

# The Sound of Fury Fan Club Newsletter



## Issue 17: July 2023 - September 2023

Hi there!

Welcome to the latest issue of the SOF newsletter.

We hope you are all enjoying the summer. This edition features newly discovered Billy photographs from the early 60's and contains our Billy Connection series, this time focusing on Slim Whitman.. We also include some recently discovered Billy photographs, that have not been seen for over 60 years!

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

### Mill Hill Meeting – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023

It's been almost three years since our last official Fanclub meeting at Mill Hill, but we are pleased to announce the meeting in October will go ahead.

Fans are welcome to meet at the cemetery at 12:30pm and then go to the Hall afterwards (finish at 4pm), where there will be refreshments, Billy merchandise, a raffle and of-course plenty of Billy's music playing to sing along to! Any food (snacks for the tables) you could bring, would be very much appreciated. We would love to see you all there, catch up with old friends and celebrate Billy in the best way possible. Please note, there is a small admission cost of £3 per person.

The address for the hall is St. Paul's Church hall, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7 1QU.

Please do not park in the signed residents parking areas outside of the Church or Hall. Please also check the ULEZ (Ultra Low Emission Zone) guidelines on your car before you travel, as you may need to register and pay the charge.

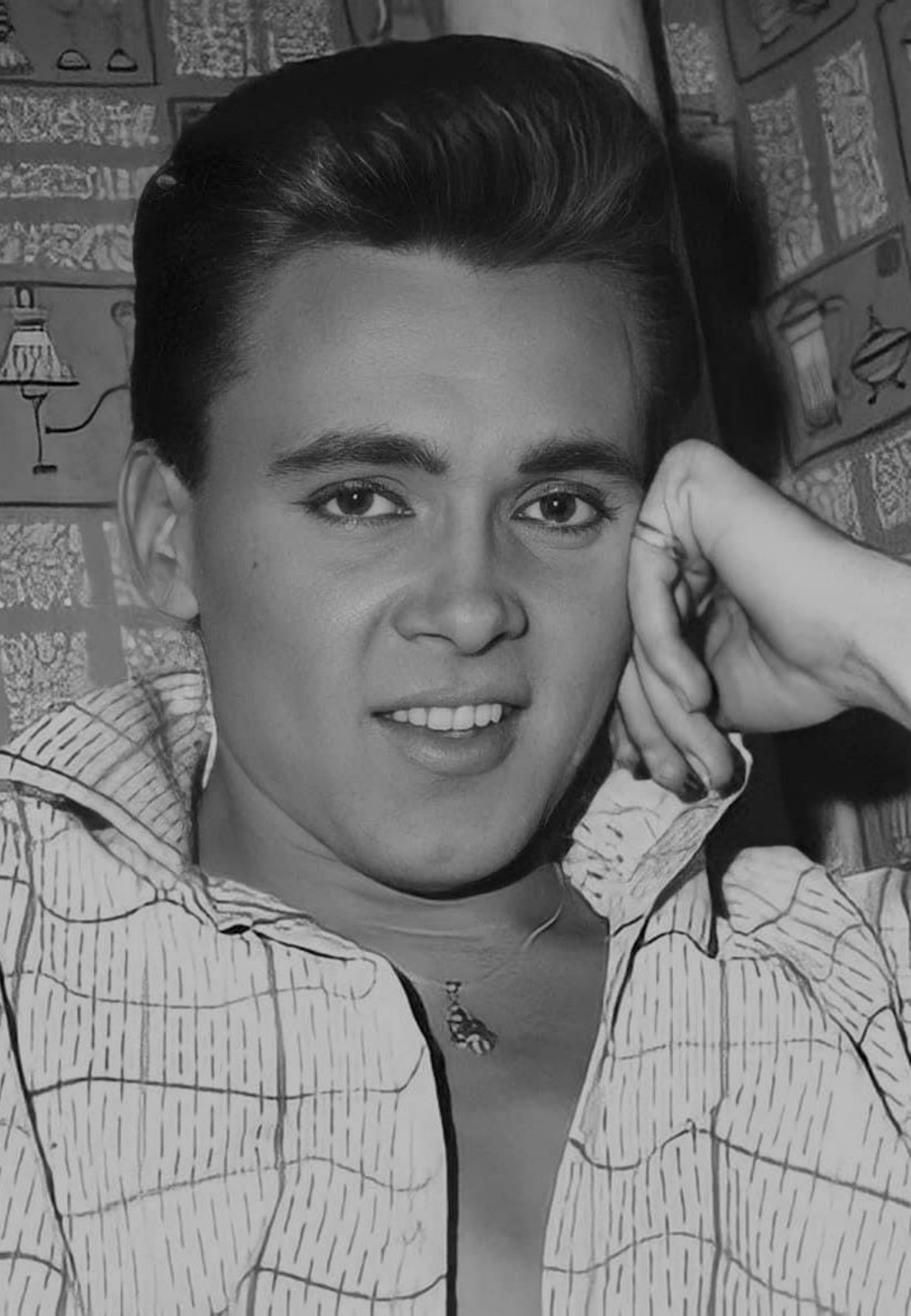


If you would like to receive paper copies of the newsletter, the cost is £10 per year, which covers all 4 newsletters.

Payment can be made by either bank transfer or cheques (should be made payable to 'Sound of Fury'). Thank you if you have already paid.

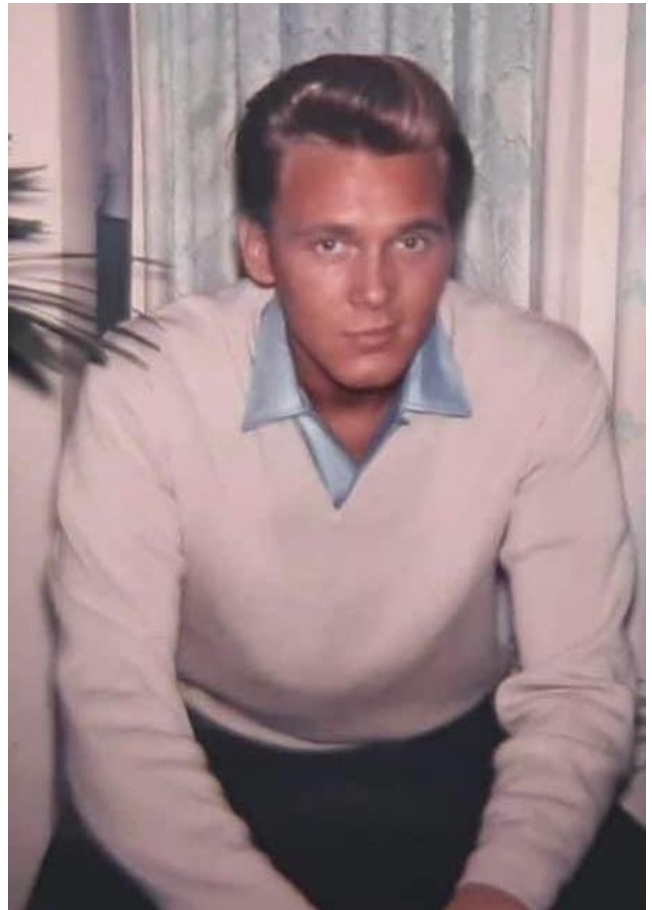
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[soundoffurysecretary@gmail.com](mailto:soundoffurysecretary@gmail.com)



## Recently discovered pictures of Billy!

Two previously unseen photos were recently discovered of Billy in a Hollywood hotel. These pictures were taken on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1962 (the day before Billy met Elvis Presley on the set of *Girls! Girls! Girls!*) They have remained unseen for over 60 years in the LA Public Library archives!



Credit and copyright to LA Public Library.

Another newly discovered unpublished picture of Billy, recently appeared on the Huddersfield HUB newspaper archive.

This picture shows Billy being interviewed by journalist Laurie Stead in the early 1960's.

What we wouldn't give to hear those tapes!

