

The Worn Fret

February 2012

Exceedingly occasional voice-piece of the NI
Shadows Club ('A scarcely believable treat': the Editor)

Report on the February 2012 meeting at the YFC, Nards.
From our twang-&-bam correspondent, **Ed Banger**, the
man with more pick-ups than your local taxi-cab rank.

Welcome Back, One & All

Another year older maybe, another year wiser – I don't think so. If that were the case all those would-be Marvin, Welch, Bennett & Harris impersonators would realise the foolishness of trying to match the 'real thing' and accept that it would be better for all local Nards residents if we stayed on our sofas beside the Sunday fire. Instead the Boys-with-their-toys gathered for the first meet of 2012 amongst the YFC stage-show detritus. All the talk during the week in Ards shopping centre had been about the multitude of vocal acts appearing at this month's Club event so several dozen groupie girls were not screaming at the front door when the stretched limos pulled up at the Tech gates. Oh, how it hurts, this celeb thing....

New Term, New Faces

The 1st Spring Term outing of the year was a chance for the budding pupils to show how their hours of practice in the bars & coffee houses over the festive period had reaped its rewards in terms of expanded waistlines and caffeine dependency. There was also the opportunity to finely hone the playing & singing list for the proposed March Jamboree at Stormont. Anyway, Boaly was there to 'kick *ss' & get the show on the road once all leads & connectors had been clamped to the National Grid.

Binson Buddies' Boogie

Tully & The Binsons (Turner & McNeil) raised the curtain with 'Apache', 'The Stranger' & 'Kon-Tiki' in a fitting start to the New Year – who can beat a story about a paper-raft-sailing North American Indian alone on the Pacific high seas with a guy whom he hasn't met? – certainly not this humble scribe. All we needed was a Texas chain-saw or killer whale and we would have had a real blockbuster on our hands. Anyway Mr Tully, equipped with his newly acquired axe freshly purchased from Mr Titchmarsh in B&Q, gave us a fine performance full of soaring dramatic vibrato, echo, foxtrot, whiskey & zulu (maybe that was who the Stranger was?) and reminded us of what we had missed over the Christmas break.

Dance On Doo-Doo

Following such a promising opening act it was bound to be a struggle for next-up which, following late call-offs, turned out to be Clarke playing lead on 'PITS' (with Simon on 2nd lead & George on rhythm) followed by a slightly less than perfect rendition of 'Dance On' – can anybody explain why those note-perfect practice sessions turn into such dodgy performances when the pressure is on.... the audience is watching.... Charlie's spy-in-the-sky is running... the drums pounding.. ('Get on with it'. The Ed)... the rhythm & bass thrashingthe fingers start to miss a note (or two).... the phrasing goes, the timing is missed... very time stands stillwas it a dream?...can we start again, please?..('Ok, we get the drift' The Ed)... can somebody reconnect my left & right hands?.. Just relax, there's always next week... somebody clapped... maybe the camera lens cover was never taken off...maybe Uncle Des will never look at it

...maybe Pull yourself together, man..... We do this for PLEASURE?????!! ('You're fired, loser'. Ed.)



Spy in Sky – misses nothing.....

Ollie's On & Phil's Savage

Following right up came Ollie on lead with 'Cozy' & 'Sleepwalk', Eric & David backing on 6 & 4 strings respectively, after which Philip took front of stage with 'Peacepipe' & 'The Savage' with Terry on bass tones & Mike shredding another plec.

"Old Spice" roll on (geddit?)

First time back on stage since the last time was that explosive duet 'Old Spice' whose fox had been shot during earlier performances and who were thus relying on some true backing vocals to add some syrup to the gruffness. To their rescue, and highly recommended by 'The Enforcer', came Ann Osborne while the old duffers (acoustics a-shoulder) worked their way through 'Don't Make My Baby Blue', 'Travellin' Light' & 'Please Don't Tease' with DM/Terry on bass & Bernardo adding the Hank-riffs. The hail of banana skins, empty Irn-Bru tins and verbal encouragement (to get off stage) were proof yet again that this pair probably saw their finest hour about 45 years ago. Ms Osborne however retired to return later in the piece with her reputation unsullied.

'Lucky Lips' Braniff

The vocal feast continued with our next 'Cliff' contender, Mr John Braniff, taking the stage to sing 'Move It', 'Young Ones', 'Summer Holiday' and 'Lucky Lips' with Braniff Jr doing the lead fill-ins, Terry on Bass and Cyril providing a percussive assault at the back – a good set, well lead from the front by JB as though he had been doing it all of his years! A backing vocals arrangement is still to be finalised.....

