

The Sound of Fury Fan Club Newsletter

Issue 14: October - December 2022



Hi there!

Welcome to the latest edition of the Sound of Fury newsletter.

Apologies again to the cancellation of the planned Mill Hill meeting in October. We were looking forward to meeting with you all once again, but due to circumstances beyond our control, this was not possible.

All being well, the next meeting is planned for January 22nd 2023. This will be a special meeting, as it's only days before the actual 40th anniversary of Billy's passing. There may well be events all over the country celebrating the life and legacy of Billy in January, so please check out the Billy social media groups or contact us at the below address for more details.

If you do want to get in touch with us - email soundoffurysecretary@gmail.com or write to The Sound of Fury Fan Club, P.O. Box 157, Frodsham, WA6 1BY

Billy's New Bench



I am sorry it has taken so long to complete but this has been due to not knowing who to contact initially, then dealing with Westminster Council and eventually the company who made it having such a backlog due to not working during the lockdowns. They very kindly transferred the plaque from the old bench to the new one.



Thank you so much again to everyone who kindly contributed to the cost of this, we are very grateful to you all.

Jackie Clark

Where did the time go?

On January 28th next year it will have been forty years since the untimely passing of Billy. As I write in October 2022 I remember how, in October 1982, having just seen Billy with the Mick Green Band on-stage at Burton on Trent, previously in July at Hucknall, and of course on TV, and met him twice, how fired up and buoyant I and other fans were-those (far too few regrettably), who had returned to supporting him; and those younger mostly rockabilly ones just discovering him. Of course Billy looked tired and very thin, most noticeably at Burton, but he still had the magic and that voice was so powerful on the rock numbers. Chart-wise the results had been more than disappointing, the lovely *Be Mine Tonight*, (we didn't know it was recorded in the wrong key as it sounded-and still does, absolutely wonderful), and was surely an extension in style of those final Decca hits, had only bubbled under the Top 100 the previous year; and the excellent *Love or Money* (new to me because I had missed the Blackwell's and Jimmy Crawford the first time around), only reached No.57 the previous month during 1982. Tony Read ,Billy's manager and at that time a friend to many of us fans, alleged that Billy was due to appear on TOTP with the single but was precluded by another bands recording ,Dire Straits he said, taking precedence and having a long track. How true that was I don't know but *Private Investigations* was also in the charts by 4th September, so he could have been right. Just the one appearance would certainly I believe have nudged *Love or Money* into the Top 40 and paved the way for the November follow-up, the beautiful *Devil or Angel*. It could and should have been Billy's year.

Conversely, the subsequent Russell Harty appearance with Billy sounding great and looking stunning, did little to raise the chart position in November, being one slot lower at No 58 and one week less in the chart, at four weeks. Bluntly, as Spencer Leigh has said about Billy never making No 1 in the UK singles charts –self-evidently not enough people bought the records. We know there were distribution issues with the EMI singles, and insufficient push for the two non-EMI 70s releases, but Polydor invested significantly in Billy, and, according to Tony Read, were out of pocket afterwards.



Like most devoted fans I went out and bought a handful of each Polydor release, *Be Mine Tonight* having a splendid high quality cover, but the sad fact is that a Top 20 hit would have meant us now seeing film of 1980's Billy on TV shows like *That's 80's* and on Radio 2 as well. There might have been more younger fans too. When was the last time you heard a Polydor track played on mainstream radio? Whether the planned 1983 tour with Helen Shapiro and more releases would have really brought Billy back we cannot know, but in October forty years ago we had high hopes for better chart success and a highly successful 1983, full of live dates, radio and TV appearances. Sadly both Billy and his fans were to be denied this well-deserved continuation of his come-back, for such it was. After a great November and December with more TV and live shows, on 28th January 1983 our hopes and dreams for more time with Billy, alive in the world no matter what he chose to do, and great new recordings were dashed. Billy did comeback though, and whilst not in a major way, he did well to do so after such a long break, and it must be judged a relative success for all that. His public profile, especially on TV and in the *Daily Mail* etc. was quite high, his singles charted and his appearances were really well received, especially the Beck Theatre one, which Polydor ought to have filmed.