Copyright [huddesfieldhub.co.uk](http://huddesfieldhub.co.uk)





# THE BILLY FURY CONNECTION-ROOTS, COVERS AND INFLUENCES

## Part 7. Country Music-Slim Whitman- (20th January 1923-19<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

It's difficult to know exactly when and who the young Ronnie Wycherley was influenced by in terms of country music and in fact one of his major 'country' influences would be Ray Charles, a rhythm and blues and jazz giant, whose foray into country music was to be massive. This influence, which chart-wise became mainstream during the early 60s, will be covered later and the mighty Hank Williams of course has already been featured in this series. Next up will be the truly great and influential Hank Snow, but there is another world-wide country music artist that for my money, influenced Ronnie Wycherley, if only up to and during May 1958. This is when the 'Young man with a guitar' ,(no name recorded), walked into the Percy F Phillips Kensington 'Studio' in Liverpool and laid down on 78rpm disc the famous six tracks which all fans are now highly familiar with. One of those tracks was the self-penned *Love's A Callin'* and it is a very brief but haunting country song in the style of Slim Whitman's *Indian Love Call* (aka *When I'm Calling You*).



There is no actual attempt to yodel as such; it's more a plaintive wailing call taking over the second part of the song, but the title and the sound are akin to the Whitman sound and title. Others have cited other singers as possible influences for *Love's A Callin'* but my money is on Slim, despite the three year gap between the UK No.7 chart hit he experienced in July 1955 and the Kensington recording by Ronnie. After all, the four Elvis numbers recorded by Ronnie on that day dated from 1955 in one case, the others from 1956 so why should he not also have used this massive country UK hit from his own 15<sup>th</sup> year as an influence.

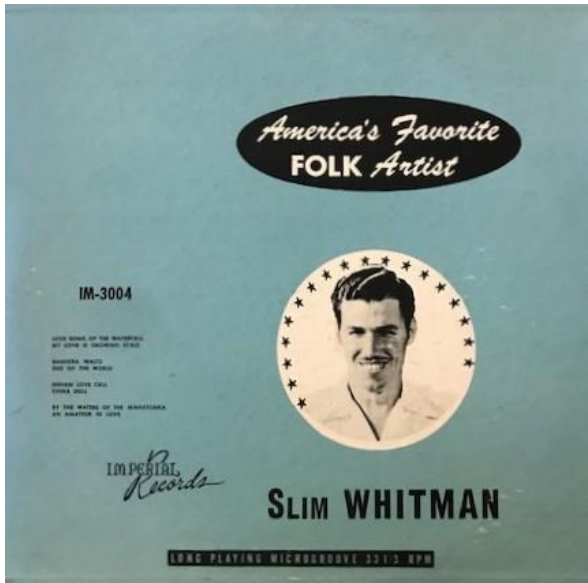
The Blue Yodeller Jimmie Rodgers is a very early and unlikely source and *Love's A Callin'* is not obviously reminiscent of any Hank Snow or Hank Williams track. Whether seeing Gene Autry and other singing cowboys up there on the silver screen fed into the young Ronnie's musical psyche we don't know, but it is likely. Many people of a certain age still hold golden memories of the Saturday morning matinee westerns in their hearts. The six Ronnie Wycherley recordings first surfaced spread over two Ozit label CDs, Billy Fury-Wondrous Place Live Ozit CD 002 in 1999, and the ridiculously entitled Billy Fury Sings A Buddy Holly Song-Ozit CD 56 in 2001. Since then all six tracks have been available all together on at least three CDs. The Sound of Fury Demos-Select SELCD 608, 2002, Billy Fury-The Sound and the Fury-(three CD collection) GVC 2028,from 2011 and the dear old Jasmine label double CD, Billy Fury-Maybe Tomorrow JASC 154, 2011.

