

The Sound of Fury Fan Club

Newsletter

Issue 13: July - September 2022



Hi there!

We hope you are enjoying the summer and this glorious hot weather.

There has been some recent exciting new Billy and Billy related record and CD releases.....further details below.

Just a gentle reminder about newsletter subscriptions. If you do want to receive paper copies in the post, the cost is £10.40 per year. Thank you to those that have already paid. As always, email copies are 100% free.

Fantastic news - both the Liverpool (July) and Blackpool (Nov) Billy weekends this year have now sold out! Still tremendous support for our Billy!

The new bench for Mill Hill cemetery is on order. This should be installed in a couple of months time. A big thank you to everyone who donated. It has taken a while to arrange and was set back during COVID restrictions, but back on track now.

The Mill Hill meeting on 2nd October is planned to go ahead. The plan is to meet at Billy's graveside & then St Paul's church hall from 1 until 4 p.m. Merchandise on sale. This will be the first meeting since the COVID-19 outbreak, and it would be wonderful to see friends, old and new. An afternoon of music, memorabilia, raffle etc. £3 entrance fee. Any buffet donations will be gratefully received. Tea & coffee provided.

We will obviously make every effort to ensure COVID-19 safety procedures are in place, such as hand-sanitizer on entry and spacing where applicable. Obviously if you do attend, you can wear a face-mask, but these will not be compulsory and are a personal choice.

Our very good friend Colin Paul, who is still performing by the way, has set up a channel dedicated to Billy and produced a different slant on some of Billy's performances and appearances.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzRvk_xUOcDhLqy9J9IKQCA

Give it a whirl!

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

New Releases....

MAYBE
TOMORROW

Margo
Don't knock upon my door
Gonna type a letter



**BILLY
FURY**

Billy Fury-Maybe Tomorrow-Ten inch Yellow Vinyl EP. IKON Records-Icon 03.

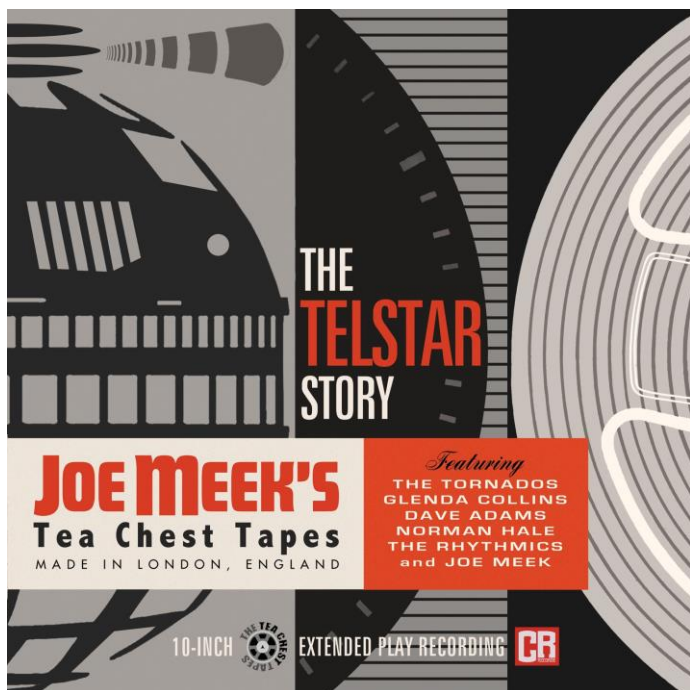
This collectable vinyl pressing features both sides of Billy's first two 45s, each track in mono and stereo. For me *Margo* in stereo does not work as well as the others, but then I do have hearing loss. I assume that the stereo tracks are an amalgam of the genuine stereo originals, with added computerised stereo where needed-recently all the rage with Elvis 50s and 70's mono output -with mixed results. Nice idea, nice package, but it would be nice to have the technical information to go with it and some photo inserts or sleeve notes on a card. **Available on-line from Warbash Records or e-bay. Those without PCs could try Vinyl Tap Shop 01484517720**

Joe Meek Tea-Chest Tapes – First Two Releases!

