

ROCK N ROLLER RICHARD

REMEMBER WHEN

IN the latest of his profiles of figures on Bradford's rock 'n' roll scene, DEREK AJLISTER looks at the career of Richard Harding:

Richard was born in 1943 in Bramley and educated at Swinnow Primary School and Leeds Central High School. His father, Arthur, although having a university degree in textiles, also had a musical background as a violinist in several West Riding orchestras. He ran a recording studio in the attic, and as a skilled studio engineer with a homemade eight-track (mainly mono), he produced hundreds of excellent demo tapes for a wide range of Yorkshire musicians.

It was little wonder the Richard's knowledge of the electrics of music would be as they say, 'a chip off the old block'.

At a local youth club Richard knew a lad with an electric guitar that he couldn't play. Richard was very interested in this new musical dimension, particularly how it was made, and set out making his own guitar. In fact, he made three guitars and learnt to play them by listening to Bill Haley's Rock Around the Clock over and over again.

It wasn't long before he became proficient on the guitar and during the last days of skiffle he met local lad Mick Sagar and with three others formed The Tennesseans. They were soon playing at



local venues, including the Students Club, Gaumont and Majestic Ballrooms and local working men's clubs.

They were joined by Malcolm Clark and Ian Bannister from The Dingos, and newly named group The Cresters had arrived. Later with an EMI contract

they recorded Deep Feeling, but the record wasn't a success. It was followed with Richard's solo single, Temptation, and Jezebel, in 1961. However, bad luck: the Everley Brothers released at the same time their version of Temptation. The band were now playing venues

around the UK, including a tour with Freddie Cannon and a week at the notorious Glasgow Empire. In 1963, at the height of their popularity, they had a three-day tour with the Beatles in Scotland.

Perhaps one of Richard's fondest

Richard Harding started out making his own guitars and was a gifted guitarist

memories was in 1965. During an overnight stay in Manchester, playing at the Jungfrau Club, in a city centre cellar, the group were sorting out instruments and Richard bumped into a tall fellow and stood back in amazement. It was Chet Atkins - Richards's hero! He was in the company of Jim Reeves and later they watched the group play, with Richard playing a few instrumentals. Chet told Richard how much he'd enjoyed it. Richard will never forget that day and that meeting Chet Atkins, because he caught chicken pox the following day.

Richard was still very much in demand in the music business, and continued to play with popular Bradford rock n' roll reunions. He is also active in his recording studio, producing radio commercials within the radio industry. His lovely late wife, Brenda, was also quite a star in the Swinging Sixties, singing under the name of Brenda May. In 1967 she recorded on HMV I shouldn't care about you and made many TV appearances and European tours in cabaret.

As for Richard, no amount of editorial can cover the life of this extraordinary talented guitarist. It has been a pleasure to know this virtuoso friend for over 60 years. He now lives with his partner Jean in Brighouse.

* Derek and collaborator Reuben Davison have profiled singers, bands and musicians from Bradford's 1950s and 60s music scene in their website: www.whenbradfordrocked.co.uk

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