Otis (some sources cite Ottis) Dewey Whitman Jr (Slim Whitman) was born in Oak Park Tampa Florida and was musically active (as the expression goes) from around 1945 until 2003. He died of heart failure in Florida aged 90. One respected source cites his birth year as 1924 but most favour 1923. Growing up he was greatly influenced by Jimmie Rodgers, his yodelling vocal being a mix of the Rodgers sound and that of 'cowboy' singer, Gene Autry. Slim served in the US Navy in the Pacific during WW 11, learning at the time to string and play his guitar left handed due to an extensive finger injury.

Later (Sir) Paul McCartney would allegedly cite Slim as an inspiration for him to play left-handed and the image of Slim with guitar was one recalled by George Harrison as being the first entertainer he ever saw with a guitar-Liverpool was obviously impacted by the country legend. Michael Jackson was allegedly to cite Whitman as one of his Top 10 singers! According to writer Paul Hazel for a while after the war Slim became a professional baseball player. A shy man with a stammer, from radio appearances he made during the 40s he attracted the attention of one Tom Parker, who was managing the highly popular Eddie Arnold, and who would one-day become the manager of the greatest music star the world would ever know. Mentored by (Colonel) Tom Parker, Slim signed to RCA cutting around ten tracks.



Nothing happened, but on performing on the Louisiana Hayride ‘Cradle of the Stars’ at the suggestion of Hank Williams Slim got a break that would send him on the path to fame with the recording labels Imperial, London, United Artists and others. Whilst performing one of his career best songs-*Love Song of the Waterfall*, the steel guitarist played a rogue high note which followed Slim’s yodelling call. Liking it, Slim kept in in and ‘The Man With the Singing Guitar’ tag became part of his trademark (and an album title). Together with his high-baritone, with its distinctive and beautiful lilting sound, natural falsetto and occasional yodel, his style was now defined and would be loved all over the world, as indeed would he and his Christian and family values. He was a deacon at a Baptist church and was married to Alma ‘Jerry’ Crist for 67 years. Some were critical of his melding of country and ‘folk’ music with ‘crooning’ and easy listening, and whilst this is patently unfair, given the quality of his work and the later success of the likes of Jim Reeves and other ‘country crossovers’, perhaps that’s why, sadly, during my visit to Nashville in 2017, this wonderful performer and songwriter had still not been inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. He was however given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

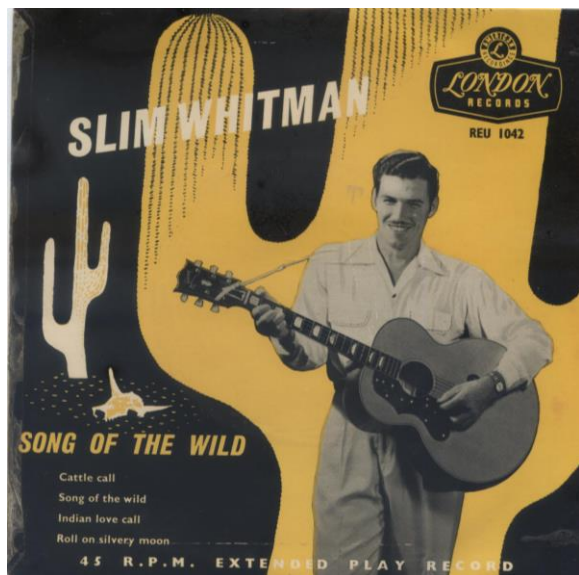


Like many US artists, Slim was highly popular in Europe and the UK , especially in the 1970s, even more than in the US, and up to 2004, he had spent seventy seven weeks on the UK singles charts and sixty one on the album charts-the latter mostly from 1976-79, achieving eight Top 10 singles and seven hit albums. There was a new western themed final album, *Twilight on the Trail* issued in 2010. From 1976 to 1979 Slim was voted Best International Male Vocalist at the International Country Music Awards. I was privileged to catch his date in Worthing on his 2002 farewell tour, supported by his flamboyant son Byron (a singer, performer and producer in his own right) and the wonderful country rocker and rockabilly performer, Narvel Felts.

