

'THEY THINK WE'RE CLIFF'S BAND!'

REMEMBER WHEN

DEREK AJ LISTER, who was resident DJ at the Gaumont and Majestic in the 1950s and 60s, recalls the night his band Dal Stevens and the Four Dukes was mistaken for Cliff Richard and the Shadows...

Things were improving for our group, we were averaging two venues a week. We'd been practising on Wednesday evenings at the Unity Hall in Rawson Square costing 10 shillings. The problem was, after our various bus journeys and the walk through town with instruments, practice time seemed limited. However, things were about to change.

We had recently played at the Saturday morning teenage show at the Gaumont. On our second visit I was speaking to Mr Philcox, the manager, whose idea, this show, was proving to be a success for local groups. I mentioned that we were finding it difficult to have a place to practice. Hearing of our plight, Mr Philcox offered us one of the changing-rooms to practice on Wednesdays. This was not only convenient, it wouldn't cost us a penny and it meant we could leave Keith's drum kit there.

Our practice room was on the first-floor balcony, the entrance was through the balcony, down the right-hand side through double doors, along a passage. The dressing-room was spacious and soundproofed, with a frosted window



Gaumont manager Mr Philcox, right, on stage with Dal Stevens and the Four Dukes.
Pic: Derek AJ Lister

looking onto cobbled Quebec Street. Our practice nights went well, with Duane, who could sing like Cliff Richard singing Cliff hits. We'd arrive at 7.30pm, then disperse at 10pm, carrying guitars for our buses home. We had to be quiet going to the dressing-room, as most of the time we had to pass many patrons

watching the film. Sometimes some of the females asked who we were. We'd answer, not too loud, but this would change when Cliff Richard and the Shadows were due to appear at the Gaumont one Saturday night. At our practice the Wednesday before, it

was Duane who thought we should make more noise than usual on the balcony down to the dressing-room. It would be dark other than the light showing the film, and perhaps we'd be mistaken for the Cliff and the Shadows. We agreed to act it out, with Eric being tall and a little like Hank Marvin, the

rest of us unlike any of them. It was dark as we clambered through the double doors. 'Hank' and 'Cliff' were said loudly during this fiasco as we settled down for our practice. All was set up, with Duane singing Cliff numbers, also instrumental number Apache. After a while as the music drifted into the night through the open window a crowd of teenagers below were looking up and shouting. Word had got around that Cliff was here with his group. I was later told all this from one of the usherettes who, having problems at the double doors, had to call Mr Philcox. Playing in the soundproofed room, we were unaware of all this - until Mr Philcox entered and said our practice had been mistaken for Cliff Richard and his group! We looked at each other in amazement. The noise from the street was loud, Mr Philcox said we shouldn't play any more numbers and closed the window. Glancing down, we saw lots of teenagers outside. We had to wait until 11pm before we could leave, rumours rife that it could start up again. I don't believe we pulled the wool over Mr Philcox's eyes, even though we tried to act innocently. The last buses had gone, outside it was quiet, and what did Mr Philcox do? He paid for two taxis to take us home.

Dennis (Duane) Oliver later joined The Crusaders as vocalist and was popular for his renditions of Cliff Richard numbers.
* Visit whenbradfordrocked.co.uk for more of Derek's stories.

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