Since January 1983 a lot has happened and as we gathered around the grave year after year, with three successful fan clubs and a hard core of dedicated fans, venue owners, bands and acts over the intervening period ,(and Billy's family) all doing their level best to promote the image and legacy of Britain's finest ever performer, we could not have known how quickly the time would go, and how hard it would become to continue with such dedication, especially losing so many devoted and beloved fans/friends (and Billy's contemporaries) along the way. Many original fans were still having to hold down jobs and still found the time to be active fans, no sinecure for sure. Quite where we all go from this time onwards we cannot be sure, especially as in today's world, nothing is as it was and nothing is sure, (except death and taxes as Elvis sings!).



Credit Chris Eley collection

Thanks to the internet there is plenty of Billy out there for the world to dip into and new discoveries, whether photos or songs, keep turning up. A new (or at least slightly younger!) generation of internet savvy fans seem to have shouldered the burden to a degree and bless them for what they find and put out there-as we tried for years to do in our more traditional way. We original fans, and some younger ones , via the clubs and /or the amazing website-billyfury.com, have done our best since 1983 and are justifiably proud of the various projects we have been involved in; the music releases (hit DVDs and CDs), fund-raising, the Bronze Statue, the Fury Sound, Sound of Fury and BFI TOY magazines and other written work. What a wonderful time, mostly anyway!, we have had until a combination of ageing, ill health and perhaps most of all Covid-19 came into play. Many fans have pre-existing health conditions and covid currently remains a threat to us, but despite that, we had hoped to be gathering at our usual hall this October, where we felt that some degree of safety could be maintained that could not be found in nearby pubs and such. Regrettably there was apparently a major roof leak which may take some time to repair. Currently we cannot be sure of a venue for around the 40th Anniversary or even April 2023, which would still allow us to remember the events of that sad year-1983. We do hope to confirm. I will say how great it is that Billy Fury Weekenders, all associated with Elvis and Billy fan Colin Paul, a great performer and friend to the SOF still continue at Blackpool and Liverpool and hope those who can attend this November have the sort of great time that Linda and I and other SOF members and fans used to have before ageing parents, personal health issues and covid made such events non-viable for us-at least for a while. A very special thanks is due to Diane and Mrs Roth for the Blackpool events, incredibly running since 1991-long may it continue, keeping live Billy Fury music very much live, and Colin and Yesterday Once More for Liverpool and gigs. There may also be other tribute acts performing again in various venues-time will tell. The sad truth is that even major still performing and credible icons, with beginnings in the pre-Beatles era were relegated by HM Platinum Jubilee event organisers to appearances (if they were lucky), on pageant buses-when Sir Cliff Richard in particular should have had pride of place on-stage (ideally with the Shadows).What a fantastic band Cliff and the Shads were, yet their highly significant joint and solo contributions to music, here and abroad, have yet to be lauded sufficiently-always it's the Beatles and beyond. An Xmas No.1 album or single for Cliff would be nice-lets support it all we can when it's released in November. Old Cliff really should have released *My Xmas Prayer* but perhaps it might be a little irreligious for him I guess-mixing a prayer with earthly 'love', it would be nice though. Our Cecilia would love it I know!

Although they would not want it mentioned I would like to say a massive thank you to all members of the SOF Team for their continued hard work-it may not be obvious but making calls, maintaining funds and payments, doing the calendar and many other things takes precious time; especially when there are so many other life-issues to deal with, increasing as we get older. Without Lee Fry there would be no newsletter I am pretty sure and given his other commitments we are very lucky he helps us as he does, and indeed that we still exist as a team What the future holds for us and Billy's legacy we don't know. Taking each day as it comes becomes pretty common-place for us now it seems. **Chris Eley.**



Credit Chris Eley collection

The 40th Anniversary Year-2023.

Although there is much uncertainty about next year, and indeed as far as we can see thereafter world-wide, on the Billy front we have it seems some events to look forward to. On January 29th, unless notified otherwise, Colin Paul will be performing a Billy Fury Tribute at the Cavern. Other Billy acts have done this in past years but it is a signal event in that this is a very important anniversary and an acknowledgment of how important and valued (and good!), Colin is in his Billy role. Space will be at a premium and it is a confined event but we would urge fans who feel it is safe enough to attend, to support Colin and remind the general Cavern punters from around the world just how important and great, Ronnie Wycherley/Billy Fury really was (and not just a footnote in the history of the Beatles). There have been quite a few programmes, both fact and fiction filmed in Liverpool but we never seem to see Billy on the dock-get a grip film-makers and film a scene in front of the statue, two lovers or something! Hopefully soon we will be assured that the proposed/rumoured sale of the Albert Dock will not affect the property of the Liverpool Museum –including the Billy Statue and we hope soon to know more about the planned maintenance of it and the arrangements for protecting it from damage, including that arising from flowers etc. being tied to it. The grave (see recent photo) looks great (thanks to our efforts-mostly our Jackie and the kindness and generosity of Lisa Voice), as does the new bench (Jackie and Wendy predominantly). Not so roomy as the previous one it should prove to be more robust with this design and The Sound of Fury is no longer responsible for it, or the grave, as we were for many years. We continue to monitor both and work with Westminster Council and The Billy Fury Estate as necessary. We fans may pull the strings (and have done from the mid-80's) for a lot of what happens but it was the fans generosity, both on-line and otherwise, that paid for the new bench. We had to add to the £1,000 donated by you all as the price has increased since first collected and apologise for the delay, but the old bench was still serviceable and the past two years have been a little challenging to say the least.

