was the sixth time I had seen them during the last 18 months, so I was getting pretty blasé about seeing them. But something was different. Hysteria was beginning to be seen in the Stones' audience, and I thought it was... undignified!

Unusually for the Ricky Tick Club, this was an afternoon performance and as we arrived, we could see fans tearing around the outside of the building. We were told they were risking life and limb by trying to climb in through the first floor windows at the back of the Club.

*1964: I forked out half-a-crown for this magazine:*



## The Rolling Stones

### This could be the Last Time

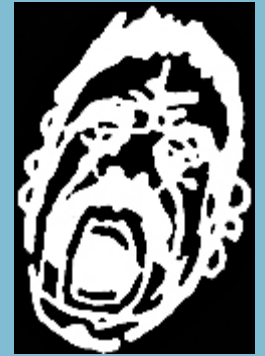
Chris Farlowe & The Thunderbirds were the support group but I don't actually remember much about their performance. I had liked them when they played previously at the club, but what a thankless task to go on when everybody in the audience was waiting for the Stones. (Mick and Keef were soon to write 'Out of Time' for Chris Farlowe, with which he had a No.1 hit).

The Stones played 'Route 66', 'Cops And Robbers', 'You Better Move On', 'Mona', 'Walking The Dog', 'Not Fade Away' and 'Around and Around'. It was a complete crush and a very different experience to my usual visits to the Ricky Tick club.

In just two months time, they would begin their first tour of America, and be on their way to becoming the **World's Number One Rock'n'Roll Band**.



1964



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1964



**RICKY  
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I saw **The Steam Packet** twice at the Ricky Tick, and once at the Windsor Jazz and Blues Festival. The Packet were a fantastically talented bunch of performers, delivering an exciting Revue type show.

**Long John Baldry** was the main singer, and he was a favourite of mine since I had first seen him with Cyril Davies in 1963. He sang with a fabulous and soulful blues voice.

The apprentice vocalist was **Rod Stewart**, who had a rather light gravelly voice. He was short and when he wasn't singing, he would dance in

## The Steam Packet

### Long John Baldry Rod Stewart and Julie Driscoll

the audience in a very stylish way. Of course, he went on to become a world famous singer.

**Julie Driscoll** was beautiful, had great presence and was soon to have a No.1 hit with the Bob Dylan song 'Wheels on Fire'.

**Brian Auger** was the band leader. He would sing as well as play great swirling jazz organ.

When the four of them sang together, the sound would make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. They had a powerful sound and were great entertainment. I always went home happy from their shows.

**Elton John** was pianist in **Long John Baldry's** next backing band – **Bluesology**. Elton changed his name from **Reg Dwight** by taking **Elton Dean** (**Bluesology's** sax player) and **Long John Baldry's** names.

"I adored **Long John Baldry**. He was hilarious, a fabulous musician and a kind and generous man. He nurtured me, taking time to build my confidence."

*From **Elton John's** autobiography 'Me'*

"My hero was **Long John Baldry**. There's not a day goes by when I don't think of him. I owe him everything."

*From **Rod Stewart's** autobiography 'Rod'*

*Julie Driscoll*



*Long John Baldry*



*Steam Packet in 1964*





The genial **Zoot Money** and his **Big Roll Band** were very popular on the Ricky Tick circuit. I regularly went to see them. They mixed up great jazz influenced R&B with the outrageous antics of their frontman George Bruno "Zoot" Money. He was not shy in standing on his keyboards and dropping his trousers to reveal Union Jack underpants.

(Apparently the name 'Big Roll Band' derived from Zoot mis-hearing the phrase 'big old band' from Chuck Berry's Johnny B. Goode.)

In 1964 the Big Roll Band started playing regularly at The Flamingo Club in Soho, London, and were soon drawing huge crowds to their shows throughout the country.

*At this time, the healthy live music scene was not reflected in the record charts and show business at all. It was a strong underground music scene which influenced*

## Zoot Money and the Big Roll Band

*the mainstream entertainment world, but didn't bring huge rewards to these great performers.*

The Big Roll Band became the psychedelic **Dantalian's Chariot** in 1967. I saw them at the Jazz and Blues Festival and it was not a comfortable fit for the big personality of Zoot Money. They were all dressed in white kaftans with a light show projected onto them.

His guitarist throughout 1961-68 was **Andy Summers** who went on to huge success with **Sting** in **The Police**. George remained a close friend of Andy throughout the Police years, continuing to be his support and advisor.

In 1969 George joined **Eric Burdon** and **The New Animals**. He continues to play in various formats to this day. I last saw him play in 2018 and he still sounds great. To my surprise, I have also seen him turn up as a bit actor in television soaps!



Andy Summers



1964-65



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1964-65



**RICKY  
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I saw the **Spencer Davis Group** twice at the Ricky Tick Club, and once at the Guildford Civic Hall and once at the Jazz and Blues Festival. All four members of the Spencer Davis Group were good musicians but it was **Stevie Winwood** who had the charisma and magnetism.

As I stood at the front of the little club stage, there was just that one man I had to watch. I say man, but he was a boy of sixteen, one year younger than me. Yet he was an excellent guitarist, a great keyboard player and he had the voice of Ray Charles. I first heard 'Georgia on my Mind' sang by Stevie, as he was known then. He was hypnotic.

He was still a pupil at Great Barr School, when he became part of the Birmingham rhythm and blues

## Spencer Davis Group with Steve Winwood

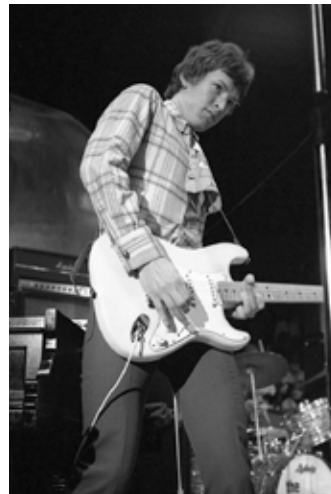
scene, backing visiting American blues singers.

Spencer Davis Group's best known songs include the **three UK number ones**, 'Somebody Help Me' and 'Keep on Running', 'I'm a Man' and 'Gimme Some Lovin' which reached number 2 in the UK and number 7 in the US.

Both *I'm a Man* and *Gimme Some Lovin* sold over one million copies, and were awarded gold record status.

Steve Winwood left the group in 1967 to form the influential group **Traffic** which had numerous hits before joining **Blind Faith**, with Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker, and then forging a career as a solo artist.

He had chart success with 'While You See a Chance', 'Valerie', 'Back in the High Life Again' and **two US number ones** with 'Higher Love' and 'Roll with It'.