'Fingers' Braniff Jnr / 'Tinas & Turner

Chris B stayed on stage to lead JT & Terry on 'Foot-tapper' & 'Flingel Bunt' prior to 'The Eric Burns & GT Show' starring 'Argentina', 'Cavatina' & 'Titanic' interspersed with 'Guitar Tango', the latter in full acoustic set-up – David did bass honours on this grouping.

½ time refreshments (at last)

The tired & thirsty warriors then retired to the kitchen to partake of Margaret & Andrea's finest cucumber sandwiches and fairy cakes (thanks, Ladies – where would we be without you to repair our health & shattered nerves?!).

Stanley & JB

After what must have seemed like an age Stanley was able to brandish his plectrum and kick off the 2nd half with 'True Love Ways' & 'Guitar Boogie' (Jim & Terry in the vanguard) followed by a Jim Bennett lead on 'Wonderful Land' and 'Atlantis', JT/Boaly on strums & Terry/David on bass.

Up, Up & Away

Soon the eagerly awaited "Jet Setters" arrived at the terminal building in their finery, the paparazzi being out in their multitudes to spot the constantly changing lines-up as they boarded for take-off. First up was the luscious 'Besame Mucho', complete with backing vocalists in skirt & lipstick – nice one Mr Corlett, giving an assist to Ms Osborne. Besides this pair we had Mr Desmond playing lead-bass, Jim on rhythm & Terry on bass. The following Jet numbers were played by George, Simon & Des (Mk 2) leading & JT taking up rhythm from Mr Boal and David & Des doing bits of bass :- 'Applejack', 'Scarlett O', 'Nivram', 'Diamonds', 'Theme From Something' & 'Here I Stand'. The Starship Galactica then returned to earth to disgorge its multiple pilots and trolley-dolleys onto the tarmac and bring to an end this stunning tour of Harris-ville.



Stunning Toy missing in Transit – Please deliver to distraught bass guitarist in Newtownards, PDQ !

More Bennett (with 'Rabble')

'Cliff' Bennett, with his Rabble-rousers, then mounted the rostrum fetchingly clad in pink jacket, black bow tie and Brilliantine to a shriek of fanzine anticipation as he commenced his CR repertoire of 'Livin' Doll', 'Voice in Wilderness', 'Don't Talk To Him', 'Do You Wanna Dance?', and 'I Could Easily Fall' – all this with Bernard again doing the Hank-bits, Eric & George rhythm-backing, Desmac on 4 strings and Ann & Simon adding vocal depth. Rock-on.....!



Library photo 'Cliff', sans pink jacket (or 'Rabble')

King Keys/Bernardo/Mark

At this point our quiet keys-maestro, Chris, played lead Hammond on 'Time is Tight' & 'Telstar' with Jim/George/Bernard/Des jousting on guitar before Bernard led the fleet home with 'FBI' & 'Going Home'. On his way to the stage door Mark leapt out from behind the bushes to encore with 'Wonderful Land' & 'Spring is Nearly Here'.



Library photo : Roland Wakeman

"And that, my friends, was an F Flat 13th diminished 7th, with pike....."

Summary

Copious thanks as always to Hall for doing the percussion marathon at the back of the stage. As an 'undress' rehearsal for the March 9th "gig" this was a useful pointer showing where tweaks are required in change-overs and sound balance on certain numbers. It also showed promise in the quality of the vocal numbers that exceeded this humble hack's expectations. Keep up the practice, guys!!

Public Information Notice – Absconded Pet : Mr James Bennett requests that any sightings of his missing guitar lead be reported to the nearest police or radio station. The lead, 6m long with red & green coloured ends, was last heard within the YFC on Sunday evening – it may have hidden itself amongst the many other coils of cable on show or, attempting a bid for freedom, jumped into a strange car-boot. If the lead is sighted please phone Whitehall 1212 or call Jim's portable telephone on 07824 487009.

Wanted : Headline Hacks

The Press Complaints' Commission wishes to open up the market for abuse and mis-quote in relation to the *NI Shadows Club's* regular gatherings. For too long the antics of these would-be musicians have been shrouded in secrecy protected by a sympathetic press sycophantically peddling endlessly tedious articles on the skill of the players and the beautiful people that surround them. The Commission therefore invites expressions of interest from Club members willing to join the current Group of Approved Would-be Publishers (GAWP) in order to give the public the truth behind the myth. Do you have an interesting 'take' on the playing, the instruments, the sound, the number of Jammy Dodgers at tea time? If so, please put your names forward to Head of Publications, Hon 'Prof' Philip Hawthorne who will quickly sign you up for an insignificant fee. Remember, this is YOUR club and the world deserves to hear about it from YOU.

PS This is a serious request, honest, please....

© mrc Feb 2012 All errors & omissions result from carelessness