

When we were four

Paul Fry

The Nomads were Friends' School, Saffron Walden's first rock band, existing between October 1962 and July 1964. I wrote this account of those years of band activity (with the original cover above) in 1968, as a personal response to the importance of the group to me at the time. Inevitably, with the passing of years, that significance has gained a truer perspective. But it does record for posterity an image of the school from a particular view that coincided with an important time in the development of popular music and teenage culture in Britain. Apart from minor editing, it is as it was written in 1968, but using presentation technologies not available then. I hope it is of some interest.

Paul Fry November 2010

When we were four



Left to Right:

Richard Jones : bass guitar

Paul Fry : guitar, harmonica
and lead vocals

Steve Timpson : drums and
vocals

Brian Simmonds : lead guitar
and vocals

Introduction

Writing this diary as I do, nearly six years from the date that the Nomads were conceived, it would appear likely that much of the fact would have turned to fiction in the long break since the reality of the band's existence. However, I have tried to use this to advantage and where possible view the two years of activity objectively, without being overwhelmed with the impact of the events as they appeared at the time. I am fortunate that a good deal of fact remains firmly embedded in my memory, but where this has faded I have been able to refer to letters, calendars and other reports.

One disadvantage in writing at a distance is that in the light of greater experience and age, one's attitude becomes critical and even cynical of events that took place then and in some cases does not echo the true sentiment felt at the time. The crazy jokes, stupid tomfoolery, and deep disappointments are all part of this story, and it is an additional dimension I have no doubt failed to deliver. Nevertheless, it is written, for posterity, but more for my own satisfaction.

Paul Fry
1968

One : October 1962



It all started in the boys end loo; a porcelain throne room which was at that time hardly a fitting place for the purpose for which it was built, let alone for the initiation of a musical group designed to dominate my life over the following two years.

My interest in guttural six-string guitar sound was long standing, having many times as a young teenager imagined myself as the king of pop like Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent or Elvis Presley, who's wailing on "Saturday Club" or, more rarely, "Two-way Family Favourites" avalanched from the steam radio into our living room. Even when the traditional jazz era arrived, I would wander aimlessly around the school corridors humming Acker Bilk like sounds and strumming some very lifelike actions on an imaginary banjo. Occasionally I would listen enraptured to the school jazz band, wondering at their ability.

But the big event was the parental Christmas present to my brother in 1961 of a Russian acoustic guitar which received more attention from me over the following months, no doubt to his chagrin. When he finally came to school and brought it with him, I played it on every occasion where I could dominate the scene, and eventually I purchased a similar one in April 1962, although of a Spanish breed, and took it on the Aldermaston protest march; a CND undertaking, a little more peaceful than those of late.

The boredom experienced by members of the first year sixth was well known. Similarly their reactionary attitudes did not go un-noticed and the two were very closely inter-related. The seemingly blank spaces of boarding school life became increasingly obvious at this time, with the two year gap between 'O' and 'A' levels stretching way into the

distance. So on an early autumnal evening, taking a break from evening prep., I wandered into the loo, where a chat with Peter Bradley – the clarinettist in the jazz band – on the subject of boredom blues, led to his suggestion as an antidote. “Form a pop group: get some of those individual amateurs together and form a group.” I remember feeling a certain amount of amazement at the idea, but looking back it seems surprising that it had not already crossed my mind, considering my enthusiasm for that sort of activity.

That evening I contemplated the idea and discussed it with a good friend of mine Martin Lamborn (more affectionately known as “Lil”). I knew precious little of the musical activity and skills of other members of the school in the sphere in which I was afflicted; in fact I could only think of two who even played the guitar, and it was them that I approached.

The following day I put the suggestion to Richard “Rik” Jones, a small, rather frail-looking day boy in my year who suffered equally from asthma and, allegedly, over-bearing parents. It was he who had taught me my first three chords on the guitar, the famous trio E, A and B7. A keen woodworker, he built his own electric, semi-acoustic guitar in 1960; won several leisure-time activity awards with it and was actually taught to play it by a member of a rather lowly Saffron Walden group The Champions; a group who made a couple of records on the Oriole label; sold few copies and faded like so many into obscurity.

Richard’s reaction to starting a group was a bit vague but having shown interest we together routed out Brian Simmonds; two years our junior but who was said to play a guitar. “Simmo” was the complete opposite of Richard; a keen Shadows fan, his robust build was topped by the original Cliff Richard backward-swept hair style from which issued a somewhat sunken face, elegantly given depth with a pair of large, dark-rimmed glasses. His ability to play the guitar he sported was an unknown entity, but his enthusiasm outweighed any potential lack in that department, so we arranged to meet in the boy’s end practice rooms that evening.

Lil was beginning to feel a bit out of the action so at a joint suggestion he was nominated drummer. Now Martin, a great sportsman, would be the first to confess that his musical knowledge was limited; more importantly his musical ability was even thinner and just what he proposed to do with any instrument he was provided with was only given a fleeting opportunity to reveal itself. However, our first problem was to find him something to bash. Someone said Andy Norton had a drum and Brian managed to secure the sorry-looking nine-inch apology from him on temporary loan.

That evening of 15th October 1962 was the start and nearly the finish of it all. It was obvious within the first few minutes that our combined ability was limited and nothing short of a noisome mess issued from the cramped quarters in the practice rooms. Brian dominated with some irregular lead work; Rik played hesitantly on the fringe; Lil tapped to no particular rhythm and I thrashed out the famous chord trio. We didn’t lack something, just everything, but our efforts attracted the attention of passersby who came in to watch bemused. Among



them was Steve Timpson who appeared painfully distressed by Lil's apparently disinterested knocking. Finally, uninvited, he asked Lil for a go and Lil vacated his position. The effect was dynamic. With drum sticks flying and precipitating an infectious rhythm, we all joined in with as much vigour as we could muster. The difference was incredible, and so the group was formed and cemented; never to change until our eventual disbanding.

It serves here to say something of the age of pop music that we were entering.

The rock 'n roll era had died a natural death and trad. jazz was making a similar exit, leaving in its wake one of the traditional stagnant periods when ballad singers flourish and the remnants of past fashions desperately struggle on. Groups were a dominant part of the emerging scene which was to culminate ultimately in "Beatlemania", but for the moment Cliff Richard and The Shadows were the idols and together with Brian's obsession with them, and as the only tunesmith amongst us, most of our work was initially channelled on their lines.

If anything was gained by our first meeting it was an indication of the part that each of us would play in the group. The group line-up was being established outside the confines of the school where in the pop world numerous groups were adopting a lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass guitar and drums format. Steve's position was clear as drummer, and so was mine as rhythm guitarist since I was quite convinced that my abilities would not stretch further than forming the second part of the rhythm section. Brian asserted his position as lead guitarist which left Rik following with a second lead when Brian ran out of ideas. This was unsatisfactory and Rik realised so within a short time, partly due to the losing battle he was having with Brian who managed to secure a greater monopoly of the volume.