I have seen **Steve Winwood** several times in recent years and he is still fantastic.





I saw The Paramounts at the Ricky Tick and loved the sound of the singer Gary Brooker's voice. He had soul, emotion and conviction when he sang. I recognised some of the songs from The Rolling Stones repertoire – among them 'I'm a Hog for you, baby', 'Poison Ivy' and 'Road Runner'. I was very impressed and determined to see them next time they played the Ricky Tick.

Unfortunately, they didn't play the Ricky Tick again because they changed their name to **Procol Harum** and almost immediately had a monster hit with 'A Whiter Shade of Pale'. They became one of the originators of the genre 'Progressive Rock'.

I eventually got to see them as Procol Harum many decades later when they played a warm-up

## The Paramounts with Gary Brooker

concert at Chiddingfold Ex-Servicemen's Club, where Gary Brooker would regularly put on 'under the radar' charity gigs each Christmas with Eric Clapton, Andy Fairweather-Lowe and other world class musicians.

Gary lived in Dunsfold in Surrey, close to where I lived, and I was pleased to be able to help him with the graphic design for tickets, etc. for his charity group called 'No Stiletto Shoes', and also for Procol Harum publicity. It was a real thrill to work for him and his wife Franky. He was tickled that I had seen him play with the Paramounts all those years ago.

I saw Procol Harum several times after that at 'proper' venues such as the Barbican, the Colston Hall in Bristol and the Cropredy Festival at Banbury.



1964-65



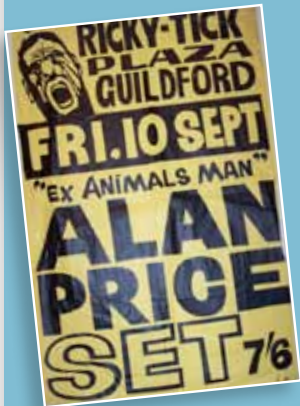
**RICKY  
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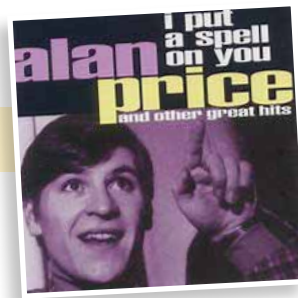


**RICKY  
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## The Alan Price Set

Alan Price played the iconic instrumental intro to The Animals *'House of the Rising Sun'*. He was The Animals keyboard player and corner stone of their sound, playing on *'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood'* and *'Bring It On Home to Me'*. As they became internationally famous, he developed a fear of flying and resigned from the group. He went back to the clubs (he had played the Ricky Tick Guildford with the Animals) to develop his own band **The Alan Price Set**. They were jazzy, he had a great voice and I enjoyed them very much. He went on to have a string of hit records and regular TV shows.



## Alex Harvey Band

Alex Harvey was a tough Glaswegian, but he could sing sensitive blues. He did a great rendition of *'Georgia on my Mind'* here at the Ricky Tick, singing the song solo, accompanying himself on acoustic guitar. He dropped off my radar for a few years until he returned with the very theatrical *'Sensational Alex Harvey Band'*. It seemed a strange mash-up of theatre, glam-rock and pre-punk attitude, and they had a fanatical following. Their recordings did very well, including their exaggerated version of *'Delila'*, a cover of the Tom Jones hit. It reached No 7 in 1975.



# Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds

Despite having a unpleasant personality, Chris Farlowe had a great voice. He also had a great band with an excellent horn section. Jimmy Page (Led Zeppelin) was his guitarist for a while, but I don't remember if he was in the band when I saw them. Chris Farlowe swore a lot on-stage which didn't impress me. But his was the first British band I saw playing Otis Redding and James Brown songs, and he was good at those. He was soon to have a massive Number One hit record with '*Out of time*' written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards.



# The Moody Blues

I was leaning on the edge of the stage as usual, when the hairs stood up on the back of my neck as Denny Laine sang '*Go Now*', which I hadn't heard before, but in January 1965, it went to Number One in the charts. I thought that it was a great song, and that Denny Laine, the singer and guitarist of The Moody Blues, had a great voice. The rest of the band didn't impress me so much, especially one who just seemed to play the tambourine. Denny Laine quit the band in 1966 and went on to join Paul McCartney and Wings. I didn't follow The Moody Blues on their Progressive Rock journey after that.



1964-65



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**RICKY  
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*Right:*

*John Mayall takes a nap on the shoulder of his wife Pamela in the band-room during an all-night gig at the Flamingo Club in Wardour Street, Soho.*

I first saw **Peter Green** with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers at the Ricky Tick in Guildford very soon after Eric Clapton had left. I hadn't heard of Peter Green before then and I was apprehensive that he wouldn't be up to the job. I loved Eric Clapton's playing and was very disappointed when he left John Mayall, but when Peter played the opening number, I knew that he was a great replacement. He was playing very much in Eric's style, not surprisingly as he was playing the existing John Mayall repertoire. It was only later after he had settled in, that his individual style emerged, and I became a huge fan.

Mike Vernon, producer at Decca Records, recalls Peter's debut with the Bluesbreakers:

*'As the band walked in the studio I noticed an amplifier which I'd never seen before, so I asked John Mayall, 'Where's Eric Clapton?'*



## John Mayall's Bluesbreakers with Peter Green



*Mayall answered, 'He's not with us anymore, he left us a few weeks ago.' I was in a state of shock but Mayall said, 'Don't worry, we've got someone better.' I said, 'Wait a minute, hang on a second, this is ridiculous. You've got someone better? Than Eric Clapton?' John said, 'He might not be better now, but you wait, in a couple of years he's going to be the best.' Then he introduced me to Peter Green'.*

Peter Green made his recording debut with the Bluesbreakers in 1966 on the album *A Hard Road*. Aynsley Dunbar was the drummer on the record, although Mick Fleetwood was in the group briefly.

In 1967, Peter Green left the Bluesbreakers to form **Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac** with Mick Fleetwood. Eventually John McVie left the Bluesbreakers to join Peter, and one of the world's biggest groups had begun.



## History of the Ricky Tick Clubs

● During the early 1960s, the Ricky Tick clubs were venues in Windsor, Guildford, Croydon and Reading. They attracted teenagers wanting to hear blues, rock and roll, jazz or rhythm and blues music.

American stars brought over by UK agents to play nationwide tours, would find themselves sub-booked to appear several sessions per night at different venues near London. The Ricky Tick clubs, along with Eel Pie Island, The Flamingo and The Marquee were significant venues in this circuit.