These incredible recordings, hidden away for so long are now starting to see the light of day, with the first two releases available for pre-order in two 10" EP's, taken straight from the tapes! 'The Telstar Story' and 'The Heinz Sessions Vol 1' are both available to pre-order now from Cherry Red Records.

www. <https://www.cherryred.co.uk/> or telephone +44(0)208 996 3120

We cannot wait for the Billy and the Tornados one!



Darrel Higham-Made in England.

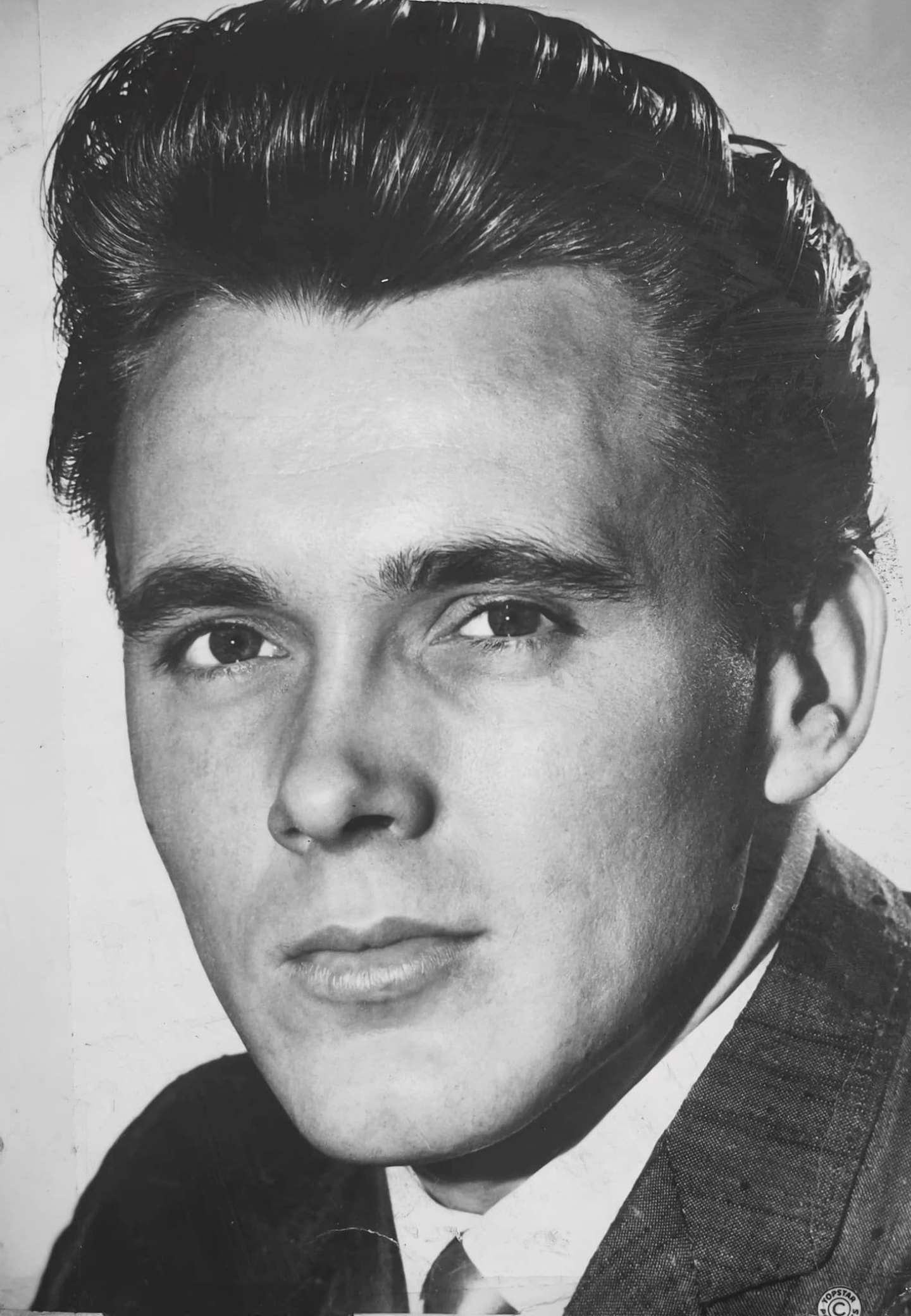
Foot Tapping Records FT 215

Darrel has recorded several Billy Fury songs in the past including a fine version of *In Summer* and on this UK Rockabilly/Rock'n' Roll set he turns in a great raunchy version of Billy's *Gonna Type A Letter*, the highlight of the album for me. Other offerings on this 12 track collection are Cliff's *Dynamite* (which is toughened up), Cuddly Dudley's HMV offering, *Miss In-Between* (where the whole number might in all respects be Eddie Cochran-great stuff), and two Marty covers. *Bad Boy* lacks the plaintive subtlety of the superb original, yet does work on this edgier level whilst *Your Loving Touch* is a nice touch-and also works well.



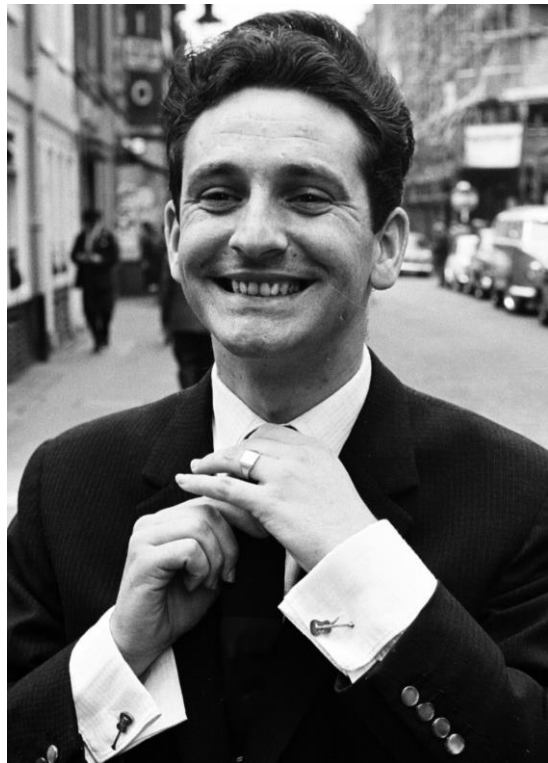
Tracks such as Johnny Luck's 1958 Fontana platter, *Play Rough*, from the film *Violent Playground*, betters the original whilst *I'm Coming Home* is a new one to me, very Stray Cats to these ears. Tommy Steele, is covered with *Rock With The Caveman* and *Rebel Rock*. *Just Too Late* is catchy, a nice version being recorded in 1960 by Peter Jay. *Jelly Baby* was recorded in 1958 by