Our equipment at that time was nothing short of pathetic. Richard's home-made machine and my battered acoustic left a great deal to be desired, although Brian's amplified Hofner acoustic appeared the last thing in six-string guitars to our uninitiated eyes. However, Steve's drum kit just didn't exist. Andy Norton's loan was converted to a gift but we were no better off kit-wise. Our amplification was dependant on Brian's 5 watt machine which at best produced a sound over-laden with what sounded like chips in deep fry. It was with this uninspiring heap that the first organised practice commenced.

Official reaction to a school pop group remained unconsidered until this first practice came to a crashing end. Rehearsals for the school play were getting underway and the school hall

was in regular use, but a Wednesday afternoon arrived when Kenneth Whitlow was not using it and further than asking him permission to use it no-one else was approached. We managed to get hold of the school Pam amplifier, microphone and loudspeaker and assembled our small offering on stage. For a small amount of gear we managed to make a king-size mess and eventually one or two grating guitar groans. I used the mike to amplify my guitar through the Pam and Rik connected directly to it while Brian used his own. Brian's effort to out-volume Rik resulted in his amplifier deciding the struggle was too much and gave up. A small crowd had gathered to watch our increasingly fruitless efforts and through them stormed an irate physics master, Mr. Benson by name, who accused us, rightly, of using school equipment without permission, whereupon he departed with all of it leaving us bewildered and with our now even less useful kit. So ended the first practice and giving birth to our battles with the school authorities

Two : November to December 1962

Our spirits were not in the least dampened by this event; in fact it made us all the more determined to succeed. It was probably at this stage that I assumed the title of "unofficial" leader, since as initiator of the band and one of the two older members of the group, I took it upon myself to make encounters with the staff in an effort to establish the band as a recognised activity. Our problem was a new one to face the school; appearing afraid of the consequences of allowing a pop group using amplified equipment to come into existence and therefore initially unwilling to commit themselves one way or another.

The first step was restoring good relations with Mr. Benson which was initially successful, but he refused to allow us to use school equipment without the authority of the headmaster, Mr. Nicholson. This negotiation had to be taken with great diplomacy for it would be the beginning or end for us, his decision being final. His reaction was wary and his decision uncommitted and I was left with the response "I'll think about it and have a word with Mr. Sturge." The answer took several weeks to arrive and even then not without tactical reminders from me. His passing of the matter to the music master Mr. Sturge reduced our hopes; his rigid classical background and repugnant view of pop music was well known. But throughout this waiting period we never considered that we would not exist in some form or other and we talked heartily of names for the group and of possible material.

A suitable name for the group was more of a problem than we anticipated. Pop groups at this time were simply named with plural proper nouns, producing pretty uninteresting nom de plumes such as "The Drifters", "The Spotnicks" or even "The Beatles"! Naturally we followed suit and tossed around such names as "The Avengers", "The Boys", "The Eskimos" and "The Beatlecrushers" (a good job we trampled on that). Uninspiring though they were, they were no more original than the name we finally stuck with, "The Nomads".

Material was an easier task, especially with Brian's seemingly intimate knowledge of every note The Shadows played. At our conception the possibility of doing vocal numbers was never considered. Although privately I believed there was potential, publically I considered my voice totally unsuitable. Richard couldn't, or more accurately wouldn't sing and Brian found it difficult to concentrate on singing and playing. In any case we had no microphones to spare on such daring ventures.

I finally extruded an affirmative answer from the headmaster, although he warned us about over-enthusiasm which would affect our work, advice we took in a manner I'm sure it wasn't given. These steps through the school's red tape produced one or two perks we had not anticipated. We found Mr. Benson particularly supportive and helped us quite extensively in establishing a sound electronic base. He gave us access to the school's Leak amplifier in the hall as well as the more mobile Pam amplifier and this was a great advantage in that Brian's amplifier, which we had used during the long wait, could be put out to grass. With our electric side sorted, our headache was Steve, for how could his rich talents be exploited on one small side drum? Anyway, it looked ridiculous. To resolve this extensive research was employed to find a solution and eventually we came up trumps. A classmate of Steve's, Paul Price-Smith (who lived opposite the school and eventually figured prominently in the second school group, The Squares), produced a large bass drum from his attic – a magnificent relic of Waterloo fame complete with cannon hole through one of its skins. It was just what we were looking for; an instrument which gave Steve something else to hit as well as looking pretty impressive.

So we were set; our material was initially greatly influenced by the existence of a bass drum-come-tom tom, from which Steve was continually driving thudding rhythms, and of course Brian's unbreakable obsession with The Shadows. The outcome was that our first recognised number was "Apache", combining our two most obvious elements. Practices became steadily more frequent and the volume increased and although we were unaware that it had, several members of staff did notice. The hall was difficult to secure for use as often as we wanted, but we made do with Brian's original amplifier in either the practice rooms or one of the bedrooms.

For the remainder of term we thrived, unmoved by public comment and totally enraptured by our ability to produce anything at all collectively. Our temerity became greater and our confidence grew so that more as a consequence of opportunity than sound judgement, we produced our first vocal. Chris Montez had recently had a hit with a catchy song called "Let's Dance". The opening four bars were identical to the "Apache" thudding introduction, before the vocal refrain opened joined by some simple accompaniment. My affection for the record coupled with the simplicity of the tune, resulted in me spontaneously using our one microphone to break into song during one afternoon practice as Steve commenced the start of The Shadows hit record. Before we knew it, we had done it, and strangely quite

happy with the outcome. With Christmas soon upon us we were to make our first public debut before the term was out.

School dances had at this time got into a rut. They were held twice a term and were rather formal occasions, attended by forms 4 and upwards. Attendance was not compulsory but instinct drove almost everyone to them for a small fee, painlessly extracted by a dance committee member during Wednesday form meetings. They had almost become ritualised; suits for boys and dresses for girls, starting at seven and ending at ten, with their providing an opportunity for a change round in the relationships between the sexes. The aftermath of a dance was becoming painfully familiar (in truth it had probably been ever thus), with the down-in-the-mouth dumpee being ignored by self-satisfied dumper who had changed their fancy during the previous evening. Musically the programme was unimaginative, dictated by a limited availability of records; a dance committee Victor Sylvestor intermingled with the odd borrowed Elvis, at which the floor sprung to the rhythm of jiving bodies eventually exhausted for next foxtrot followed by a waltz. On rare occasions the jazz band would make an interval appearance, but having moved from trad to modern, they were not an ideal dance band.



The Christmas dance was traditionally the best of the year; more food, better decor and longer hours. The group's activities were becoming well known and a fortnight from the day Roger Bertram, senior member of the dance committee approached me and asked if we could play. To us it was like saying would you like a million pounds gratis and as eagerly as we accepted, we prepared a programme. We arranged to play for two sets of 20 minutes

using all our now well-tried equipment. Two lots of 20 minutes meant about ten numbers and besides our thudding pair, we ventured into other awe-inspiring compositions such as “Beatlecrusher Walk” and even one of our own inventions “Saturday Night”.

The hectic end of term days added to the fervour with which we anticipated the dance. On the night we were at fever pitch; at the last minute desperately checking amplification, tuning, volume, plugs and stage positions. But the only obvious person with nerves was Rik who looked as though he was up on a murder charge! From an insignificant position behind a wood-workshop bench to playing his work of art on stage and in public was a large step for half a term’s work and undoubtedly helped to un-nerve him: still, with a muffled announcement and a sweeping curtain we were on.