What distinguished a Ricky Tick club from any other was firstly the presentation style. It was simplistic, ads rolled out by silk screen on black posters, with crude white lettering and always using a very eye-catching logo – a huge Afro-head shouting the blues, stencilled in white.

A large mansion in Windsor, not far from the Castle and the Thames, became the Ricky Tick organisers Philip Hayward and John Mansfield's headquarters and main venue.

Windows were covered, walls painted matt black and the task of painting the Afro-blues-shouters in white on either side of the stage was undertaken by Hog Snort Rupert, a graphic designer and singer, in return for living quarters in the boiler room and the occasional gig for his band.

Admission prices were cheap: from 2/6d (13p) to 7/6d (38p). The Ricky Tick clubs were affordable.

By 1964, a ruling had been set by the UK Musicians Union that required that UK artists touring America had to be balanced with USA artists performing in Britain.



As British artists such as the Beatles were beginning to have success in the US, this allowed more American artists, especially blues performers, to come to the UK.

The Ricky Tick clubs were packed for the nights when such American performers as Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, Howling Wolf, Screamin' Jay

Hawkins and Sonny Boy Williamson performed.

The Musicians Union rules meant that it was too expensive to bring over American back-up musicians in all but a few cases. Which meant that every visiting American 'name' needed a British backing band.

Many groups, soon to become famous themselves, were employed to be the backing groups for the visiting Americans. Amongst them were Long John Baldry, Rod Stewart and the Steampacket. (Along the way, they convinced the young Reg Dwight to change his name and become 'Elton John'.)

Antonioni's film 'Blow-up', a story of swinging London, showed the Yardbirds with both guitarists Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page playing at Windsor Ricky Tick venue.

Home grown groups at the Ricky Tick clubs included Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, Zoot Money and his Big Roll Band, Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds, Ronnie Jones and the Nightimers, and Geno Washington with the Ram Jam Band.

Wednesday nights at the Ricky Tick Windsor, belonged to the Surrey group Phillip Goodhand-Tait and the Stormsville Shakers.

When Larry Williams visited the UK in 1965 the 'Stormsvilles' not only backed him and his US guitarist Johnny 'Guitar' Watson on tour, but also recorded two albums with them. ●

1964-65



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**

**Visiting Legends  
from America that  
I saw at the  
Ricky Tick Club:**

- **Howlin' Wolf**
- **Sonny Boy Williamson**
- **John Lee Hooker**
- **Jimmy Reed**
- **Lee Dorsey**
- **Bo Diddley**

Seeing American Blues Legends playing in a small club in Guildford was a fantastic experience. I think that the artists were probably touring Europe, performing in large concert halls, but were tempted to play the small Ricky Tick circuit for cash in hand, without having to give a large proportion of the ticket sales to an international promoter.

Whatever the reason, I was thrilled to see these artists in an intimate club setting, rather than the restrained atmosphere of the concert halls. It seemed to be the natural environment for Rhythm & Blues.

These musicians were the authentic originators of Rhythm & Blues and many British groups had 'borrowed' their songs and the sounds.

The Rolling Stones, The Yardbirds, John Mayall's Blues Breakers and all the bands from the Ricky Tick took these artist's songs for their own repertoires, and as they became famous, made a lot of money from their recordings of them.

Later in their career, The Rolling Stones acknowledged

## The Visiting American Blues Legends



that the originators had not been properly financially rewarded for their songs, and voluntarily made recompense.

How curious that R&B and Blues seemed so relevant and engaging to affluent suburban white teenagers such as myself, who seemed to have no common experience with these black, mainly middle-aged, musicians from segregated America.

I think that because my generation was brought up on Rock & Roll, we recognised that Rhythm & Blues was where Rock & Roll had originated from. In many respects it was similar, but Blues sounded more authentic and genuine.

The connection made between us youngsters who loved Rhythm & Blues and the black musicians who played it, was highlighted by the love and respect that the blues artists were shown when they visited Britain, in contrast to America, where there was little interest remaining in the blues, and where even the black community was moving away from the blues to soul and funk.





**Jimmy Reed's** electric blues, with his dry, sly drawl, was hypnotic to me as I watched him perform songs I had heard many times copied by The Rolling Stones and other bands at the Ricky Tick Club.

The Rolling Stones have credited Jimmy Reed as a major influence on their sound, and their early set lists included these these of his songs: *Ain't That Lovin' You Baby*, *The Sun Is Shining*, *Bright Lights*, *Big City*, *Shame, Shame, Shame*, *Little by Little* and *Honest I Do*.

## Jimmy Reed

Elvis Presley recorded several of Reed's songs, having a hit with *Big Boss Man* (1967) and recording several performances of *Baby, What You Want Me to Do*, including one for his 1968 TV come-back.

Jimmy Reed had twelve of his own hit records in the pop charts, including: *Honest I Do* (1957), *Baby What You Want Me to Do* (1960), *Big Boss Man* (1961), *Bright Lights*, *Big City* (1961), which all appeared on both Billboard's rhythm and blues and Hot 100 singles charts.



1964-65



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**

**Bright  
Lights!  
Big City!**  
Gone to  
my Baby's  
head!



*A Jimmy Reed fan writes:*

“I remember going to see Jimmy Reed at the Flamingo. I couldn't believe we were seeing this legend and I don't he couldn't believe it either! He came in the Flamingo with his overcoat on and his manager next to him, and they both looked bewildered.

The band started playing and there were all these Mods around them that they couldn't relate to at all.

These young, white kids looking at Jimmy Reed and idolising him, standing



there with their mouths open saying 'It's Jimmy Reed!'

And he's standing there, this black guy, and you could see that he can't understand it and he's getting a bit edgy.

The manager must have been thinking "Right Jimmy, we'll do this and grab the money and run, before the Klan arrive".

It was absolutely amazing. This quiet old black blues singer was idolised and surrounded by his dotting fans. That was a fantastic night. ●

1964



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**

In 1964, the **Rolling Stones** reached number one on the UK Singles Chart with their cover of Howlin' Wolf's **Little Red Rooster**.

**Chicago City Blues** came to the Ricky Tick Club in Guildford on 20th October 1964 in the impressive shape of Howlin' Wolf, who strode up and down the tiny stage like a caged animal. The stage was so small that he could only manage about three steps in each direction. He was a huge man and a magnificent presence.

When I had first heard, and immediately loved, 'Smokestack Lightning' and other Howlin' Wolf songs, I could hardly imagine who or what was singing in such a raw and sand-papery voice.

It was unlike any singing I had heard before. And what was he singing about? Situations unlike anything I had experienced. The whole sound seemed to be coming from an alternative universe. So to be in the same room as the exotic Wolf was unbelievably exciting.