We don't know at present whether music releases or other commemorative events will occur next year but it is always possible that releases, mooted or 'secret' may surface-we can only hope. Vinyl is very popular now, including within the rock 'n' roll/ rockabilly fraternity (just look at Vintage Rock and The UK Rock 'n' Roll magazine to see how healthy 50's /60's style rock music currently is -except on Radio 2 who think the 80's are the new 60's and are side-lining their best DJs), so who knows. At my age I prefer CDs /DVDs to any other medium, for ease mostly, and thank heaven for labels such as Jasmine who still push out our kind of music in CD format, courtesy of good old Roger Dopson and others. Lee Fry, our internet guru, and an independent Fury fanatic in his own right usually roots out whatever is happening and Jackie Clark can be contacted /will email out any information we discover, most importantly any scheduled Mill Hill gatherings. The SOF Team and partners wish everyone out there all the best for the coming festive season and hope that some silver linings appear for us all-at our age we deserve it that's for sure! **Chris Eley.**

The Billy Fury Connection-Originals, Covers and Influences.

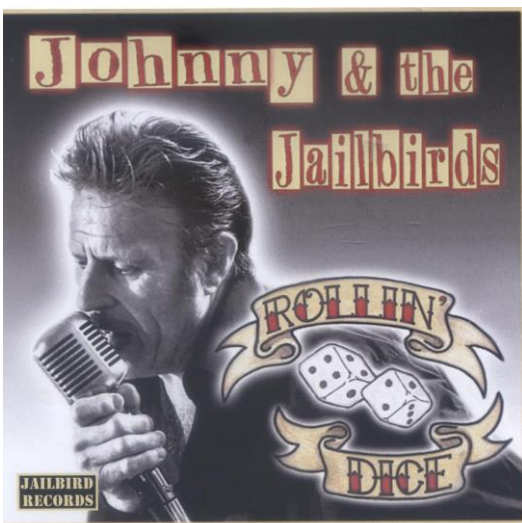
This issue was to include the connection between Ronnie/Billy and Country Music, referred to almost always by Billy by its older sixties style title-Country and Western. Of course Tennessee Ernie Ford and Frankie Laine sang a form of country or C & W ,as already covered ,but those who were not such all-round performers ,more country purists, also influenced Billy from the early years to the early sixties, and beyond to a degree. Hank Williams, Hank Snow, Slim Whitman, and others will feature hopefully as the connection in detail continues in future newsletters. I apologise to those who I know enjoy the connection articles but sometimes as they say, life gets in the way, and research by its nature needs to be extensive to be worthwhile, so please do bear with me until hopefully the next newsletter. **Chris Eley.**

NB How wonderful to hear the Billy classic Like I've Never Been Gone (my favourite song by anyone ever), being played in Emmerdale's Woolpack Inn during wonderful Fay's passing. Obviously there are fans in the cast ,crew or producers, certainly there are oldies in the cast! Only background-yet significant.

CD Corner with Chris Eley

There are three CDs which came my way recently and which I need to mention. The first is my old mate Johnny Red, a rocker since around 1973, former Billy Fury Tribute act, straight-up guy and someone who for my money has recorded the most authentic versions of several of Billy's early rock'n'roll numbers. Three were on the 2002 Without You tribute album released by Harry Whitehouse of billyfury.com, a man who did so much for Billy's legacy. Johnny Wall (Red) mostly writes and records his own excellent rock'n'roll and rockabilly numbers and on this release he uses a great band, whilst playing piano, rhythm guitar, harmonica and of course providing the lead vocals himself.