Audience reaction was, to say the least, encouraging. Through the sweat and floodlights I could see swerving bodies, scything with the music, coming up for air at the end of each number, cheering and clapping enthusiastically. The fact that we were a live group that at



least produced music they could dance to played a large part in our successful debut. A rocked-up version of “Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer” ended our last session and we received a rapturous ovation. We were immediately booked for the following evening’s “End of Term Entertainment” in which

we played a part in a send-up of a Radio Luxemburg programme “Dear Marje” where we were an immediate hit with the whole school.

During the afternoon of the same day we made our first recording courtesy of Nic Salmon. Listening to that tape now it seems incredible that we dared emerge from the security of obscurity to make public our questionable ability. The recording was poor but records our first signature numbers, “Apache”, “Let’s Dance” and “Saturday Night”. So we departed our separate ways for the Christmas holiday, savouring the results of a hard term’s establishment and our eventual success, not daring to consider what the following terms would hold in store.

Three : Spring and Summer Terms 1963

The holiday break gave me the opportunity to look back objectively on our terms' achievements. It was obvious that our equipment was insufficient; it restricted our need to develop musically and technically the system was impractical. This was particularly true of the amplification of my guitar and this made me determined to buy an electric one so that I could benefit from the vacant sockets on the Leak amplifier. I found my quarry in a Walthamstow junk shop; a solid Broadway guitar with a single pick-up. This purchase exhausted my Post Office savings but I was nevertheless delighted with my new instrument. I spent the remainder of the holiday adjusting my playing to the easier fret action it afforded. My only contact with the rest of the group was a card from Brian who was in Switzerland on a skiing trip. A hastily written message conveyed his requirement of me to learn the chords for "Dance On", The Shadows' latest. Well, that could wait.

My keenness to return to school had never before been surpassed; my desire to introduce new equipment having an overpowering effect. On return I was greeted with a surprise, for Rik had lashed out a year's savings on an old home-made bass guitar once owned by the bassist in The Champions and long since discarded. This purchase rather thwarted my own, and correctly so, for this was to have a very worthwhile impact on the group. The missing link had been found and Richard upgraded his position in the group to one of fundamental importance. Now each member of the group had a clear role to play and we could co-operate on equal terms. However, once again, it was Steve who was lagging behind, not in his ability but in his very limited kit, so once again we searched for help.

Finally we closed a deal with Ian "Eno" Whiteman, another member of the jazz band, who agreed to sell us a plastic snare drum and cymbal. After several weeks and as many reminders he arrived at school with the much desired items. Now we were beginning to look more like a group of musicians rather than four parts of a one-man band.

Musically we progressed rapidly during the spring term, aided not only by the increase in our equipment but also by the very harsh weather which brought outdoor games to a standstill, permitting greater time for the group without seriously eroding into our academic work. Our success at the Christmas dance had, probably, resulted in my being voted onto the Dance Committee as 6one representative; a dubious honour but something which made dances and The Nomads more of a collective association. Richard picked up the bass very easily, (no pun intended) and was soon manipulating some effective if not primitive bass runs. Our all electric line-up looked reasonably impressive for the first time so we had a few publicity photos taken. A motif was designed for the cannoned skin of the bass drum which was returned to its more traditional upright position and our new image was presented at the Amnesty dance on 9th February. A completely new programme was prepared and our success even more encouraging.



At this time the pop world was completely dominated by beat groups, notably from Liverpool and The Beatles, The Searchers, Gerry and The Pacemakers and their compatriots were providing us with possible new material and vocals to boot. Brian still stuck to The Shadows influences but Steve and I felt it was too restricting and encouraged him to learn from the beat groups. Even so, The Shadows were very suitable material for our line-up and equipment and we continued using as much of their material as we felt we could take. Rik was wound up with his new toy and seemed happy to play anything.

During this term we changed our practice venue on several occasions to the gym. For getting that "full" sound the place was excellent but when we attempted to record there the results were shatteringly poor.

Mid-term brought the Old Scholars to the school for their Lecture Weekend and in their traditionally sparse numbers. However a successful dance was held by them, but mostly for the school's benefit at which we introduced a comedy turn. Chris Rule, whose musical ability was several fathoms lower than Lil's, was, to his great credit, persuaded to dress in motor-cycle gear and enter the stage on a motor-bike, with Jill Hanson on the pillion seat behind, singing Mike Sarne's "What I Like", which he "sung" ad nauseam in every key but the right one, throughout the school. Our problem in providing a backing for him was never solved, other than by starting him off and then letting him lead us through a myriad of rhythms and notes to an eventual end. Musically it was nauseating but as an entertainment it was pretty humorous.

Towards the end of term our ventures were beginning to be reported in school magazines, even if at times a trifle oblique from the truth. The March edition of The Avenue attested our success at Christmas and a 6two run periodical "Das Fenster" ran a whole page article called "Profile" where our individual likes and dislikes received an airing in traditional pop magazine manner. At the end of term we again departed to homelands in Chingford, Kettering and Clapham, leaving Rik residing just down the road.

Wednesday March 13th 1963

DAS FENSTER

School Profiles - Nos. 4,5,6,7 and 8. 4

THE NOMADS

THE BEETLECRUSHERS, THE BOYS, THE ESKIMOES, THE AVENGERS - and now they are THE NOMADS. What will they be next ?

But, theirs is indeed yet another story of success in the Pop World, so let us delve deeper and look into the characters of those who comprise this talented group. First it would be best to include some general comments on the Four as a whole, and at the interview outside the boys' washroom, I discovered much of interest.

Their ages range from "almost fifteen", to seventeen; none are pop-centered and admire good music of any sort; all play for enjoyment and have no thought of turning professional; finally, in the true Adam Faith spirit, they are all in favour of the Quaker Pamphlet on sex.

The leader, although unofficial, is Paul Fry - a smallish unassuming character. Peeping out from his glasses, he briskly informed me that he liked chic, intelligent girls but intensely disliked girls who dyed their hair. Other dislikes include school coffee and school carrots - a hideous combination.

Passing on to Richard Jones, a slight and somewhat reticent local boy, who made his own guitar and has bought a bass guitar from the Echoes. On being asked about his favourite meals, he disregarded the normal pop-singer's retort of "Oi like Spanish dishes," and snappily told me that he liked an Entrecote steak (rare).

On the drums, there is the only non-electric man, Steve Simpson, who has inherited proficiency from his brother, who used to play "trad" in a London Club. He likes Worcester Sauce, Veteran cars and girls, but not in that order.

Lastly, the group's guitarist, Brian Simmonds, or Fat Harris as he is otherwise known. Brian says that any likeness between himself and Hank B. Marvin of the Shadows is coincidental and denies flatly that his glasses were an optional extra with his Hank.B. Marvin guitar.

When asked whether he considered that the group should start a fan club, he said - "We don't want stardon. We just like what we play."

They would all like to dispel rumours that Christopher Rule is turning professional, although they believe that he may sing "Come Outside" at the next dance and is having a Mike Sarne hairstyle at Ihm's.