It was a terrific night, watching two country legends from the 50s-70s , and while Slim’s vocal power may have lessened the sound was still beautiful and unique, and people around me were also astounded by Narvel’s stunning version of *Great Balls of Fire* and his country ballad upper register.

Knowing that in 1955 when Ronnie was aged fifteen and really into music Slim spent nineteen weeks at No.1 in the UK with the lovely *Rose Marie* and then twelve weeks, peaking at No 7, with *Indian Love Call*, and being aware that 78rpm singles and possibly early vinyl was being brought into the family via the merchant marine, it’s not too much of a stretch to believe that Ronnie had heard records by Slim, especially *Indian Love Call*, leading him to write his own interpretation of that style and hit.





We know Ronnie loved C & W music because of its sad sentiment and he is on record saying how he liked this style of music, it suiting his teenage angst in terms of love and loss, more than other music of the period. By 1958 Ronnie or his family side may even have owned a 78 rpm single of 'Love Call' or the 1955 EP '*Call of the Wild*' (one grandmother had a record player and some records), as Billy related in interview on-air during his EMI years. It is also possible that some LPs came Ronnie's way, such as the 1956/57 Imperial ten-inch 'America's Favourite Folk Artist' or others. Radio airplay was another means by which Ronnie would have heard Slim's recordings. Slim did tour successfully and made appearances in the UK prior to 1958, notably during 1957, so this is another possibility for a musical sponge like young Ronnie Wycherley.

An appearance at the London Palladium in 1956 was a landmark occasion with Slim apparently being the first country star to appear at the prestigious venue.

In 1957 he appeared in the music film Jamboree with a host of US rock'n' roll stars. Earlier, with *Rose Marie* (from the famous light operetta) remaining so long at No.1, together with *Indian Love Call* being in the Top 10, it had ensured a high UK profile for the singer and with the former songs success, had created a record chart stay that would stand until Bryan Adams came along with (*Everything I Do*) *I Do It For You*, some 36 years later. Slim Whitman also recorded songs that Billy Fury would later record and perform, such as *Candy Kisses*, *Unchain My Heart* and *Lovesick Blues*, but the only reasonably sure connection would seem to be *the Indian Love Call* with *Love's A Callin'*. **Chris Eley.**

If you have not heard this wonderful performer-do give him a spin! There are numerous CD Compilations out there and no doubt downloads for the more internet minded. A truly great artist.

**Thanks and Acknowledgments:** Wikipedia, Guinness Book of British Hit Singles and Albums 2004, Discogs, Paul Hazel (The Essential Slim Whitman-Readers Digest).







# Donation to Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital in Billy's name

One hundred pounds was donated by the Fanclub to the wonderful Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital in Billy's name.

Brent Lodge treats, rehabilitates and responsibly releases injured wildlife casualties and orphans. As we all know, animal care and conservation was very close to Billy's heart, and we know he would be helping these animals himself, if he was still with us.

Below is the acknowledgment letter from Asha at Brent Lodge.

You can find more details about them online <https://www.brentlodge.org/> or telephone 01243 641 672



Brent Lodge Bird & Wildlife Trust  
"We provide care and rehabilitation to wildlife casualties  
to get them healthy for release back to their natural habitats."



30/04/2023

Dear Sound of Fury Members,

On behalf of Brent Lodge Wildlife Hospital, I am writing to thank you for generously donating £100.

The hospital is busy caring for the seasonal influx of baby bird and mammal admissions. With another busy spring/summer season already underway it is essential that we are well-prepared for the months ahead. This will mean a healthy stock of supplies to clean the hospital wards and food to feed our growing number of patients. We will also need an increase in staff and a volunteer recruitment to provide round the clock feeds and care.

Wildlife admissions at this time of year are often orphans and will be suffering from stress, dehydration, malnourishment and sometimes nasty infections. Once in our care they are examined and kept warm in our incubators. Most of them will initially need hand-feeding, fluid therapy plus regular observations while they stabilise. For those patients with injuries or infections they may require veterinary tests and treatments or a course of medicines to treat their conditions. Once they are assessed to be fit and healthy, they will move to an outside enclosure to prepare for their release.