I was very surprised to bump into Wolf's famous guitarist Hubert Sumlin in the gents at the Ricky Tick. He was dressed very smoothly in a sharp silver-grey suit whereas I was not dressed so smoothly.

## Hubert and The Wolf

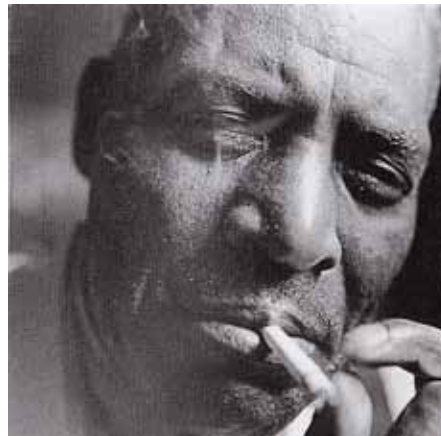
I was wearing my big Sloppy Joe pullover. I was seventeen but I felt about twelve. I told him that I had seen him and The Wolf just the previous night in a Blues Revue at Croydon Fairfield Halls. "Did ya man! That's great. Hey, let me shake your hand."

I was a little alarmed because he continued to urinate throughout this friendly gesture, but I was also as pleased as punch.

As the guitarist of Howlin' Wolf's band, Hubert was known for his rapid, shattering bursts of notes, and sudden cliff-hanger silences.

Hubert was ranked number 43 in Rolling Stone's '100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time' and became a big influence on British blues guitarists such as Eric Clapton and Keith Richard, who both guested on Hubert's solo recordings.

After he died on 4th December 2011, at the age of eighty, Clapton and Richard hosted a star-studded concert in his honour. Mick Jagger and Keith Richard generously paid for Hubert's funeral expenses.



**Howlin' Wolf**

**Whoo oOhh!!**  
**Smokestack**  
**Lightning**  
**Don't ya hear**  
**me callin'?**  
**Who0o oahh!!**

**Who0 oOhh!!**  
**Smokestack**  
**Lightning**  
**Don't ya hear**  
**me callin'?**  
**Who0 oOhh!!**

**Sam Phillips' of Memphis Recording, praised Wolf saying,**  
*"God, what it would be worth on film to see the fervour in that man's face when he sang. His eyes would light up, you'd see the veins come out on his neck and, buddy, there was nothing on his mind but that song."*

*"no one could match Wolf for his ability to rock the house down to the foundations while also scaring its patrons out of its wits."*

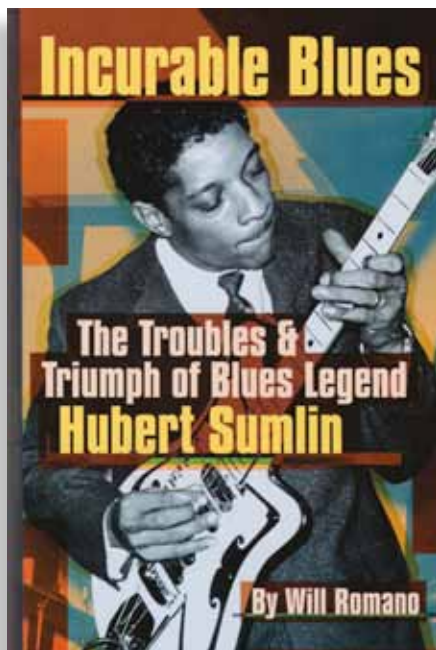
*Having achieved success in Memphis, he described himself as "the onliest one to drive himself up from the Delta to Chicago" in his own car on the Blues Highway and with \$4,000 in his pocket, a rare distinction for a black bluesman of the time.*

1964



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**

**Howlin' Wolf  
and Hubert  
Sumlin**



Eric Clapton and Howlin' Wolf recording 1971's *The London Sessions*



Hubert Sumlin, Fairfield Hall, Croydon England 1964

1964-65



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**



I saw **Sonny Boy Williamson** once in concert at Fairfield Halls, Croydon and twice at the Ricky Tick Club, Guildford. It was at the Ricky Tick where Sonny Boy's eccentric personality really shone through.

But first: he was born 1897, so was in his mid-sixties when he came to England. He had had a successful musical career in America, but was no doubt somewhat surprised at this late revival of his good fortune. Sonny Boy took a liking to England and while he was here, he had a chequer-board black and grey suit tailored for him, along with a bowler hat, a matching umbrella, and a leather attaché case for his harmonicas and Scotch.

## Sonny Boy works the Queue

On my first visit to see Sonny Boy at the Ricky Tick, I stood on the pavement waiting to go in, in a long queue that was snaking around the road's bend, when I heard a kerfuffle from around the corner.

The sound of a harmonica came closer and it was Sonny Boy, dressed in the trademark grey and black chequer-board suit and bowler hat, busking the queue that had come to see him, and collecting the money in his bowler hat!

It was a great taster of what was to come. Once on the stage, he started his trademark tricks of playing the harmonica without hands, held in his mouth, and then playing it through his nostrils, etc! A loveable rogue.



*Touring the clubs in Britain, Sonny Boy was backed by The Yardbirds and The Animals. He was quoted as saying "These boys want to play the Blues so badly... and they do!"*





As I walked from Guildford Railway Station to the Ricky-Tick Club, anticipating a close-up evening with the legend that was **Bo Diddley**, a Dormobile Van drew up alongside me and the passenger door slid open. *“Excuse me, man, do you know where the Ricky Tick Club is?”*

I was staggered to see that it was Bo Diddley himself asking me, and behind him I could see Jerome and the ‘Duchess’ also sitting in the van. Jerome Green was the Maracas man of the band, whose style Mick Jagger had emulated in the early days of the Stones. ‘The Duchess’ was Norma-Jean Wofford, who was, unusually for the time, a female guitarist. There must have been the other band

## Bo Diddley pulls up alongside

members in the back of the van, but my eyes were riveted on Bo (Ella McDaniel) as I stuttered out that they were very close to the club, and gave them instructions. *“Why thank you, sir”* he replied, impeccably polite, leaving me standing and stunned on the pavement. Had that

really just happened? Having spent years of staring at LP covers of Bo, wondering who this man with the strange name, the strange shaped guitars, and the stranger rhythmic music was, now I knew he was real. The evening went past in a rosy glow.

Mick Jagger later said that ‘he is a wonderful, original musician who was an enormous force in music and was a big influence on the Rolling Stones’.



