

MIKE WAS A ROCK ‘N’ ROLL HERO

REMEMBER WHEN

IN the latest of his Bradford rock ‘n’ roll profiles, DEREK AJ LISTER pays tribute to Mike Sagar:

Mike Sagar, good-looking, a strong voice and a marvellous sense of humour, had all the qualities in the early days of rock ‘n’ roll to line-up among the Cliffs, Adams, Kennys and other UK pop stars. But things were not to be, although, his name is still recognisable to yesteryear’s teenagers and well into the 21st Century, especially in his home town, Bradford.

Mike Sagar (1940-2020) was born in Bradford and attended St James School off Manchester Road then Grange Boys Grammar School. Aged 16, he became an apprentice wool sorter for GR Heron Ltd in West Bowling. It was during these early years that Mike taught himself to play the rhythm guitar, although it was his vocals which brought him to the attention of the many new groups on the local scene. Rock ‘n’ roll music had left skiffle behind and vocalists like Mike were in demand.

In 1957, aged 17, he joined The Tennesseans, one of Bradford’s early successes. In 1960 he was with The Cresters. He was with them when the group now known as Mike Sagar and the Cresters recorded Deep Feeling at EMI Studios in Abbey Lane, London. On its release it was voted a ‘Hit’ on Juke Box Jury, but failed to live up to expectations, with many theories still



discussed today as to why. His next record, also in 1961 was The Brothers Three, written by group member Richard Harding who based it on John Leyton’s song Johnny Remember Me. The Cresters didn’t play on this record as a studio band of session musicians backed Mike on this number. Again,

this record only had mediocre success. However, Mike and the Cresters were proving popular, with bookings throughout the UK. They turned professional in 1961 and were based at a house in Kilburn, London. Mike suffered from a throat problem

diagnosed as polyps on his vocal cords. It needed surgery and months of recuperation. With Mike away, the band continued as The Cresters. In 1962, fully recovered, Mike rejoined them, but not for long! It appears that a big argument took place and Mike stormed out of the digs, walked to Kilburn High Road,

The original Mike Sagar and the Cresters. Back L-R: Malcolm Clark and Ian Bannister. Front: Colin Houghton, Mike Sagar and Richard Harding

thumbed a lift to Bradford, and left the group.

Back home, he turned his hand to the building industry but it wasn’t long before he was back with The Cresters. From 1963, well into the 60s, he also played with Mick and the Tornados, The Quiet Three, The Toledos and in the late 60s he was the vocalist with Jinx. In the 1970s he formed a duo with Billy (Willie) Fenton, the Mike Sagar Duo. They later became The Mike Sagar Trio. In 1979 Mike formed popular group Dillinger who, with the odd musician changes over the years, are still popular.

Mike was still involved in the music business, appearing at many venues with The Cresters, himself and Richard Harding. In June 2020 Mike sadly passed away, another stone in the crown of Bradford’s rock ‘n’ roll era.

He lived in Low Moor with his wife Tracey and is missed by his many friends and group members of those days.

I knew Mike for over 60 years and never forgot that in 1966, when I was just married to Diana and living in a cottage in Wilsden, it was Mike and Ian Bannister (also of The Cresters) who built us a large stone fireplace, as a wedding present.

* Derek Lister and Reuben Davison profile singers, bands and musicians from Bradford’s 1950s and 60s music scene in their website, When Bradford Rocked. Visit www.whenbradfordrocked.co.uk

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Sun 6th	Whitby	£18.00	£17.00	Sat 16th	Whitby Christmas Market	£19.00	£18.00
Wed 9th	Northallerton Market & Barnard Castle Town	£18.00	£17.00	Sun 17th	Bakewell Christmas Market	£19.00	£18.00
Sat 12th	Ormskirk Market & Southport	£17.00	£16.00	Tues 19th	Gainsborough Market & Lincoln	£19.00	£18.00
Tues 15th	Fleetwood Market & Blackpool Illuminations	£21.00	£20.00	Thurs 21st	York St. Nicholas Fayre	£19.00	£18.00
Sat 19th	Llandudno	£19.00	£18.00	Sat 23rd	Llandudno Christmas Fayre	£21.00	£20.00
Sun 20th	Scarborough	£17.00	£16.00	Mon 25th	Skipton Market & Harrogate	£17.00	£16.00
Mon 21st	Pickering, Thornton Le Dale & Whitby	£19.00	£18.00	Thurs 28th	Holmfirth & Buxton	£18.00	£17.00
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Thurs 24th	Northumberland Coastal Tour & Holy Island	£21.00	£19.00				
Fri 25th	Blackpool Illuminations Vintage Tram Tour & Blackpool	£34.00*	£33.00*	December			
Sat 26th	Bridlington	£17.00	£16.00	Sun 1st	Bicester Shopping Village	£20.00	£19.00
Sun 27th	Blackpool Illuminations	£21.00	£20.00	Wed 4th	Birmingham Christmas Market	£21.00	£20.00
Tues 29th	Skegness	£19.00	£18.00	Fri 6th	Durham Christmas Market	£20.00	£19.00
Wed 30th	Chester	£17.00	£16.00	Sat 7th	Liverpool Christmas Market	£19.00	£18.00
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Thurs 31st	Oswaldtwistle Mills & Boundary Mills	£17.00	£16.00	Mon 9th	Harrogate Christmas Market	£19.00	£18.00
November				Wed 11th	Chester Christmas Market	£17.00	£16.00
Sat 2nd	Whitby Goth Weekend	£19.00	£18.00	Wed 11th	Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet	£17.00	£16.00
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Wed 6th	Bury Market	£17.00	£16.00	Fri 13th	Manchester Christmas Market	£17.00	£16.00
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