Johnny and the Jailbirds-Rollin' Dice. Jailbird Records. JJCD003



This 15 track release features a variety of differing tempos and styles, all related to rockabilly or rock'n'roll, but a refreshing change from straight head down rockabilly in its originality of approach.

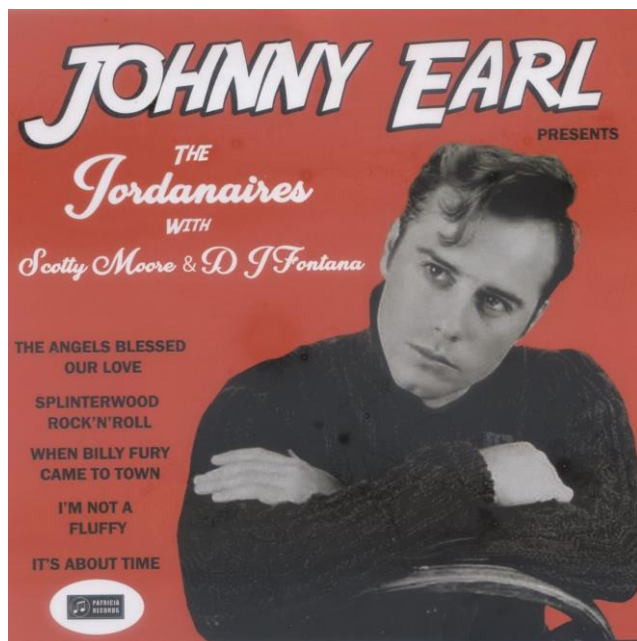


Such is the standard of all recordings that selecting favourites is difficult but the standouts for me are *Girl in Black*, *Like A Roadrunner*, *I Saw The World Change*, *All the way to Memphis* and the catchy and pleasant *Love Me Tonight*.

No Billy connection but a nice set for rockers/dancers everywhere. Around a tenner from Johnny via johnnyredrocknroll@tiscali.co.uk or mobile 07887 851427.

Johnny Earl Presents- Patricia Records. CDPR007

This 24 track collection, a career retrospective covering studio and live recordings, and featuring The Jordanares and Scotty Moore on some performances, is of interest to all Elvis fans but also Fury fans in particular because of a very competent and enjoyable version of *Gonna Type A Letter*; and perhaps more especially, the tribute song, *When Billy Fury Came To Town* (first played to me by my friend and fellow music fanatic Richard Furnell).





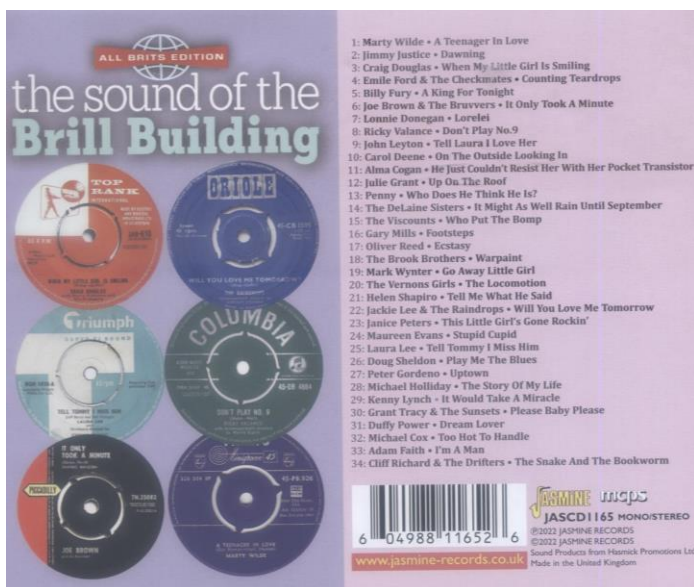
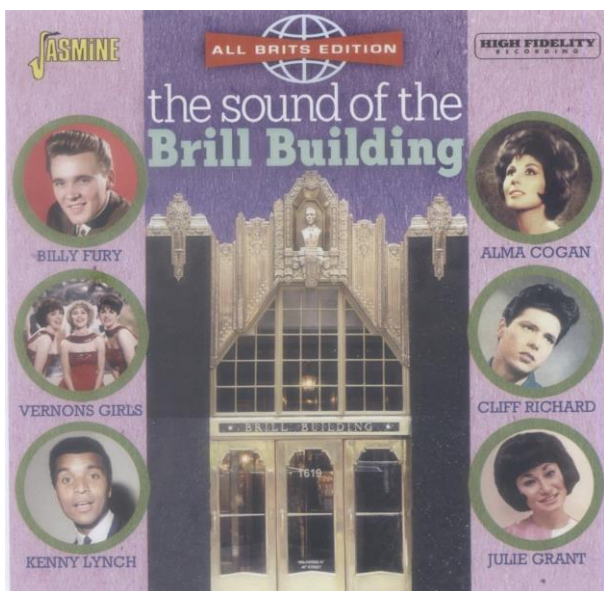
This is based I would think, as an idea, from the US country numbers such as when *Hank Williams Came To Town* and is quite enjoyable and catchy- the more so because of the Elvis inflection in Johnny's fine voice. There is a little too much echo on this particular track for my liking, but it is sincere, catchy and enjoyable and every fan must of course own it. The covers of Elvis's *Don't* and *Is It So Strange* are particularly authentic and *Dream Lover* (recorded over 25 years ago it seems) is great-strangely a sort of Elvis meets the Shadows. *Queen of the Night* is a standout.