1964-65



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**



**Boowom  
Ba  
Doowm  
Doowm  
Bup Bup !**

1964-65



**RICKY  
TICK  
GUILDFORD**

It was Friday night and I had been watching **John Lee Hooker** playing *Dimples* live on the 'Ready! Steady! Go!' TV programme, and wondering whether he would get to the Ricky Tick Club in Guildford in time to perform that same night. He did arrive on time, and he put in an excellent performance. As he played his hypnotic rhythms, he surveyed his faithful fans with a smile that indicated that he was the cat who had got the cream.

He was born in 1917, the son of a share-cropper. Now in 1964, at

## John Lee Hooker

the age of 47, he was riding high on a wave of successful hit records.

*Boom Boom* and *Dimples* were huge hits and his young fans in Britain could not get enough of him. Which is probably more than can be said for his backing group who were struggling to follow his idiosyncratic bar structures!

Later in his life, John Lee Hooker went on to be probably the most financially successful Blues singer, making great collaborative albums with some of the music world's biggest superstars.



**Ya got Dimples  
in yajaw!! Uh!**



*Below: An older John Lee backed by The Rolling Stones*



1964-65



**RICKY  
TICK**  
GUILDFORD

**Lee Dorsey**

**A visiting  
Legend  
from New  
Orleans**

January 30  
Ricky Tick,  
Plaza,  
Guildford

**Lee Dorsey  
and The  
Crew, plus  
Ronnie  
Jones and  
the Blue  
Jays**

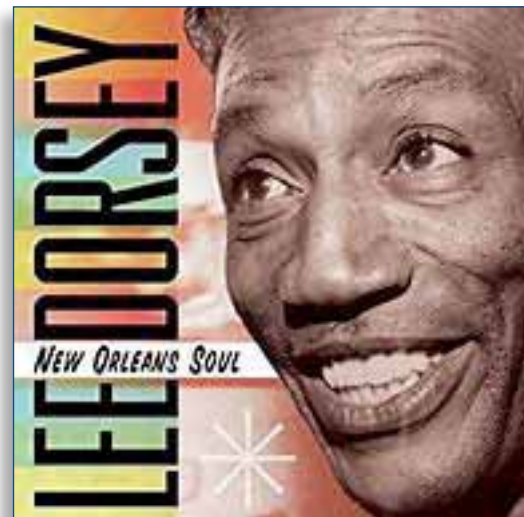
I loved seeing Lee Dorsey in the Ricky Tick. He was such a great entertainer. He had become a Mod's favourite with his catchy songs that had a New Orleans flavour that was impossible not to dance to. In 1961, he recorded the catchy *Ya Ya*, which went to the No. 1 spot on the US charts. This was followed by further hits with *Ride Your Pony*, *Working in a Coal Mine*, *Get Out Of My Life Woman* and *Holy Cow*.

## Lee Dorsey gets on his pony

His records were produced by Allen Toussaint with backing by the Meters. Impeccable pedigree!

Watching him in the Ricky Tick Club, I loved seeing how much fun he was having performing and interacting with his young audience. The best dancing I had seen was going on and the party atmosphere was intoxicating. He was not a blues singer, in fact quite a different type of performer for the Ricky Tick, but he was great fun.

**Ride youR pOny!! Get on youR pOny and Ride!!**





## Dave Else was a 'Face' at the Ricky Tick Guildford, and he writes:

October 1963 saw us at Guildford Odeon where, for 8/6 (42p) we got to see the legendary Bo Diddley (complete with The Duchess and Jerome of course) as well as the Rolling Stones (on their first UK tour) and the Everly Bros, but two months later, the music and the style came together.

In December there was a concert held in the local Civic Hall, promoted by the Ricky Tick guys and headlined by the Stones, supported by Georgie Fame & The Blue Flames, The Graham Bond Quartet and The Yardbirds (with Clapton in full Mod style), the evening being compered by Johnny Gunnell from the Flamingo. All for the princely sum of 8/- (40p)!

The audience must have included virtually every mod from a ten mile radius, a lot there to see Georgie Fame, Graham Bond and the Yardbirds as much as the Stones.

That was the first time I saw Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, and I think he will always be the number one English band for Mods – the Who or the Small Faces wouldn't even get in my top ten.

Our love of good music took us along to the Guildford Ricky Tick Club. Apart from the main club in Windsor (originally opened in December 62) which had its own premises from May 64 on (the legendary Clewer Mead), the guys who ran the Ricky Tick circuit, Phillip Haward and John Mansfield, would book regular weekly evenings at various suburban dancehalls, and put on the best of the British R'n'B groups (they weren't called 'bands' until later).

Guildford was their second club, opening in February 63, and the most regular after Windsor, but they also held clubs in Reading, Harpenden, Hounslow, Newbury and several other towns. As much as

# Mod Life and The Ricky Tick by Dave Else

anyone, they were responsible for spreading good quality live R'n'B and soul music over the South East of England.

After six months at the Wooden Bridge Hotel (where they had the Rolling Stones play once a month) and three months at a local village hall, Guildford's 'Tick' finally found a home at the Plaza

dancehall (a converted cinema) where, every Friday, five bob (25p) would get you in to see the likes of John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, Charlie & Inez Foxx, The Yardbirds, The Graham Bond Organisation, Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds and, of course, Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames.

We also seemed to get John Mayall's Blues Breakers at least once a month, which was slightly boring (even with Clapton on board)! Between the live music, a DJ played great R&B sounds, old and new.

The 'Tick' was where all the local Mods met up to listen to good live music, check out the fashions, dance, and plan their weekends.

The Harvest Moon Club opened in early 1965 and by the summer were holding all nighters. The crowd weren't as hip as the 'Tick', and it was a year or so before they started booking decent bands, but it gave us somewhere to go if there was nothing else happening.

Apart from the All Nighters, it was also open seven days a week from late morning to late evening, so if you bunked off work or college there was always a place to while away the day where you would find a friendly face and get a cup of coffee or a coke. Hardly any of the clubs that we went to were licensed for alcohol in those days, which meant that they could choose their opening hours and didn't need permission to stay open all day or all night if they chose to.

Fridays were spent at the Ricky Tick because you simply had to be there. Howlin' Wolf and Hubert Sumlin were there, backed by the Muleskinners with future Small Face, Ian McLagan.

The Ricky Tick, throughout 1965, continued to put on the best of the club bands, as well as visiting US R&B artists. In May, the Who appeared for the first time, straight from an appearance on TV's Ready Steady Go to plug '*Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere*' and wearing the same clothes – target T-shirt, Union Jack jacket etc. – almost fancy dress as far as us Mods were concerned !

The door price was increased to 7/6 (37½p) and a guy who worked in the cloakroom at the time remembers all the local Mods walking out when The Who started playing! I don't remember it being quite that obvious, but I do remember we were fairly underwhelmed by their act.