Jimmy Miller and The Barbeques. In closing there is an enjoyable nod to Lonnie Donegan with *Have A Drink On Me*. Perhaps one day, Darrel will record a whole album of Billy covers, putting guitar in on some of those sixties tracks where arguably it should have been included before.

Purchase direct from Foot Tapping Records or Bim Bam Records. Tel. 023 80600329



THE BILLY FURY CONNECTION-ROOTS, COVERS AND INFLUENCES

Part 5. Lonnie (Anthony James) Donegan-(29th April 1932-3rd November 2002) and the Skiffle Explosion.



Born in Glasgow (his father was Scottish-his mum Irish) this dedicated, driven entertainer has been cited by some as ‘The most successful and influential recording artist (in the UK) before the Beatles.’ The first UK Male Artist to score two Top 10 Hits in the U.S. (winning a gold disc for *Rock Island Line*) and thereby successfully ‘taking coal to Newcastle’ in the way the Beatles would eventually do, Donegan achieved twenty four successive Top 30 singles in the UK (including three No.1s), and seven hit albums. Just as Elvis would become so much more than ‘The King of Rock’n’ Roll’, Lonnie was so much more than just ‘The King of Skiffle’ (how people love labels!), and songs such as the lovely calypso styled *Love Is Strange*, *I Wanna Go Home* (later a Top 10 hit as the *Sloop John B* for the Beach Boys), *The Party’s Over*, *500 Miles*, saucy comedy tracks with Max Miller, and many others displaying his musical diversity, especially including the gospel, blues, folk mix classic *Bury My Body* and *House of The Rising Sun* (years prior to the Animals classic).