Construction for our new Patient Admission Building, complete with veterinary treatment rooms, has almost finished. With the implementation of an onsite wildlife veterinary surgeon and nurse the new building will help us provide a prompt veterinary diagnosis and treatment service, and quarantine facilities for wildlife casualties. Through successful treatment and rehabilitation, we aim to release hundreds of healthy wild animals back to their natural habitats, increase local biodiversity and ensure local habitats continue to thrive with healthy wildlife.

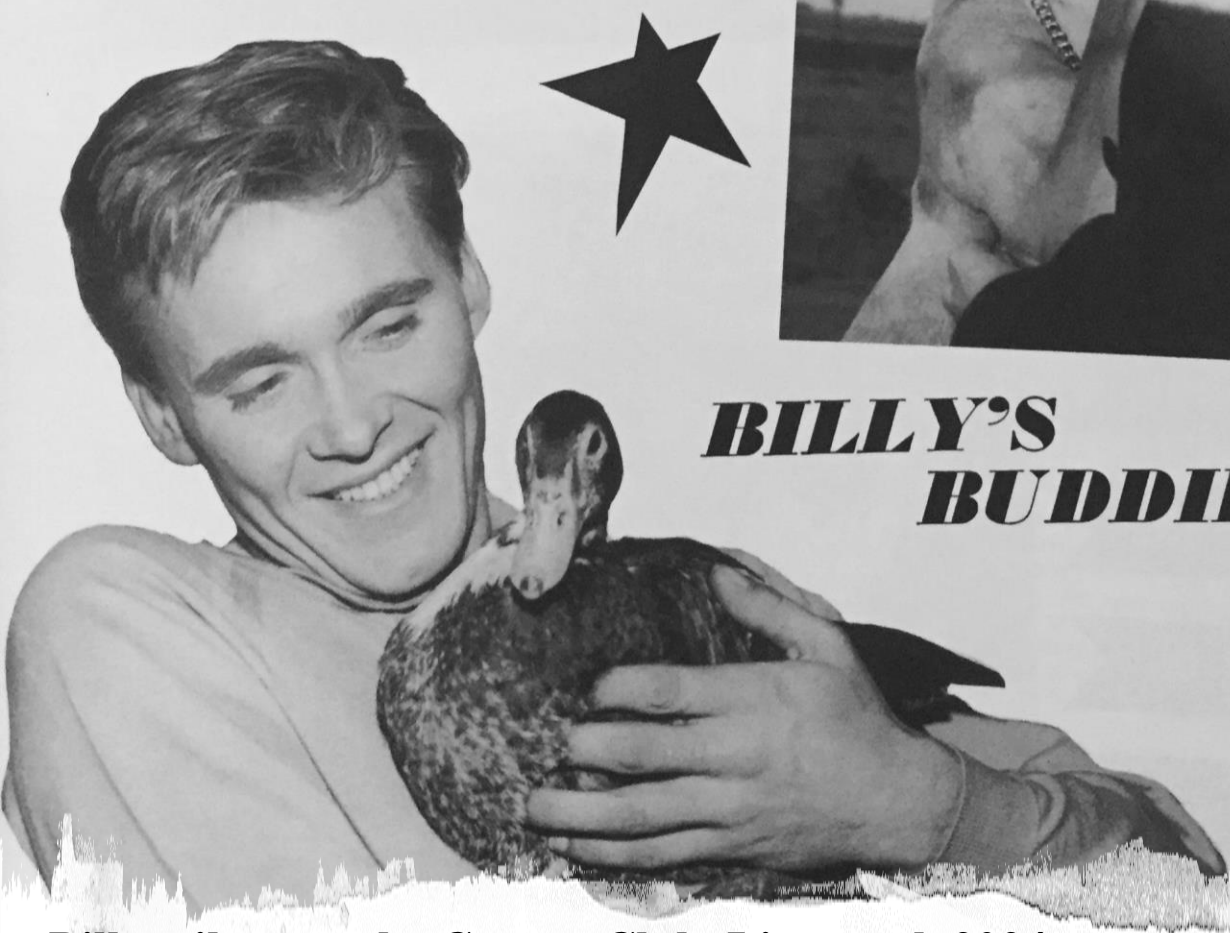
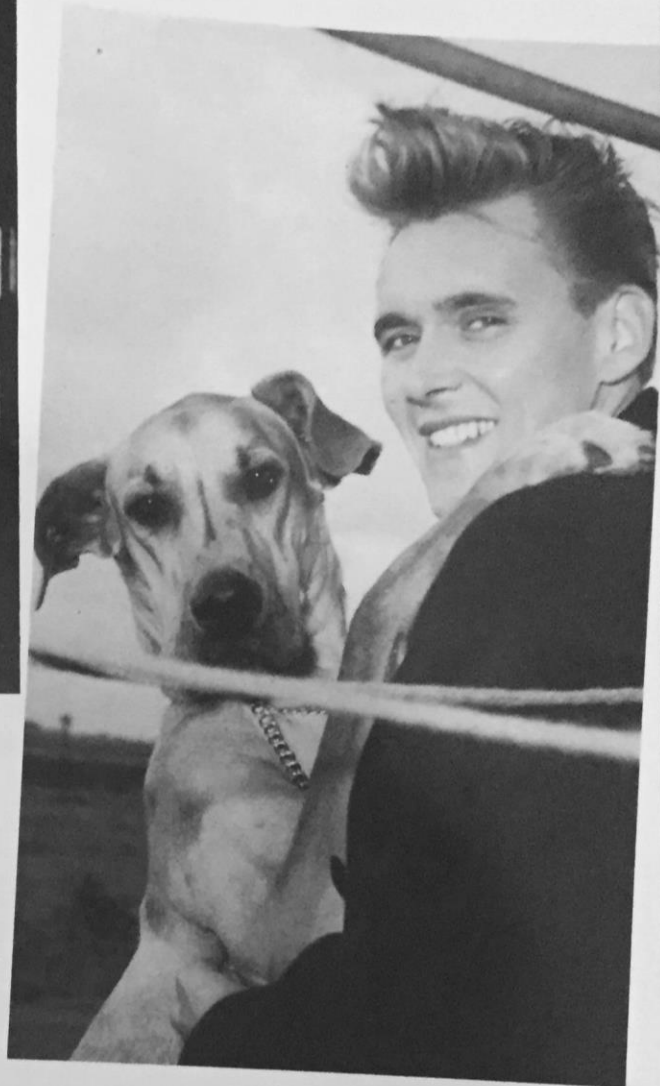
Thank you for your support as we embark on this milestone project set for opening in summer 2023. We hope this will make a real and lasting difference to wildlife in our care and their chances of survival.

Kind regards

Asha







## ***BILLY'S BUDDIES***

### **Billy tribute at the Cavern Club, Liverpool, 2024**

Limited tickets are still available for the fantastic Colin Paul & The Persuaders Billy tribute, performed at the the famous Cavern Club in Liverpool on 28th January 2024, (the anniversary of Billy's passing). Tickets are £15 per person.

Doors open at 1pm. Show starts at 2pm. Finish 5pm

Don't miss out! Tickets on sale now - <https://www.cavernclub.com>





# **Blackpool Holidays Ltd.**

Diane Wardle  
*presents*

## **Rockin Like Fury**

### **Billy Fury Tribute Week-End**

## **at The Savoy Hotel,**

Queens Promenade, Blackpool FY2 9SJ

**17th - 19th November 2023**

*starring*

The return of the fabulous  
**Colin Paul & The Persuaders**  
also **Colin Paul Solo Show**

"A massive welcome back for one of our favourites"



**Mark Keeley**

**Rockin' DJ's Neil Williams**  
and **Andy Cordwell**

Appearing for the first time - please welcome

**The Jets**

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast and Sunday Lunch

**ENQUIRIES** - Telephone (01253) 722300 (24hr answerphone)