The man behind the scenes is Martin Lamborn, the public image officer. There is an air of cool efficiency about him and despite the frequent bombardments of such derogatory terms and comments as Mr. 10% and a "Larry Parnes protege" he is an invaluable though unobtrusive asset.

At any rate, they flourish, although there is doubt as to whether they will continue after the two veterans have left, but they have left their mark for their is a nascent rock group in the 2nd form.

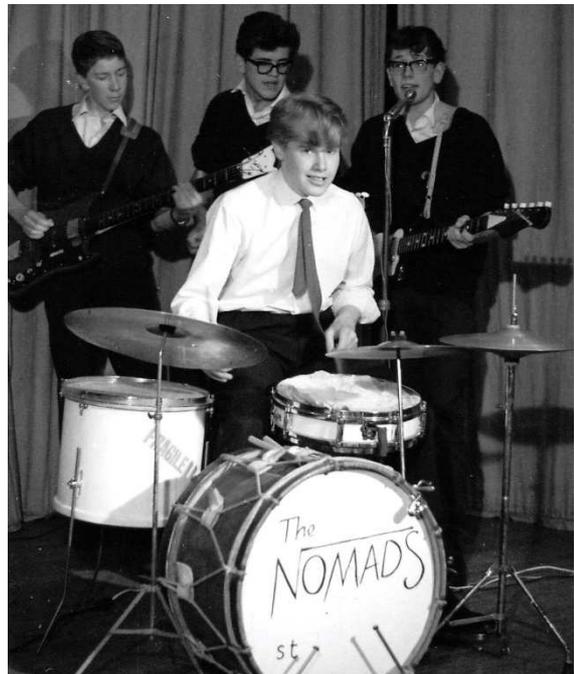





Our school stardom had not unnaturally brought out an increasing passion to evolve our equipment, although in Steve's case this was closer to desperation. The Pam microphone was nearing its last days as a functional operative and my first steps in the holidays took me to Soho to buy one for the group. Similarly our utter dependence on the school for amplification was distressing and in a bid to right this I bought a copy of Exchange and Mart to see what was going. Morden in Surrey provided the answer and Brian and I hurried down to see the offering. It was a Westminster 14 watt job with 4 inputs and a foot controlled tremolo. To our young eyes it seemed most impressive so we bought it between the three of us guitarists, but Richard complained of a lack of funds and explained his belief that his bass would rupture its tiny speaker within five minutes. He was right of course and in the end I had the lot, but it did mean we had alternative amplification when using the gym.

I was utterly elated when on returning to school I found Brian with a new solid electric Vox Ace guitar; Richard having totally restyled his bass guitar but most valuable of all, Steve with an array of new kit; high-hat, floor tom-tom, snare drum and cymbals. Now that was really something to get excited about.

Early on in the new term we were for the first time to come face to face with the outside world. The school charity was the Freedom from Hunger Campaign and in an effort to adopt an original fund-raising scheme, the lower sixth form decided to hold a teenage "hop" in the town's Parish Rooms. The success of such an event depended partially on the intrigue in which townsfolk had about the school and its activities and our appearance would add to the attraction. Lengthy negotiations with the Headmaster ended with the eventual success of my part in the plans. This involved preliminary consultation on the idea and near the end, persuading him to allow the younger members of the group to retire after their normal bed-times. Hops at the Parish Rooms were regular events in town life and the additional attractions gave us a pretty good clientele. We played an interval period, keenly displaying our new equipment and some new Beatles material. It got a bit tough towards the end when we were requested to play songs we barely knew, let alone played. We choked out "Henry the Eighth I Am" as a finale and retired gratefully; apparently well received and unscathed.



The school dances were becoming a bit habit forming; we were missed when we didn't play and accepted when we did. My increasing occupation with dances as a member of the committee meant that as much effort went into arranging them as playing. For the group

dances were ceasing to be as inspiring as they were initially and it was felt that new ground should be pursued when the opportunity arose. This feeling resulted in several developments. Our increasing prowess on our instruments led us the inevitable step further from playing to composing. Brian had several ideas mostly as a consequence of mistakes, but one developed into a tuneful instrumental he entitled "Humpback". Another success was a re-writing of the words to "Green Back Dollar", a classic folk song which everyone knew the tune but not the words. Inspired by frustration and a lesson on satire I had recently experienced in my 'A' level English class, I re-wrote the words as a kick at school meals, somewhat feeble by TW3 standards, but which I called "Fried Bread and Bacon Blues" and turned out to be quite a hit with the school.

Our line-up changed very little, apart from an occasional appearance with Dave Hale, a harmonica player who came in to add a bit of variety to the now well known scenery.



The new ground we were waiting for arrived at a welcome moment. The Amnesty Society arranged a concert which was to showcase all aspects of school musical activity. Careful groundwork was put into the arrangements by the organisers who successfully managed to produce a varied and interesting programme, drawing on musical talent from every corner of the

school. We were invited to take part and eagerly accepted. We only had to perform three numbers to close the first half, but it was a new challenge in that our audience was seated, attentive to mistakes and that it felt competitive with other performances. In the latter we had an advantage; scholars of 14 have rarely been glued to their seats by orchestral sonatas and choral motets, but they readily relate to music of their time. It was a successful night for us, even under the critical eye of more classically orientated staff. Our inclusion of Dave Hale in one of our numbers was popular with the girls and the whole school seemed to enjoy "Fried Bread and Bacon Blues."

We felt it would be worthwhile making another recording since a great deal of new work had been developed since we last attempted a recording. This was combined with an idea that Brian had suggested for the coming General Meeting programme. The presentation of Leisure activities played a large part in the open day and since the group had fully occupied four pupils leisure time it seemed appropriate to make a small exhibition of our activities. We exhibited our equipment supported by photos and written material and played a recording especially made for the occasion. The recording was made in one afternoon on



Rik's father's generously loaned Ferrograph, recorded via the loudspeakers. We taped about 10 numbers, each interspersed with my explanatory comment. The energy put into this initiative was rewarded with a one guinea Group Award, but more satisfying was the interest of visiting parents, no doubt

prompted by their offspring, in our enterprise. To support the project another photo session was arranged, this time with Peter Bradley who produced a good collection.

At the same time we were recording the tape for General Meeting a 6three student, Matthew Robinson, was making a documentary film on a day in the life of the school. The film included about one and a half minutes of us playing a Ventures recording called "Walk Don't Run". The filming was a straightforward task, but the recording to go with it was a much bigger problem. We assembled our equipment at Matthew's house and made several attempts at synchronising our playing whilst watching movements made the week before on the screen. I found this very difficult, especially as it started with a chord riff and judging the start was highly problematic. Eventually a reasonable recording was made but I remained dissatisfied, despite the interesting experience.

Throughout our existence thus far we remained a monopoly on the school pop scene. This term, however, saw the embryo of a rival to our monopoly. Paul Price-Smith was moving towards forming a group and although his passage was rather tougher than ours, they kept us on our toes for a full year after.

The term seemed to close rather rapidly after General Meeting. Steve's 'O' levels had prevented excessive practice; the Old Scholars hired an outside band, although their success was questionable, prompting a comment at the following AGM when Alan Ridsen's observation that that year's band was better, received a response from John Shippey that "I didn't think so. It struck me that The Nomads put up a much more popular show." Praise indeed! Dave Hale's success was short-lived as he was unwilling to put in the time to learn more than two well-tryed rock instrumentals, but his worth as a session man was good for the group.