What a culture shock Donegan must have unleashed in the UK with songs that were, in their sheer rawness, the total antitheses of most mid-fifties chart fodder. But he does deserve the title, because although some others (i.e Nancy Whiskey) may have handled the genre more subtly and sweetly, no other ‘skiffler’ had his drive, presence, power, audience or chart popularity. Like so many Brits I hated his No.2 hit from 1959-*The Battle of New Orleans*, (I was only ten years old but already proudly British), but loved *My Old Man’s A Dustman*. Now I realise how good *Rock Island Line* and others really were; so close to rock’n’ roll, (which Lonnie apparently disliked) and why he could perform in the USA alongside the best rock’n’ roll acts such as the

seminal and innovative Rock’n’ Roll Trio (Johnny and Dorsey Burnette with Paul Burlison). They allegedly admired Lonnie so much that they also backed him during a tour!

Donegan was undoubtedly a major influence on his generation and with the melding of so many U.S music forms into his own style, inspired numerous would-be performers to take up the guitar and just as importantly look to the source of his inspiration; black and white American roots music, (blues, gospel, folk, country, and jazz), the latter having so many forms within the genre.

By 1954 at the very least, the idea of having ‘A small group within a jazz band, essentially led by a singer with a guitar, washboard, bass accompaniment and a type of song of the rural blues category’ had taken hold and recordings were being made in the UK by these ‘sub-groups’, as shown on the rear





cover of the 1957 release (of 1954 recordings) on the Decca label EP-The Lonnie Donegan Skiffle Group. Soon Donegan recordings and those by other skiffle groups would include drums ,electric guitars etc. producing a much fuller sound and guitar solos. Examples of this are *Cumberland Gap* and *Don't You Rock Me Daddio*. Having his first chart success whilst on Decca (highest position No.8 in January 1956) with *Rock Island Line*, Lonnie was soon poached by Pye where he enjoyed a string of hits.

The term 'Skiffle' was used in the USA in several black music releases from at least the 1920's, and was very broad in application, meaning mostly some kind of musical 'coming together', a sort of impromptu jamming session. By the time this musical form had permeated the UK the term was much more narrow,

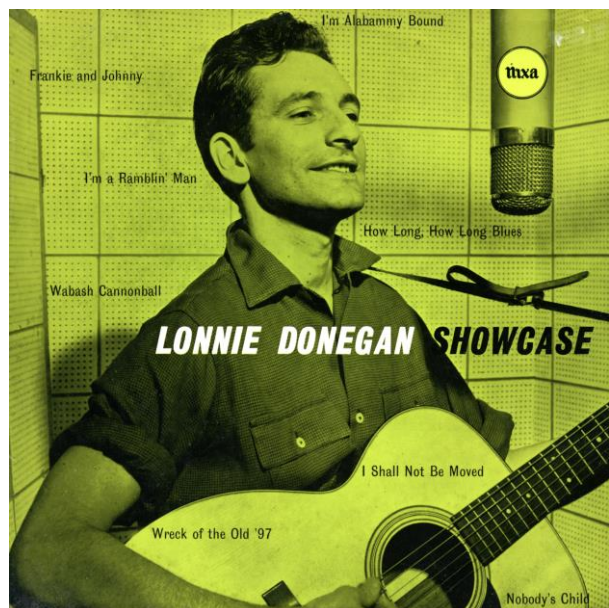
perhaps being coined as claimed, by exponents Ken and Bill Colyer. Lonnie partially owed his success to the variety of his styles but despite that and his talent, his hit streak ended in August 1962 with the frantic *Pick A Bale of Cotton*. Aside from the hits of Lonnie Donegan it seems that only a handful of skiffle groups charted, and then only during 1957, despite the genre being performed much earlier, including during jazz band concerts in 1954. Just as with previous music forms and performers, and indeed later ones, skiffle did not take place in a vacuum, occurring alongside the 'pop' music of the fifties and from the end of 1955 (with the advent of *Shake Rattle and Roll* by Bill Haley hitting the No. 2 slot), rock' n' roll as well. It was from 1956 that everything really started to happen with *Rock Island Line* at No.2 in January alongside the record then at No 1 which really started rock'n' roll in the general public's consciousness-*Rock Around The Clock*. Still a classic of the genre I defy anyone not dead from the neck up (or waist down) to sit still when that's played! We know from 'Wondrous Face', the excellent Fury biography by Spencer Leigh that the young Ronnie Wycherley was not too enamoured of Haley as an icon but loved Elvis –the male performer that had it all as far as Ronnie and millions of others were concerned (and still are), but the impact of Haley was massive at the time. Elvis's *Heartbreak Hotel* (quite unearthly and more of a blues really) was not even as 'rocking' as *Rock Island Line* but when the sheer power-house that is *Blue Suede Shoes* hit later in '56 it was Elvis all the way. Certainly by 1957, as we shall see later, Elvis was the single most influential performer and recording artist in the life of the soon to be coolest ever UK performer-Billy Fury.