By the time The Who visited again in December, plugging '*My Generation*', they attracted the younger generation of Mods and got a much better reception! Mind you, even then you didn't hear their records played in the clubs, probably because you couldn't really dance to them.

Pete Townshend may have been good at putting Mod feelings into words (the first couple of years anyway), but his group were never big favourites of my generation (pardon the pun).

When it came to British bands, for us it was always Georgie Fame and The Blue Flames, Zoot Money and The Big Roll Band or Chris Farlowe and The Thunderbirds that we would go out of our way to see.

Later, Jimmy James & the Vagabonds, Geno Washington's Ram Jam Band, Herbie Goins and the Night Timers (lead by the great Mick Eve) were always good value and did their best to give us their versions of the soul music we were all listening to by that time. All of them featured brass in their line ups and all of them swung like crazy.

They also dressed like us, in band uniforms of sharp mohair suits or matching jackets, always with collar and tie, no matter how hot it was on stage. By contrast, the Who and the Small Faces were really just good pop groups.

Apart from Georgie Fame's albums, I don't remember buying

records by any of the British based bands. From an early interest in Blues and R&B, my taste had widened to include the soul music of Memphis, Detroit, Chicago and New York, as well as Bluebeat and ska. 45's were 6/8 each (33p) so you could buy three for a quid, and LPs were about £1.50.

We were obsessive about our music and with the weekly assistance of Record Mirror and sometimes Billboard, constantly searched out the new sounds – the more obscure and rare the better if it meant no one else had heard it! It was not often that the music we liked bothered the British charts, but if one of our sounds did hit the Top Twenty, that was the last you heard of it in the Clubs.

As for the music – imagine hearing 'Smokestack Lightnin'' for the very first time, or 'Walking The Dog' or 'Papa's Got A Brand New Bag' or 'Midnight Hour' or 'I Can't Help Myself' or 'Respect'. All being cooked up in greasy little studios across the USA as Blues changed to R&B to Soul to Funk and all totally different to what you'd heard the week before.

Meanwhile, the Beatles, Stones, Who, Beach Boys, Bob Dylan, Phil Spector and so many others were experimenting in the bigger studios, stretching the possibilities of popular music (it may not necessarily have been what we were buying, but it formed the background music to our lives).

On top of all that, there was a constant stream of new Jazz sounds or the latest release from Jamaica on Blue Beat or Island Records.

Much later, in 1967 I went to a new club in a Guildford pub (The Stoke Hotel) backroom to see an up and coming group called Pink Floyd.

I was not too impressed, mainly because they blew the fuses and ended up singing skiffle songs acoustically! As there was no music before or between their sets there was a great lack of atmosphere that night.



*By Dave Else (Thanks Dave).*

1965



Pictured below is a 1965 photo of **Zoot Money and the Big Roll Band** in the doorway of the **Flamingo Club**, Wardour Street, Soho.

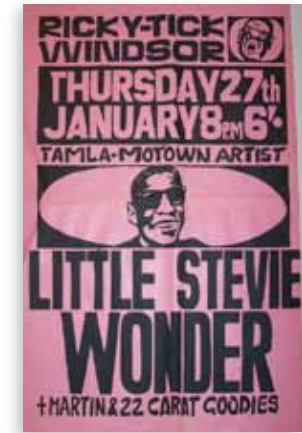
On the right of the photo is George 'Zoot' Money and next to him is Andy Summers, who went on to form the **Police** with Sting. Second from left, lighting a friend's cigarette, is Rod Stewart.

Jacqui Birchall and I went to a Flamingo All-

## The Flamingo Night Club Soho

nighter, and we travelled back to Godalming on the 'Milk' train in early hours of the next day. What an adventure!

It was an influential club that hosted the same acts as the Ricky Tick. The audience usually included many American GI's stationed in this country, and they wanted to hear cool American style music. It was here that I first heard a record of James Brown singing 'Papa's got a Brand New Bag'.

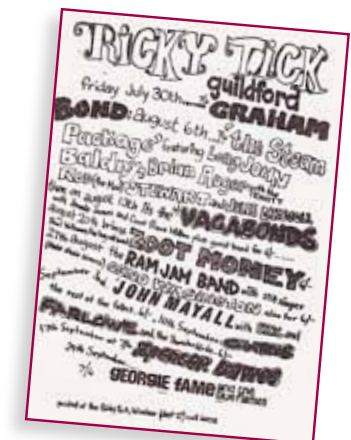


Marianne Faithfull – my pin up!



### Living the Life of Riley!

This rough collage (left) that I made in 1965 is how I imagined my nights at the Ricky Tick looked then. I was living in the land of fantasy, of course.





My girlfriend Penny Edwards invited me to the **Hole in the Wall** poetry and folk music club behind the Plaza (Ricky Tick).

This was the first *Happening* organised by Fred Pipes of the Guildford Arts Lab.

We climbed over the side of bridge and scrambled our way along the edge of the river. A small hole had been pushed

through an old wall at the base of a building. We paid a small admission fee to Mr Pipes and crouched to crawl in the hole.

We found ourselves in a cramped cellar about ten foot square lit by candles. It was about five foot high and we were unable to stand up.

When more people arrived, the audience themselves started reading avant-garde poems and singing folk songs. I was highly impressed by a very young boy who could finger-pick his guitar.

It was very atmospheric and in retrospect, a complete fire and death trap.

Well done Fred, for charging people to present their own entertainment. I bet he owns an island in the Bahamas now!

## The power and the glory of Graham Bond

The Scotsville band, with its new bass player Jim Mooney replacing Jack Bruce, came with Archie Korner, has a short Irish gig from July 30-Aug. 4.

### I saw THE GRAHAM BOND ORGANISATION at...

06/03/1964 Ricky Tick, Guildford

05/06/1964 Ricky Tick, Guildford

28/11/1964 Ricky Tick, Guildford

19/12/1964 Ricky Tick, Guildford

07/04/1965 Racks Close, Guildford with The Herd, The Stormsville Shakers, Geno Washington's Ram Jam Band (*right*)

30/07/1965 Ricky Tick, Guildford

07/08/1965 Richmond, Surrey, 5th National Jazz & Blues Festival

15/03/1966 Stoke Hotel, Guildford

09/05/1967 Borough Hall, Godalming with Alfie Lucas and Jim Cook! *Aaargh!*

### RACK'S CLOSE CONCERT 1965

I went to a very unusual place for an outdoor Sunday afternoon concert – the old quarry pit at Rack's Close, not far from Quarry Street in Guildford.