As usual the end of term dance closed the academic year and a great deal of hard work was put into its success. The extra effort paid off with the outside garden floodlit and thanks to fine weather used together with the hall. Musically the jazz band made a rare and final appearance and we rose to the occasion playing better than ever. We were fortunate in having a temporary addition to the group – a french student who had joined 6two for a term. He was keenly interested in the group's activities and could play a few chords on the

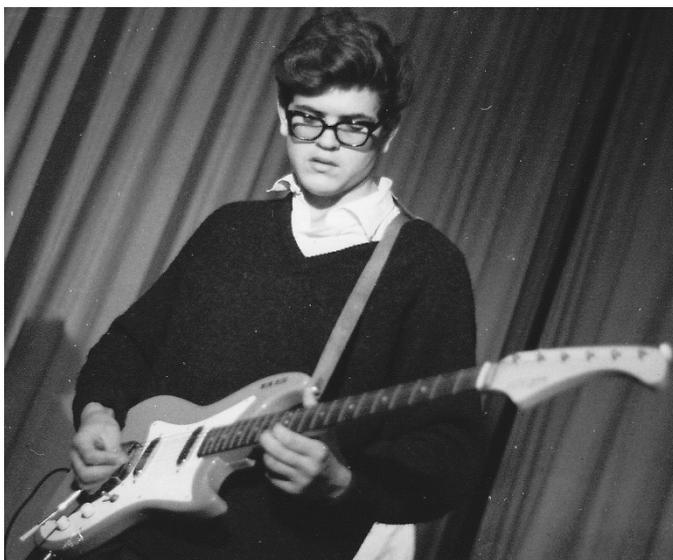
guitar, so we invited him to play rhythm guitar while I was singing vocals. By using the mic's long lead I could move off the stage and into the audience and perform some theatrical posing among the dancers. How embarrassing was that, but it seemed to get the crowd going!

With the term over, we faced a long vacation and time to relax from the regular group activity which had occupied us for the best part of nine months.

The progression we had made as a group over that period had been significant, largely due to our ever growing equipment which had enabled improvement in our technique, confidence and sound. Individually the musical progression was more varied. Steve and Richard's development was manifestly greater than we could have hoped for; their keen inventiveness provided a very sound background to the group and further advancement was inevitable. Both were playing solos that were creative, subtle and showing a great understanding of their instruments. Progression by Brian and myself was slower. Brian seemed to lack the confidence to improvise, his work being note perfect but requiring hard work to be achieved. But he was singing now as vocal support and



harmony to my lead vocals. Any improvement by me was perhaps less noticeable, but my chord sequences were uninspired, although my right hand was more fluent.



Four : August to December 1963

During the holiday I did nothing but relax. However, Richard who felt his bass was beginning to shatter the school speakers, worked like a slave on a slave's wage at Pedley Woodwork to raise the filthy lucre for his own amplifying unit. Brian managed to find the money without having to work for a new Linear Diatonic 10 watt amplifier and a Watkins Copycat echo chamber. The echo was a valuable asset but his amplifier was found to be too small to be of much stage value, although practices in the gym became easier as we collectively were able to match Steve's volume. Richard's hard earned efforts produced a superb Warfdale speaker and cabinet he built himself, together with a Linear Concord 30 watt amplifier. Steve meanwhile secured a bass drum and stool which meant that Paul Price-Smith could have his antique back. Richard, Brian and I met once during the holiday, in London, where we made an envious inspection of high quality equipment in Charing Cross Road and, when we could summon up the nerve, of playing some. As the holiday break drew to a close we looked forward to getting back to school to try new ideas and turn them into reality.

We returned to school and Brian promptly retired to the school sanatorium; a bitter blow as it put paid to an appearance at the first dance of term. Personally I was not too bothered; my responsibilities as the now senior member of the Dance Committee were bearing heavily on my shoulders and it gave me the opportunity to concentrate on the organisation of the dance. In addition I was able to show generosity to the new group Paul Price-Smith had



created. I only decided 24 hours before the dance to ask them to play as they were at that stage a bit ragged: two newly fledged guitarists on home-made instruments with a double bass player and a drummer, but they had rhythm and enthusiasm and adequately filled a vacant slot.

I would hate to give the impression that the two groups were enemies, but we were competitive. We were actually very amicable, but did battle over material as new records suitable for both groups were rehearsed hurriedly and the first performance or best version won the day. The emergence of "The Squares", as they were called, resulted in a change in material by us, and the attitude towards pop groups by the school.

We realised that although Beatles compositions were good material and popular, we needed a distinction between the two groups not only to remain amicable, but also to avoid alienating our captive audience. However it was more by luck than judgement that we had developed an interest in the blues. I had an increasing interest in the original American blues artists such as Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, Lightening Hopkins and Muddy Waters. Richard began to share my enthusiasm and Brian and Steve, if not enthralled, were actively willing to play along. So a slow transition took place and although we never completely disregarded the Beatles framework, I was on occasion putting down my guitar and soulfully blowing harmonica through such numbers as "Big Boss Man" and "Honest I Do". Many were versions presented by the new Rhythm and Blues groups such as the Rolling Stones. Good as they were, one only has to listen today to Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, John Mayall and Peter Green to hear quality interpretations of the American blues.

At about this time, the school finally came to a decision on pop groups. The sight of a new group had made the school take stock; there was a limit to the amount of noise and electric equipment that could be tolerated and accommodated. Housing our pile of equipment was a problem and we secured one of the hall's green rooms for storage which we also used for guitar rehearsals. But as the senior member of both groups I was summoned to a staff meeting where their concerns were discussed. The outcome was more decisive than of late; restrictions on practices; lower volumes to be maintained and in future all pop groups could only be created by prior permission. In short, the Nomads and the Squares were the only officially recognised groups. However, the school were not actively against the activity and to prove it, we were asked to fill a vacant Saturday evening with a concert performed and organised by ourselves.

The organisation fell squarely on me; with 48 hours notice, something had to be decided and fast. I hit upon the idea of a trip through the history of pop music from Elvis to The Stones: a small step, but it gave us a basis for a programme. Both groups played, interspersed by a descriptive narrative from me. Musically the event was messy, especially doing songs like "Let's Dance" and "Heartbreak Hotel" which we had not played for some time. Rusty fingers on the frets had forgotten almost all but the titles. The whole school turned up and even a few staff. It was an appreciative audience and we played several encores, although not before the Headmistress, Jennie Ellinor had threatened to stop the proceedings if the junior girls did not refrain from hysterical screaming. The concert's success bonded the two groups for many weeks as a result.

We had our first anniversary on 15th October 1963, celebrated with a choice chocolate cake baked by Richard's mother, and from that date the school moved its way slowly through the traditionally long autumn term. The mid-term dance was our first engagement since the summer and we made the most of it by playing at the Junior Dance for a short stint in the gym before moving rapidly down to the Senior Dance in the hall; an operation we did not care to repeat. Junior dances had become regular events for The Squares, but for us it was

much of a disappointment. The gym lacked atmosphere; getting a decent sound was impossible and the juniors spent more time huddling in single-sexed groups talking or climbing the gymnastic equipment so we were glad to return to our well-tryed hall.