Other than knowing that Ronnie left school aged fifteen in July 1955, eventually joining Ellison's Engineering, we can only guess at the time-span spent on the Mersey tugboats-his next employment venture following sacking from Ellison's. A clue is that the skiffle group on his tug group allegedly performed *Singing The Blues* (presumably among the skiffle numbers), which was a No. 1 hit for Tommy Steele and Guy Mitchell in December 1956-skiffle it was not. Chances are that Ronnie was still on the tugs during much of 1957-before his final employment at Joshua Harris's store, prior to his discovery in 1958. During his time with the Alexandra Shipping Company the young Ronnie Wycherley apparently named and formed part of the jokingly named 'Formby Sniffle Gloup', based on the tugboat the Formby, but we cannot be sure to what extent Lonnie Donegan and other skiffle artists impacted the teenager. We know from 'Wondrous Face' that Ronnie and the 'Gloup' performed at some venues, local cafes and clubs at Aintree but exactly when and where we will probably never know. We can assume that later gigs, allegedly organised by Margo King after Ronnie had left the Formby and the other tug he had been transferred to (an unhappy one which he left), would have most likely consisted of rock'n' roll songs, some country no doubt as Ronnie loved Hank Williams and Hank Snow, and perhaps some skiffle tracks as well. Margo recalls that some gigs during Ronnie's time at Joshua Harris were at Aintree, so perhaps Ronnie revisited his skiffle gig locations. Perhaps his tug mates still joined him as his departure from the tugs may not have meant the end of the 'Sniffle Gloup', although that is the likely outcome.



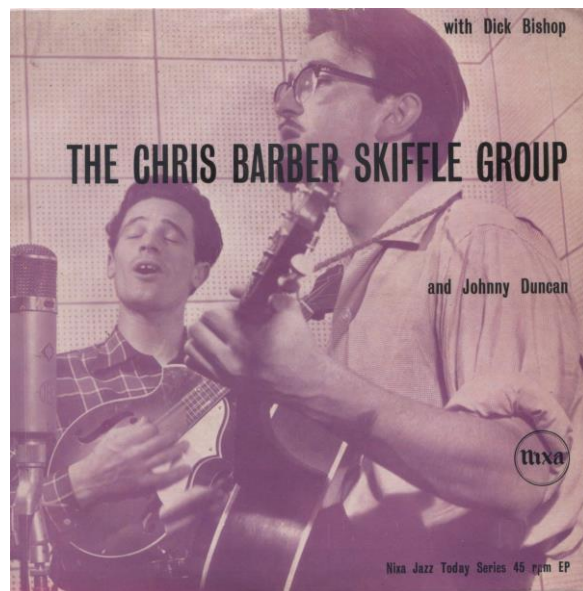
From his time on the tugs onwards, almost certainly he was on one of them during 1956, we know Ronnie spent some of the good money earned (£7.00 per week) on records. Most early Donegan Pye releases came out on 78rpm only but by 1957 there were vinyl EPs and LPs. One of the major releases was a ten inch album which Ronnie could have owned in addition to any 78s/45s of Donegan and others. 'The Lonnie Donegan Showcase' featured two songs that Ronnie could have known already direct from his country heroes (his sailor Uncle Ronnie brought back country records).