The concert was organised by my friends in the Stormsville Shakers and featuring three of the most popular acts of the day:

- **GRAHAM BOND ORGANISATION**
- **THE HERD** featuring Peter Frampton (later of Humble Pie and solo success)
- **GENO WASHINGTON and THE RAM JAM BAND.**

The mayor lived just above the Quarry and put in an appearance on stage asking Graham Bond if 'all was well?'

**The Harvest Moon** was a 'mod' hang-out in the Rodboro Building opposite the Ricky Tick Plaza, and it had a rather louché reputation. Occasionally I went there to the all-nighters which finished at about 5.00 am, when crowds of youngsters would

stream out of the club heading for Guildford station to take the 'Milk Train' home. Good fun.

There was ultra-violet lighting, which was new to me. The club also had a reputation for 'purple hearts' (amphetamines) being available, although I didn't see any.

I did get to play there once depping with the 'Crow Janes'.

In February 1966, the Ricky Tick Club moved from across the road to the Harvest Moon and continued to have great music, like Jose Feliano, and John Mayall and Eric Clapton:

At The Ricky Tick Club at the Harvest Moon

**17 MARCH 1966 - JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS**

John Mayall - Organ/Vocals  
Eric Clapton - Guitar  
John McVie - Bass  
Hughie Flint - Drums

**ERIC CLAPTON** played at many of the Ricky Tick venues in

- \* **The Roosters,**
- \* **The Yardbirds,**
- \* **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and**
- \* **Cream.**

## Another writer's history of the Ricky Tick Clubs

● **THE ROLLING STONES** first show in Guildford was at The Wooden Bridge (pub with function room) in March 1963 where, as a club band, they played a couple of times a month during the summer of 1963 before the start of their first UK tour; in October 1963 this took them to the Guildford Odeon, just after The Beatles first and only show in Guildford at the Odeon in June 1963.

**THE YARDBIRDS** first Guildford show in December 1963 was at the Civic Hall. The evening was headlined by the Stones, and was organised by promoters Ricky Tick. Their recently recruited local boy **ERIC CLAPTON** (born in Ripley near Guildford) featured on guitar, though he had been gigging around Surrey since 1962. The Yardbirds went on to play regularly at The Plaza Ballroom when it became the Ricky Tick, from December 1963 until April 1965, first with Clapton and then Jeff Beck.

The The Plaza Ricky Tick (a converted cinema) was THE music venue in Guildford between 1963 and 1965, hosting **THE WHO** in May 1965 for their first show in Guildford. The local Mods walked out when they started playing as they didn't consider them very good. By the time of The Who's second appearance in December the venue was packed.

The Harvest Moon Nightclub, on the upper floor of the Rodboro Buildings had its windows 'blacked out' with red paint for a darker club atmosphere – making it hard to see across the road to The Plaza opposite. The Harvest Moon first saw Clapton in March 1966 as part of **JOHN MAYALL'S BLUESBREAKERS**. Mayall had played The Wooden Bridge in August 1963 and become a regular at The Plaza until October 1965. Clapton first appeared with Mayall at The Plaza in April 1965, post Yardbirds.



Saturdays. The Ricky Tick clubs switched from jazz to R&B early on, then to soul bands and on to 'Progressive' – before folding in 1967. As much as anyone, Haward and Mansfield who ran the clubs were responsible for the spread of good quality live R&B and soul music over the South East of England. Guildford was their second club, opened in February 1963 and the most regular after Windsor, along with clubs in Reading, Harpenden, Hounslow, Newbury amongst others.

The Guildford Ricky Tick Club had started at The Wooden Bridge in early 1963, followed for a few gigs at Worplesdon Village Hall, before it found a home at The Plaza 'dancehall'.

Fridays were spent at the Ricky Tick because you simply had to be there after watching 'Ready Steady Go' on TV. On a Friday five bob (25p) would get you in to see the likes of The Yardbirds, John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, Charlie & Inez Foxx, Graham Bond, Zoot Money, Chris Farlowe, Georgie Fame, and John Mayall. In between the live music, a DJ would play R&B sounds, old and new.

By 1965, The Plaza was mainly a bingo hall and eventually it was bingo that drove the Ricky Tick Club, in February 1966, across the road to The Harvest Moon for a couple of months, before ending up at The Stoke for four months, until their last Guildford event in October 1966. ●

## Why did R&B appeal so much to my age group?

There could be a comparison made between American and British social attitudes in the early 1960s. The stereotype that white Americans had then for African-Americans was that they were rebellious, lazy, oversexed and rude.

Respectable adult British society (including parents) in the early 1960s, held the same prejudices for the young generation here: rebellious, lazy, oversexed, and rude. So it was possible that young people in Britain could empathise with the frustration and indignation that rhythm and blues conveyed.

But it was the sound of rhythm and

blues that was immediately attractive to me. I think that because my generation was brought up on Rock'n'Roll, we recognised that Rhythm & Blues was where Rock & Roll had evolved from. In some respects it was similar, but R&B sounded more authentic and genuine.