The term dragged on for several weeks until one day I received a letter from the Headteacher of a local village school. Part of their fund-raising scheme involved holding a record "hop" at Clavering village hall and they wanted us to play. How he came to hear of us I am still not sure, but we were not too bothered. Moreover the head offered to do my usual dirty work in persuading Kenneth Nicholson to permit us to play which meant it was speedily concluded to our advantage. Unfortunately I laid claim to an intense cold rendering me virtually speechless on the day, but of greater concern to the organisers was that the

event clashed with The Beatles show on television, so to overcome any reduction in numbers at the dance they set up a television in the hall. Transport was provided to Clavering and we spent the afternoon setting up and rehearsing. We had to play an interval period of about thirty minutes so after the Beatles TV show we struck up. (A newspaper report indicated our discontent at this, but none of us even thought about the clash.) We belted out several of the numbers The Beatles had played not ten minutes before, even the time-honoured "Twist and Shout", but the audience loved it and all the girls under 15 were screaming hysterically. When we finished we were idols, signing autographs, even on arms and necks and being generally mauled. Naturally we loved it and we departed feeling highly elated – Steve was sick in the car on the way back – with pleasure I think! The next morning I couldn't speak a word as my voice had taken a rear exit, so it was a shame that I was programmed to read in evening meeting, but thanks to Jill Hanson who stepped in to the breach. As a result of that dance we had our first fan mail!

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The Nomads followed The Beatles

AFTER all the arrange-ments had been made for a teenage record hop at Clavering village hall on Saturday it was discovered that the date clashed with The Beatles' show on television.

But rather than alter the date arrangements were made for the show to be relayed to the hall, and over 70 teenagers saw it there.

HAD TO FOLLOW

However, a few people present were not too happy about this, they were The Nomads, an amateur group from Saffron Walden, who knew they would have to follow The Beatles.

But they soon got going, and after a while even had the temerity to play "Twist and Shout."

The evening was organised by parents of children attending the local primary school as one of a series of fund-raising activities. The school now takes in children from Langley, Arkesden, and Wicken Bonhunt, and the committee hopes to organise functions in each village.

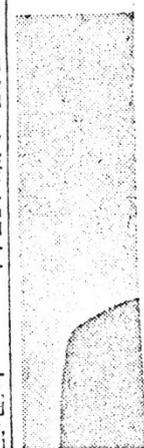
Head injuries

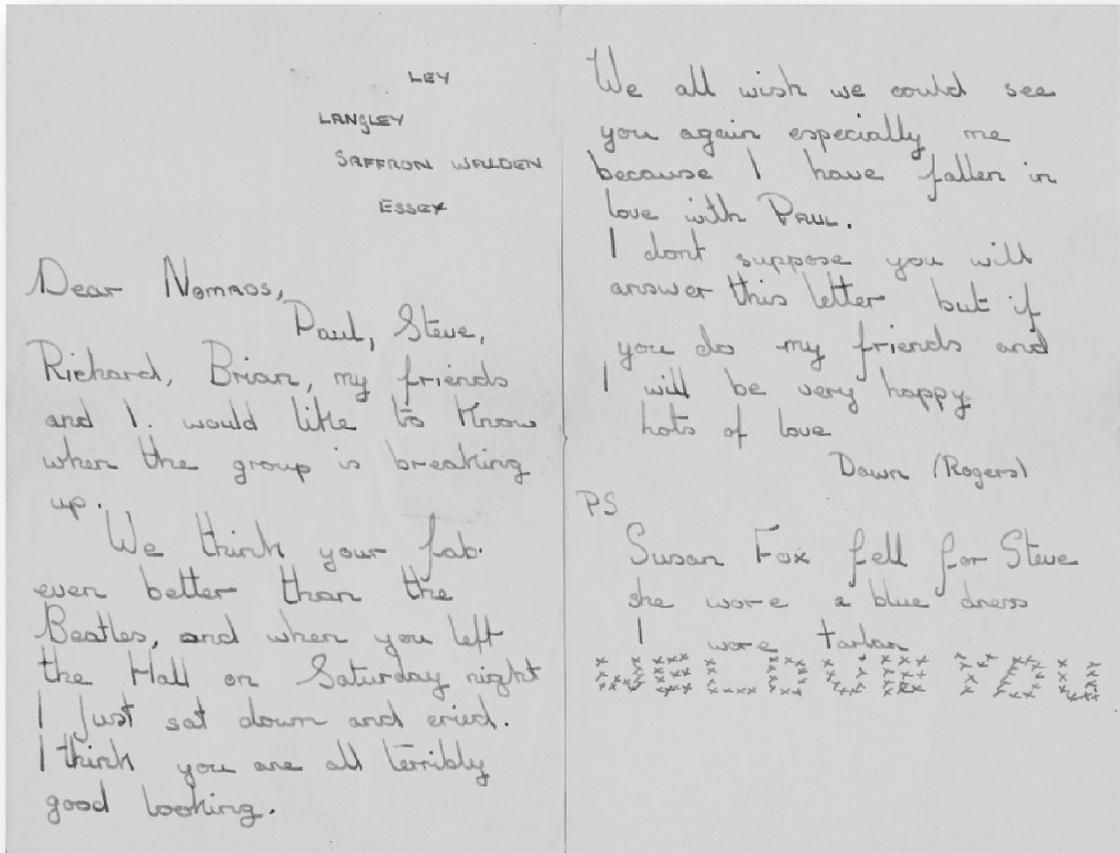
A motor cyclist, Derek Chinery, of Hartford End, Felsted, was rushed to the Chelmsford and Essex Hospital on Monday, with head injuries, when he fell



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Throughout this period minor changes were being made in all quarters. The Squares had replaced bass man John Hill and John Wigham started playing bass guitar. This was mainly to accommodate an up-and-coming guitarist Andy Southgate, whose ability was much admired, however quietly, by us. By now Brian and Steve were singing and Rik, who had become the group's technician, used his skill to adapt some thrown-out piping into a very presentable microphone stand. Our presentation changed slightly; we were never bothered about wearing "gear" clothes for performances and just wore what we felt comfortable playing in, after a few appearances in charcoal grey – very dull! Lighting was a method of presentation we felt was more important and Martin Weatherhead helped us with filters on stage lights so that different moods for songs could be captured, but we never reached even primitive psychedelics. At each new event we tried to introduce a new turn, for example a Shadows hit "The Savage" provided the opportunity for formation stage steps.

Before the end of term came we wrote an article for "The Avenue" which was being published in the spring, but more significant were our ambitious plans for the Christmas vacation. Brian had received some invitations for dates in London through his father, from the Cellar Club in Westminster and a Youth Club in Stepney. Payment was offered for these, diverse though the venues were, but our problem was transport. Tactfully I approached my father who agreed to act as our ferryman to and from our destinations using the family Bedford Dormobile. To make the "tour" more worthwhile we took up Jan Hopkins's invitation to play at her party in Reading and a request from my father to play at Wanstead Meeting's Christmas party. With our arrangements almost complete we viewed the end of term Christmas dance with less enthusiasm than normal. I had plenty to do in organising the dance so I was fully occupied buying and erecting decorations and a tree and arranging the

programme. As senior dance committee member I was now Master of Ceremonies, choosing and announcing the dances as well as playing in the group. The decorations were very successful, with a suspended string grid from which we hung hundreds of balloons which were released at the end of the evening. Both The Squares and The Nomads performed and generally it was a very successful event.