Equally he could have heard *Nobody's Child* and *I'm Alabammy (Alabama) Bound* from this hit album from November '56, before getting into Ray Charles, which was probably through Eddie Cochran in 1960-but could have been earlier. *Leave My Woman Alone*, recorded by Lonnie but only ever performed on radio, and perhaps live on stage by Billy, is another connection, although Billy was most likely deep into Ray Charles and The Everly's prior to performing it, whilst Lonnie was influenced by the folk version by the Kingston Trio. It is unlikely though that Ronnie/Billy would not have appreciated the musical melange of U.S. roots music being arranged and played by Lonnie and certainly playing the numbers learned from others in the 'Gloop,' and from records and radio he could well have liked the medium-although nothing like as much as he did rock'n'roll, country and rhythm and blues.



Much of Donegan's music was not only rooted in folk but very blues orientated, as this ten inch outing shows, and a far cry from the hard driving 'pure skiffle' tracks such as *Rock Island Line*, *John Henry*, the powerful and risqué *Digging My Potatoes* etc., and certainly from the novelty songs such as *Does Your Chewing Gum Lose It's Flavour*, *The Commanchero's*, a Western song from 1962, complete with Mexican brass, is highly enjoyable. Lonnie could also write songs such as *Ham and Eggs*, and later classics such as *I'll Never Fall In Love Again*-a hit for Tom Jones, so Ronnie may also have been encouraged by that aspect. In truth Donegan seemed happier at arranging and adapting numbers he had not written (for which he gained much criticism), including traditional ones and the songs of his

influencers-Woody Guthrie, Huddie Ledbetter (Leadbelly) and others. It's worth mentioning that Ronnie would also have heard, and probably played skiffle tunes by the other exponents around, some of whom experienced hits during 1957. The Chris Barber Skiffle Group, The Ken Colyer Skiffle Group, The Vipers Skiffle Group, The Chas McDevitt Skiffle Group (especially *Freight Train* with engaging vocal by Nancy Whiskey), Alexis Corner's Skiffle Group and Johnny Duncan and his Blue Grass Boys. Dickie Bishop warrants a mention but there are too many other musicians and line-ups to include here. As Billy Fury, in March 1959, Ronnie was to undertake a short tour with Johnny Duncan and Jill Day.



Texas born Johnny had left the Chris Barber band (where he had replaced Donegan) and formed his own-very likely singing the bands three Top 30 UK chart hits, especially the catchy one we all remember, *Last Train to San Fernando*.