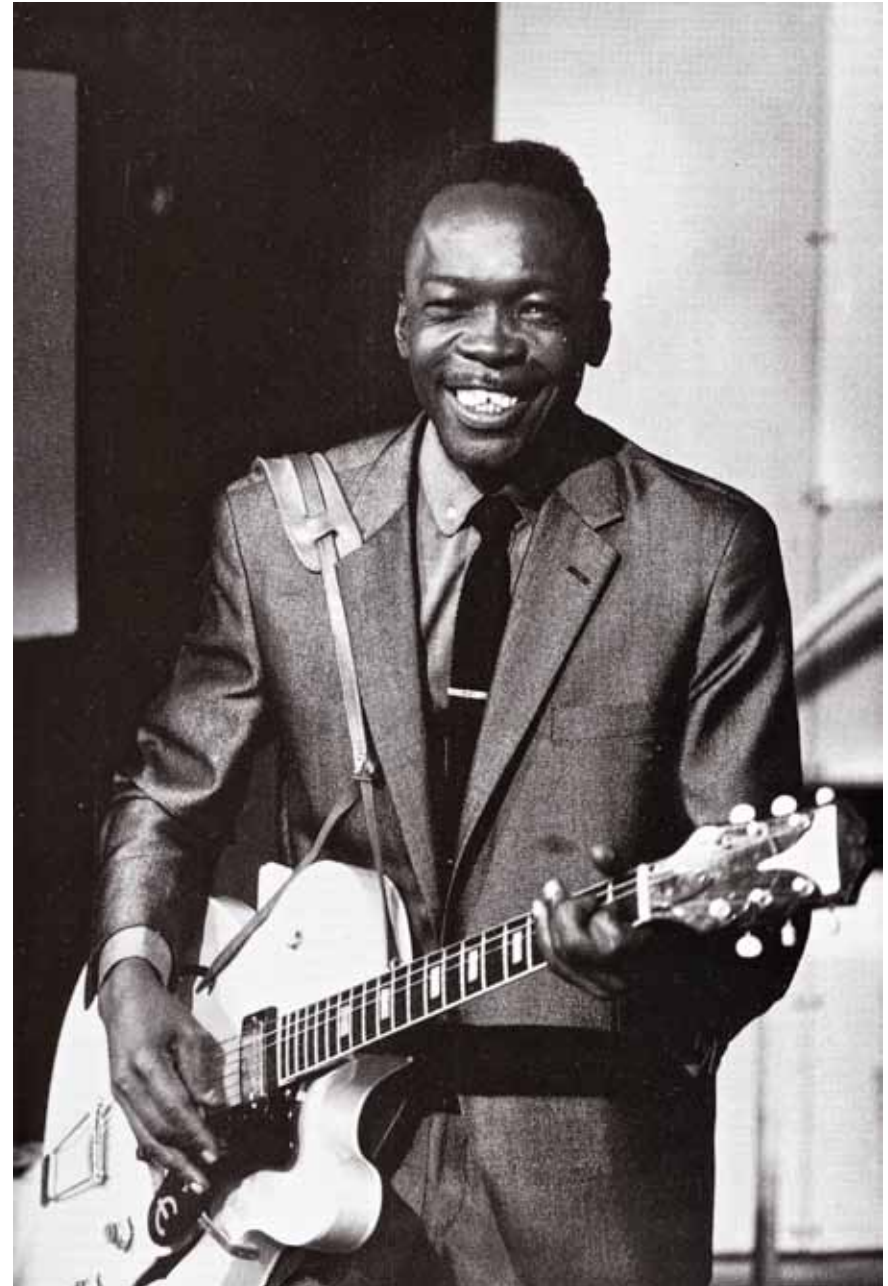
The connection made between the youngsters who loved the rhythm and blues songs and the African-American musicians who sang them, was highlighted by the love and respect that the visiting blues artists were shown when they visited Britain.

In contrast to America, where there was little interest remaining in the blues, and where even the black community was moving away from the blues.

By 1964-66, UK Musician's Union rules required that UK artists touring America had to be exchanged with USA artists performing in Britain. American blues exponents came over as UK youth sought out the original sounds from the American south. English groups such as the Yardbirds, Alexis Korner or the Rolling Stones and particularly their guitarists, imitated the music of Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker. The Ricky-Tick club was packed for such nights as audiences welcomed performers such as Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, and Sonny Boy Williamson playing their blues. What every visiting American musician needed was a British back-up band. The M.U. rules meant that it was too expensive to bring over back-up musicians in all but a few cases. Here was a great opportunity for British bands to get close to their influences and learn from them first-hand. For example, John Mayall and his Bluebreakers accompanied John Lee Hooker who inspired legendary British guitarist Eric Clapton. ●

*John Lee Hooker on 'Ready, Steady, Go! TV show in 1964.*

*I watched this live performance on television and then the same evening raced to Guildford to see John Lee live at Guildford Ricky Tick. He had raced from the London TV studios. A great thrill to see this important blues singer play live!*



**Some of the guildford area gigs.** Compiled by DAVID SHEPHARD (who now lives in Houston, Texas). The list is not yet complete. I went to several Ricky Tick nights which are not included.

## 1963 \* I went to these gigs

April 15  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: \*  
**Rolling Stones & Chris Farlow**

May 31  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Alexis Korner's  
(Blues Incorporated)**

June 7  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Rolling Stones**

June 14  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Cyril Davies All Stars  
and Long John Baldry**

July 5  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Cyril Davies All Stars  
and Long John Baldry**

July 6  
Ricky Tick, Reading:  
**Hogsnot Rupert's R&B Band**

July 12  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Graham Bond Quartet**

July 19  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Rolling Stones**

July 26  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Cyril Davies All Stars  
and Long John Baldry**

August 2  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Rolling Stones**

August 9  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**John Mayall's Blues Breakers**

August 16  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Cyril Davies All Stars  
and Long John Baldry**

August 23  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Rolling Stones**

August 30  
Ricky Tick, Wooden Bridge, Guildford:  
**Cyril Davies All Stars  
and Long John Baldry**

August 19  
Atalanta Ballroom, Woking:  
**The Rolling Stones**

## 1964

January 10  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **The Animals**

April 17  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Pretty Things**

June 5  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: \*  
**Graham Bond Organisation**

June 6  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Georgie Fame** \*

June 9  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **John Lee Hooker** \*

August 19  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Tommy Tucker**

October 2  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **The Moody Blues** \*

October 9  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **The Cheynes**

October 19  
Atalanta Ballroom, Woking: **Cliff Bennett**

November 3  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Jimmy Reed** \*

Odeon, Guildford: **The Animals, Gene Vincent**

December 11  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Howlin' Wolf** \*

December 19  
Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: \*  
**Graham Bond Organisation**

# 1965

January 1

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Alexis Korner**

January 8

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford:

**Sonny Boy Williamson, Zoot Money** \*

January 15

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **The Nightimers**

January 22

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford:

**John Mayall's Blues Breakers** \*

January 29

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford:

**Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames** \*

February 16

Atalanta Ballroom, Woking: **Tom Jones**

February 20

Civic Hall, Guildford: **The Moody Blues**

February 26

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Downliners Sect**

March 12

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Zoot Money's Big Roll Band** \*

March 15

Odeon, Guildford: **The Rolling Stones, The Hollies**

March 19

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford:

**Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames** \*

March 26

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford:

**Goldie and The Gingerbreads**

April 2

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Larry Williams, Johnny 'Guitar' Watson and The Stormsville Shakers**

April 9

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Long John Baldry**

April 16

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **John Mayall's Blues Breakers** \*

April 23

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **The Yardbirds** \*

April 28

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Goldie and The Gingerbreads**

May 21

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **The Who**

May 28

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Jimmy James & The Vagabonds**

June 4

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **John Mayall's Blues Breakers** \*

June 11

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Pretty Things**

July 9

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Jimmy James & The Vagabonds**

July 16

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **John Mayall's Blues Breakers** \*

July 23

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Inez and Charlie Foxx**

July 30

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **Graham Bond Organisation** \*

September 10

Ricky Tick, Plaza, Guildford: **The Alan Price Set** \*

November 28

Odeon, Guildford: **The Walker Brothers & The Small Faces**