The Nomads

THE 15th October 1962 saw the formation of a new School musical group. The Avengers, as we were then called. In the early stages we were very light-hearted in thinking of a name for the group; we had about six names within as many weeks, and it was only towards the end of the Autumn Term that we finally decided on The Nomads.

The group consists of Paul Fry on rhythm guitar and lead vocal, Brian Simmonds who plays lead guitar and sings as second vocal, Richard Jones who plays bass guitar and Steve Timpson on drums. Paul, who acts as the unofficial leader, taught himself to play the Spanish guitar eighteen months ago and graduated to a Broadway electric rhythm guitar last Christmas. At first we had to rely on the School for amplifiers and a mike, but last Easter Paul purchased a 14 watt Watkins Westminster amplifier and a Dynamic microphone. He is also responsible for lead vocal and any sound effects! Brian started playing an amplified cello guitar in March 1962, and in the summer term he surprised us all by returning to School with a £50 Vox Ace guitar. Since that date he has bought a Linear Diatonic 10 watt amplifier and a Watkins Copicat Echo Chamber. Richard is the "do-it-yourself" enthusiast of the group. He made his own guitar in the summer of 1960 and was taught to play it by a member of Saffron Walden's (now fully professional) group, Johnny and the Champions. However it was only last Christmas that he bought another home-made guitar; this time a bass guitar which was made by the ex-bass guitarist of the Champions. No longer does he have to rely on School amplifying equipment; he now has his own 30 watt Linear Concord amplifier complete with a Wharfedale 15 inch bass guitar loudspeaker. Steve, whose proficiency stems from his brother, started pounding the skins on the day we were formed. His kit then consisted of one 8 inch drum which had a hole in the top skin and made a sound like that obtained from a cardboard box! But he now has a complete drum-kit with which he can show off his talents.

At present our equipment has a retail value of about £300 although a lot of it was purchased second-hand or through wholesalers.

When we were first formed, none of us really thought that we would last for more than a fortnight, but we went from strength to strength, and since then we have been invited to play at school dances and entertainments. This has kept us together more than anything else, for we have felt we had something to play for. So far we have played at twelve school functions, one dance in the town, in aid of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, and a teenage hop at Clavering. At the time of writing we had just planned a tour of London during the Christmas holidays, playing at parties, a youth club and various Friends' Meeting Houses. We also hope, in the near future, to make a tape recording of about four hours' length, for a coffee-bar "somewhere" in South London.

Our repertoire is now nearing the 100 mark. In the main they are instrumentals, although we have about 30 vocals. At first the sound we could achieve limited our style to rock numbers; but since then we have tried many "sounds" both in the vocal and instrumental field. Included in the above totals are numbers which we ourselves have composed. The success we had was varied but the most popular, within the School, was an adaptation of the folk song, "Green-Back Dollar", which was renamed "Fried Bread and Bacon Blues", a satirical kick at School meals.

Finally we would like to extend our gratitude to the many people who have helped us, particularly Mr Benson whose lending of School equipment and help has been invaluable.

BRIAN, PAUL, RICHARD and STEVE



Five : Christmas 1963

The term broke up and we departed home, high with the anticipation of our London tour which was to commence almost immediately after the Christmas festivities. Richard, Brian and Steve arrived at my parent's home in Chingford on Friday 27th December and we spent the afternoon assembling and checking our equipment in their modest semi-detached house.



My mother had generously agreed to the three of them staying for a whole week and we looked forward to a thoroughly enjoyable time. The following morning after a quick practice (as noiselessly as we could manage) and a Beatles-style photo session courtesy of my brother

Andrew, we packed the Bedford and made for Reading in the early afternoon.



Jan was very pleased to see us for she was a bit worried about people not turning up. Our playing space was very cramped but our gear squeezed in and we had a further rehearsal. The party was late starting and we began playing to a few familiar faces. It took a long time to liven up and by the time we had a break we felt

exhausted and a bit fed up, so we put the record player on, donned our coats and made for the nearest pub, where we watched a group, worse than us, amusing the clientele. This sight gave us renewed vigour and alcoholically fortified we returned to play for a further hour or so with more enthusiasm than we had closed earlier. The Bedford returned in the morning and took us wearily back to Chingford. Our next engagement was on New Year's Eve at the Cellar Club so we had time to recover and discuss our programme.

Our stint at the Cellar Club was one of the most exciting venues we played. Once again the room we played in was small; one of a series of small low passages leading to the largest, the old vault where we assembled our equipment. The problem we were faced with here was cutting down on the immensely echoic environment, so we draped curtains over the

walls in an attempt to reduce feed-back and a “wall of sound” of which Phil Spector would have been proud. We formed the only music for the social evening, amongst people foreign to us, and facing a four-hour stretch. By the time we had arrived Rik was feeling ill and suffering from asthma. This worried us as conditions in the cellar would not help, but Rik was resolute having looked forward to it too much to back out now. With the New Year in, we were utterly exhausted having played continuously for over four hours with only a short interval. Rik was suffering but we all played our hearts out and the atmosphere created was electrifying. We amply impressed several people with requests that we play again, and one even offered us a recording contract!

With a successful evening behind us, we approached Stepney Youth Club two days later with a casual air of complacency. But the event was starkly different; the audience young and rowdy and we were not well equipped mentally or practically with the problems they presented. The event passed off without major incident although both Steve and I nearly lost our tempers towards the end, after a performance that was not particularly well received nor enjoyed much by ourselves. However it was not without interest and would have done our rather closeted life experience no harm.

The following Saturday was the closing day of our small tour at the Wanstead Meeting House Christmas party. We played only a few numbers and although the young party-goers enjoyed our performance, there were a few rumbles of discontent from some of the elders.

There was no question in any of our minds that we had done nothing but enjoy our four performances away from home ground; not only as being a valuable experience but also to renew our confidence as a group. Within the closed environment of school it is easy to become inward looking. On foreign soil you are given the opportunity to be judged as a musical group by audiences who only see you as in comparison to all the other bands in the big wide world. That was the real value to us, in addition to the very real enjoyment we derived from the week away from school.

Six : January to July 1964

Our return to school activity was an anti-climax in comparison with the week we had spent together in the holiday. Unlike the previous year we now had three members of the group with public exams in the coming summer and academic work was becoming increasingly more demanding. The first dance of term was an Amnesty organisation relieving me of that burden and we played in conjunction with The Squares, but our hearts were only partly in the event. The spring term was traditionally short and there was no mid-term dance, resulting in a long gap until Easter. The middle was filled with mock examinations and only minor developments with the group, some of which fizzled out as soon as they began. We had a couple of efforts at introducing new singers but they did not work very well for a

variety of reasons, mainly relating to the problems of keeping time and singing in tune when not hearing the group – something solved more recently with on-stage monitor speakers.