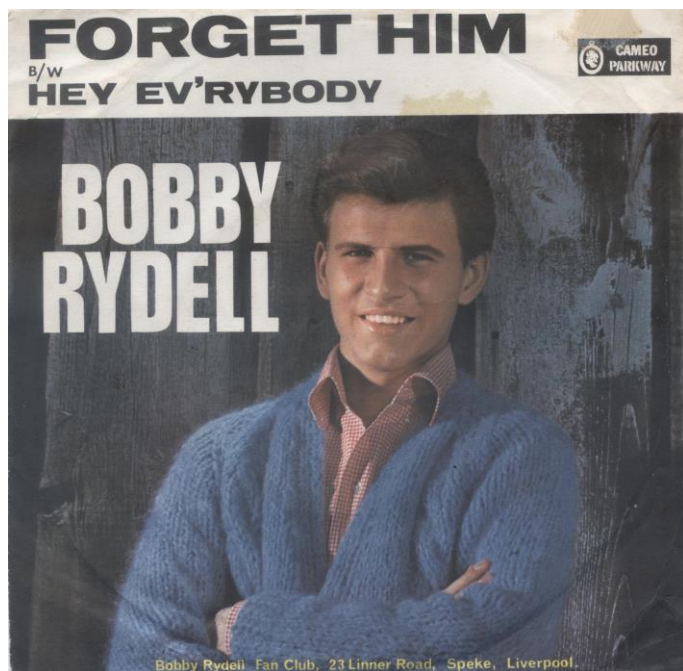
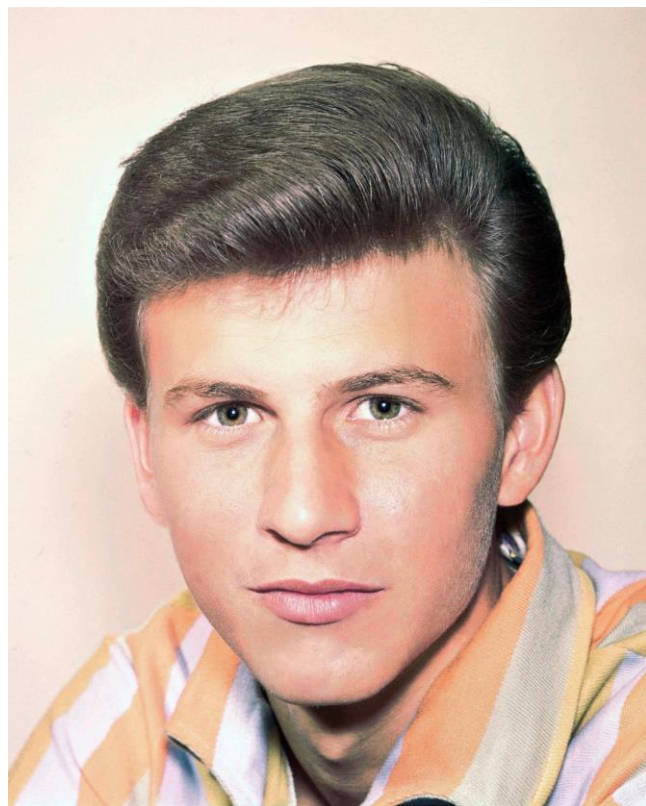
Among singers of our generation there were several that we know played skiffle before becoming rock'n' roll /pop artists; Reg Smith (Marty Wilde) and the Hound Dogs. Roy Taylor (Vince Eager)-The Harmonica Vagabonds/Vagabonds, Harry Webb (Cliff Richard)-The Dick Teague Skiffle Group, John Lennon & Paul McCartney-The Quarrymen, Terry Nelhams (Adam Faith) and The Worried Men. Both Marty and Adam have been fulsome in their praise of Lonnie Donegan and his introduction of US black and other roots music into the UK (Marty was right to praise Lonnie's fine version of *Frankie and Johnny*). Whatever the truth, the fact that Ronnie Wycherley played some form of skiffle on /and or off the tugs provides enough evidence of the link between him, the genre and therefore, the 'Skiffler -in-Chief', Lonnie Donegan.

NB: For those persons wishing to know more about the skiffle era and in particular, Lonnie Donegan, I highly recommend *Puttin' On The Style-The Lonnie Donegan Story* (2003) by Liverpool's own musical oracle, Spencer Leigh (with John Firminger). Finbarr International ISBN 0 9529500 2 2. *Wondrous Face*, Spencer's excellent 2005 book about Billy Fury has also provided information, and the late and much lamented Stuart Colman's excellent essay in the 2002 *Sequel/Castle* three CD set-Lonnie Donegan-Rock Island Line-The Singles Anthology 1955-67- has also been invaluable. I highly recommend the set, and also the budget 3 CD set *Lonnie Donegan & The Original Hits of the Skiffle Explosion-Big 3 BT 3008*, 2009, which features groups and or singers other than Donegan on the third CD. *Lonnie Donegan & His Skiffle Group- Gold* is a digipak three CD 2021 budget set-BMG Crimson CD641 (from HMV) but lacks *Diggin' My Potatoes*. Perhaps because of my age I have no special love for skiffle (or jazz for that matter) but Spencer's engaging book and the above CDs have ensured that I do have some interest in the life and music of this great performer, and through him, some other exponents. Perhaps not in the way of those who lived through the era, but enough to no longer dismiss the music out of hand. I might have been at Primary School during most of the skiffle years, but researching for this Fury connection has reminded me that many pre-1960 recordings like *Tom Dooley*, *Freight Train* and others are indelibly stamped in my memory-even the dreaded *Battle of New Orleans*. Actually, having visited the Chalmette Battlefield site and knowing that, on balance, we won the war of 1812 and have been friends and respectful allies for some time now -I no longer feel quite so bad about it! **Chris Eley**

Acknowledgements and thanks: Spencer Leigh, the late Stuart Colman, Del Richardson, Billy Sloan, Graham Hunter, Guinness Book of Hit Singles and Albums.

