

A ROCK 'N' ROLL TORNADO

REMEMBER WHEN

IN the latest of his Bradford rock 'n' roll profiles, DEREK AJ LISTER looks at the life and career of vocalist Mick Kershaw:

Mick was born in Bradford in 1942 and after leaving school worked at Grattan Warehouse, Ingleby Road. He joined The Sansovenos, his first group, in 1959. In 1960, after the name change, Mick led the group on vocals as Mick and the Tornadoes. Mick also brought into prominence his new stage name, that of 'Mick Novak'.

Mick was especially popular with female fans: his good looks could compare with any of the famous 'Budding Bobbies' and 'Rocking Rickies' of the time. He continued with this popular group until it folded in 1963, then went on to play with The Del Rio Four and was with them when they changed their name to The Chapters. The name came from singer Kenny Lynch. Mick was also part of the group when they recorded on PYE label Can't Stop Thinking about Her, which did reasonably well.

When The Chapters folded he was off the road for a while until 1967, when he formed a group with other good musicians called The Guests. He was now professional and had become an accomplished rhythm guitarist as well as his vocal abilities. In the early 1970s The Guests obtained a recording



contract with RCA records, their first recording was called Baby you've got to Stay co-written by Mick and another group member. The record wasn't a success and soon after the group disbanded.

Mick was offered a job at the Mecca

Locarno on Manningham Lane, singing and playing rhythm guitar with The Terry Blakely Quartet in residence at the ballroom. Twelve months later he was back with The Guests who had now reformed, and with a different name: PUNCH. This band went on to have tremendous

success in the 1970s, playing at many of the top clubs in the UK, and made a record. Such was their popularity a TV documentary was made about the group and their life on the road, plus appearances on BBC's Look North. More success was just around the corner, with an appearance on

Mick Kershaw singing with Mick and the Tornadoes. Derek AJ Lister and Reuben Davison profiled singers, bands and musicians from Bradford's 1950s and 60s music scene on their website

Opportunity Knocks.

However, the record flopped and they came nowhere in Opportunity Knocks, for reasons unknown. Mick was disappointed as he thought his time had come. Resolute as ever, in the late 1970s he was compering the shows at the popular Talk of Yorkshire in Bradford. He was back in the 80s in a new group, Phase Four, who mostly played at hotel functions but were also booked on cruise ships as far as the Caribbean, and they also found time for a season at Pontins holiday camp.

Leaving Phase Four, Mick joined other bands including a trio called Festival with whom he played 15 seasons for the Haven Holidays group. In 1999, due to family commitments, he called it a day on their last engagement on the Isle of Wight.

Back home after the trials and tribulations of being on the road, Mick continued to play as a semi-professional. In 2000 he joined a band called Kraka but in 2004, now in his sixties, he settled down in something different. He spent his spare time looking after maintenance at Fieldhead Hospital in Wakefield.

Sadly, Mick passed away in 2018. He was an extremely talented guitarist and rock n roll vocalist, one of the best. Much missed by his family and his many friends and fellow rock n roll artists.

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