I recall Johnny, a self-confessed Fury fan, visiting one of our Mill Hill gatherings years ago in the original small hall, but other than us saying hello I don't recall much else. He seemed pleasant and genuine and had a stunning girl in tow-as one would expect. He has released some fine recordings in his time, but this Billy tribute, self-penned like much of his work, is new to me, and very welcome with next January in mind. Those of us who were ever there when Billy Fury came to town were very lucky indeed! NB. Other than the obvious connection of both being excellent rock'n' roll acts, each artist once released a really fine 'contemporary' album-both worth checking out. Johnny Red became Johnny Rey for his release and Johnny Earl became Earle for his CD release, 'Is That All There Is'.

£12.00 from Bim Bam Records (023 80600329) or direct from Foot Tapping Records on-line.

The Sound of the Brill Building-All Brits Edition. JASCD 1165 (Jasmine Records)

This excellent 34 tracker (with Billy's version of *A King For Tonight* featured and quite rightly highly praised) showcases not only the incredible writing talent of those creative musical souls such as Goffin and King and so many others based in New York during the fifties and sixties, but the often superior recordings emanating from our sceptred isle. There are also three more compilations available, The All Girls, The All Boys and The Brill Building-This Magic Moment (mixed selection with Bobby Vee, Dion etc.) If you are still collecting CDs check out Jasmine-not forgetting the excellent Billy Fury Heard Them Here First advertised in our last newsletter. **On-line outlets or from Bim Bam-details above.**



The 70 Best Singles of the last 70 Years-Record Collector November 2022

This must have been a daunting and exhausting task, hard enough up to the mid-sixties alone, but how nice it was to see *Wondrous Place* as one of three ‘bubbling under’ 45 choices for 1960. Of course it would have been better for it to have been judged as the chosen single (only one for each year from November 1952 has been permitted), but nice anyway –below *When Will I Be Loved* by the Everly’s but above *Sweet Nothin’s* by Brenda Lee. Musician, music aficionado and Fury fan Bob Stanley cannot be faulted for his choice of top single-the superb *A Mess of Blues/Girl of My Best Friend* by Elvis. John Leyton copped the 1961 top slot with the wonderful *Johnny Remember Me*, which I guess is fair enough, as *Halfway to Paradise*, ruddy marvellous though it is, was not original or innovative, and not so influential. I admit to losing interest after about 1967! Nice one Bob. **Chris Eley.**

2023 calendars now available to order!

As we approach 2023 and the 40th anniversary of Billy’s passing, the Sound of Fury Fan Club proudly provide a preview of next years’ Fan Club Calendar.

Please note this years calendar includes a number of photographs from the private collection of Lee Fry. We believe you will be delighted to see these new images of Britain's’ greatest Rock n Roll Star

We hope you enjoy turning the pages each month as much as we have enjoyed building the calendar. The price is the same as last year (£10 – no extra charge for post and packaging) but numbers are limited, so please request your copy as soon as possible.

You can pay via bank transfer. Bank sort code: 40-46-23, account no. 81586688

Account name: Sound of Fury. You **MUST** put your full name as reference and email your address details to: treasurethesoundoffury@hotmail.com.

Alternatively, you can pay by cheque. Cheques to be made payable to SOUND OF FURY and sent to *The Sound of Fury PO Box 157 Frodsham. WA6 1BY*



Love and Best wishes for 2023 from “*The Sound of Fury*” team.