Bobby Rydell (Robert Louise Ridarelli)-April 26th 1942-April 5th 2022.

There being a connection between Bobby and Billy Fury, he would have eventually featured in the series of 'Connection' articles being put out in the SOF Newsletter, but given his recent passing we felt some mark of respect was due now. This Italian/American singer was highly talented, versatile and highly successful, continuing to perform into his later years. *Wild One* was his only UK Top 10 (there were eight UK Top 50 hits), and no hit albums. It is estimated that he sold 25 million records world-wide, receiving gold discs along the way. By all accounts a thoroughly decent, humorous and likeable entertainer he visited the UK during the early 60's, recorded in London and met Billy Fury. There were probably earlier UK visits but we believe the one where *Forget Him* was recorded was early in 1963, as recalled by the songs composer Mark Anthony (Tony Hatch). The single stood at its highest position, No 13 by May 23rd, being fourteen weeks on the chart. Tony was later to say that he liked Billy's recording, as did Bobby who said so to music promoter Graham Hunter.



Quite what they both thought of Billy omitting a verse we don't know-but when given new backing in 1983 it turned out to be one of the loveliest recordings Billy, or anyone else, ever made. Who selected it for recording by Billy, indeed did he choose it himself, or was it Hal Carter, his producer at the time. We cannot be sure. A great choice-whoever it was. Billy apparently did own a copy of a demo of the original. As for Bobby, in addition to TV, film and radio appearances surviving we have a fine recording legacy including his only UK Top 10, *Wild One*, with some of my favourites; *Sway*, *That Old Black Magic*, *One Last Kiss*, *A World Without Love*, *I Just Can't Say Goodbye*, *Stranger In This World*, *Forget Him* of course, plus so many others to enjoy, courtesy of this fine singer and great stylist.

Rock' n 'rollers often knock 'The Bobby's' but the truth is ,several of them produced some of the finest pop music ever! **RIP Bobby-and thanks for the great music. Chris Eley.**

PS. Just discovered thanks to Now Dig This magazine that Rockin' Ronnie Hawkins passed away (aged 87) on May 29th. No Fury connection we know of, and no UK Chart hits, but his early work was great, his stage performances legendary in their wildness and the 1970's Cotillion album bearing his name, purchased in Hong Kong around 1972 (when it was a great place to live with US and Malaysian pressed vinyl everywhere), a revered possession still-especially because of the terrific 'Country' re-recordings of *Matchbox* and *Forty Days*- classics forever! **RIP Ronnie.**

Irene Moy

Over many years Cy and Irene Moy were heavily involved in fund raising in the name of Billy Fury for good causes including, I believe, The Bronze Statue Project. Linda and I were fortunate enough to stay with them a couple of times and to attend one of their Line Dance evenings (not something we excelled at!) courtesy of Cadbury's near Birmingham, and another Billy Fury Event run by the late and much loved Pat Young, in Evesham. Cy and Irene, good-humoured, thoroughly decent and well-suited church-going people, were great company, loved Billy Fury and indeed, virtually all kinds of music, especially country. Over the years we would sometimes exchange mix tapes (actually CDRs these days) and as so often happens, 'new' songs from them enriched our lives. At one stage Cy bravely endured major heart surgery, and then got back on the dance floor! Regrettably, due to being away, we did not learn of Irene's passing (during March this year), until a little while after. A quiet, warm, lovely and thoughtful person, we shall miss her and our thoughts are with Cy and their family and friends at such a sad time.

RIP Irene. Chris Eley & Linda Shawley and all fans who knew Irene.



Play It Cool

The Young Ones

Teen Street



*The No One Ultimate Action Packed
Rock 'n' Roll
Tribute
Show*



ay Las

OK, Come And Get It

The All-NEW

'OH BOY!' *Show*



Pete Hutton



Eddie



Lloyd McSwain



Jerry Finch



Steve Dowling

Backed by the fabulous 2

*The All New Oh Boy! Show at the Rhoda McGaw
Theatre, Woking, Surrey on Sat. 27th August, 2022
at 19.00. Tickets from £25.50.*

Phone: 0333 009 6690

