

DRUMMING UP A STORM IN SIXTIES

REMEMBER WHEN

IN his latest profile of figures on Bradford's rock 'n' roll scene, DEREK AJ LISTER profiles drummer Colin Houghton;

Born in Bradford in 1943, Colin was a self-taught drummer. From an early age, he was in demand by up-and-coming local groups. Aged 16 he joined Mel Clarke's group, then The Unknown Four and soon The Mel Clarke Four.

For the young Colin it was two years of learning the trade, giving him confidence and the chance to show he was a gifted drummer. In July 1960 he was invited to join new group The Cresters with Mike Sagar. It was a good move as three months later they were in EMI Studios, Abbey Road, recording Deep Feeling.

The following day Colin was in hospital for a heart operation. Several weeks later he was required for a publicity photo session and such was his commitment to the group he asked to be discharged from hospital early, going straight to the photographic studio. He returned to The Cresters in December 1960 and was obliged to Kenny Gough for sitting in whilst he was in hospital. Kenny, another well-known Bradford drummer, had previously played with The Cresters.

In the meantime, Deep Feeling was released, voted a 'hit' on Juke Box Jury. But it failed to live up to expectations.



There were several theories why: bad management, failure of the record company to promote, not producing sufficient copies of the record. It was also said the number wasn't popular with other groups who found it too difficult to play. The Cresters were semi-professional, limited to gigs in the

North. Daytime jobs were put on hold, and they turned professional in late 1961. Colin gave up his job with a transport company. Now able to play venues nationwide, in 1962 they were averaging a booking almost every night, mostly dancehalls, clubs and occasionally supporting top pop stars.

Early 1963 was the start of a dreadful winter: Colin was becoming disillusioned with low wages, incessant travelling and arguments. After playing the Jimmy Young Show in Bristol the band returned one Sunday morning in February expecting a few

The Cresters. Back L-R: Malcolm Clark and Ian Bannister. Front: Colin Houghton, Mike Sagar and Richard Harding. Derek AJ Lister and Reuben Davison profile singers and bands from Bradford's 1950s and 60s music scene on their website

days rest as no gigs until the weekend. No! Manager Steve Black insisted they turn up next day for rehearsal with new bass player John Harding. By now Colin had lost enthusiasm and couldn't be bothered. His place was taken by Johnny Casson.

The most Colin had ever earned in one week was £19. The band incurred tremendous expenses; commission to agents, manager, paying road managers, van travel, accommodation, stage wear, publicity, maintenance of instruments. What was left could be shared - equally? Colin filled in with a few local groups, including The Crusaders, and returned to his job with a transport company until his passing away in 1990. He was one of those people of whom it was a pleasure to be a friend. With a life-threatening illness, he performed with the best of what can only be described as the most stressful, energetic instrument - the drums! Colin has probably been overlooked in our local world of group members and now perhaps with this book, not anymore. I was indebted to Colin in 1989 when I visited his home in Eldwick researching my book Bradford Rock 'n' Roll The Golden Years. He was so enthusiastic he wrote over 15 pages about his years with the Cresters. There was so much detail but I couldn't use it due to lack of space. Most information on the Cresters in my next book, When Bradford Rocked, is due to Colin's 15 pages. A short while later he passed away, not seeing part of his story in my book. Visit whenbradfordrocked.co.uk

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