Another step, taken by me, was a bit more successful. I had developed an interest in Jacques Loussier's jazz piano interpretations of some of Bach's works. Prelude no. 1 in C was a piece I was relatively fluent at on the piano and although we never produced the finished article in public, Steve, Rik and I spent several late evenings after Brian had retired to bed on a the closed hall stage with blue dimmed lights, soulfully blending our way through jazz passages of Bach, as well as some cool blues as just a trio. These are some of my most treasured memories of this period, and in our blue mood we sparkled, happy. We were all involved in teenage romances that were on and off with typical regularity and Steve and I in particular found a pleasurable expression in the blues and the improvisation it offered.

The Squares had got considerably better since their incorporation of Andy Southgate and their music gained the authentic edge of the groups at this time, while we retained the purer sound typified by The Shadows. Our happy memories of Christmas prompted us into making arrangements for what we privately realised would be our last vacation as a group. Rik, whose organisational contributions had until now been limited, made great strides towards arranging a Parish Room hop in the town, to be held by us for our profit during the Easter holiday. Also his friendship with Sally Aves in the fourth form provided us with a further date at her birthday party in Bishops Stortford.

The end of term was soon upon us, but not before Steve had managed to get himself sent home for the last week of term. This paid a blow to our end of term activities. The dance was placed in the now capable hands of The Squares, but we felt we could still fulfil a commitment to a performance in the end of term entertainment. We decided that calling in another drummer was not the answer, so I put away the guitar and did my level best behind Steve's kit. "The Big Three", as Steve called us, got on surprisingly well and I managed not only to knock out an adequate performance on drums but also sing at the same time. Nevertheless it was fortunate that our involvement in the entertainment was small, so we made it into more of a cabaret, with some frivolous humour and antics. It was far from our greatest performance but it made a change, for me anyway.

Advertisement for our Parish Room hop was great; Steve had produced some excellent posters and flyers using his cartoonist's skills, but most effective was an article with full photographic coverage which Matthew Robinson had managed to get published in the Saffron Walden Weekly News and the Cambridge Evening News, a few days before our scheduled appearance.

I travelled from London to Saffron Walden via Ipswich where Jill Hanson and I saw the Rolling Stones performing (along with The Bachelors), before both of us joined Brian and Steve at Richard's parents house the night before the hop. We arrived to find that disaster

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SAFFRON WALDEN
Weekly News

Haverhill Weekly News and Cambridge Independent Press and Chronicle
 FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 1964



Walden's Nomads Aim for the Top

FOUR Saffron Walden school-boys who decided to form a "rock" group after hearing each other play in the school music room feel they might follow in the Beatles' footsteps if they are given the chance.

The group is called the Nomads, and is formed from four sixth-form boys from the Friends' co-educational school in the town.

Two years ago the group was started after two of the guitarists noticed each other playing in the music room. "We heard each other playing," said one, "and we got together for a session."

Another guitarist was invited to join the session and with him he brought another boy who owned an old and battered side drum.

Paul Fry, aged 17, of London, the rhythm guitarist and vocalist, spent a great deal of time looking round junk shops in London until he came across a cheap electric guitar, but 18-year-old Richard Jones, of Saffron Walden, the bass guitarist, built his own instrument.

Lead guitarist Brian Simmonds, of

London, took a holiday job to pay for his new guitar, while drummer Steve Timpson was given a used set of drums by his brother, who is a professional drummer in one of London's night clubs.

Their first public performance was at a school dance, and soon afterwards they appeared at a charity dance in Saffron Walden. More equipment was added to the group assets, including an echo chamber. The total value of the equipment now stands at over £300.

No Gimmicks

Despite the fact that the Nomads have no gimmick they have made several appearances in London, and at one of these they were asked to turn professional.

"We couldn't, of course, accept," said Richard Jones. "School exams must come first, but after these we might well consider it."

He added: "At the moment we just don't know if we are getting better. Sometimes we are told we are approaching a Beatle standard and at other times people tell us we are no good at all."

The group feel that with luck they might be very popular, but without luck they as a group might no longer exist.



had struck. The hop was cancelled. A distinguished member of the church had died and was lying "in state" in the church next to the Parish Rooms, and so as not to cause offence the authorities had stopped all events at the Parish Rooms. We were all desperately disappointed but nothing could be done about the situation. Forlornly we prevailed upon Paul Price-Smith who marginally diminished our misery and filled a gap by allowing us to have a practice in his cellar. At least it enabled us to rehearse for the following evening's party in Bishops Stortford.

Richard's mother kindly provided the transport for us to the Rhodes Hall in Stortford where the party was being held. It was a brand new building with a huge hall and full stage which

would have severely tested our modest amplification, but thankfully we were playing in the adjoining bar where we set up our equipment. We were the sole musical entertainment for the evening so we made up for our previous evening's disappointment. I was promoted to master of ceremonies but as our contribution was interspersed with party games, an atmosphere when we played was rather difficult to sustain. Still, as our last ever outside performance together, we enjoyed the evening.

Group-wise the final term together was not as exciting as it might or ought to have been; in fact it rather fizzled out without us realising. To start with there was no start of term dance and coupled with my now frantic revision along with Richard for 'A' levels, together with Brian's 'O' levels, we did precious little in the first few weeks. At the Old Scholars dance on Whit Saturday two of us made an impromptu appearance with the invited band's equipment. I had hitch-hiked to London with a friend during the day and made several visits to pubs on our return journey. I made my way to the hall where the dance was progressing quite nicely where I met Steve. We decided that the visiting group were not much good, especially as their interval break was stretching into the second half of an hour. Courage fortified by alcohol, we determinedly established ourselves behind their drums and guitar and improvised a couple of numbers. Surprisingly the result was rather pleasing; the audience reacted happily although the visiting band were rightly cross, or so I was told afterwards for my memory offered few recollections.

The yearly Amnesty Concert was to be our last public performance and it is perhaps fitting that it was on home territory and our best to boot. I was able to secure top billing as the concert's closing act. The programme was as varied as ever and it promised well. Determined we should sound our best, we borrowed some of the Squares amplification and asked Andy Southgate to play rhythm guitar during those numbers I played harmonica. It all went extremely well; the curtains opened to an excited and appreciative audience. Our first number – The Shadows hit "The Rise and Fall of Fingle Bunt" – a great foot-tapper, brought the house down setting the whole hall in the right mood. Then Andy Southgate joined us while we strode through, note perfect, six more numbers and several encores, mainly blues with a spice of pop. The highly successful evening was a fitting end to the public life of The Nomads and even our most ardent critics found cause to offer congratulations.

Following the concert we were immediately swamped by examinations with the hall impossible to use even if we had had the time to spare, so little more happened before our last act as a group.

We felt a burning desire to make a recording for posterity and fortunately Steve's brother Chris, who behind the scenes had earlier helped Steve develop his drum kit, came to our aid with an affirmative answer to our request to engineer and produce a recording. On Wednesday 8th July we spent a whole afternoon on the hall's curtained stage recording twelve numbers on Chris's Brennel recorder.



The mass of amplifiers, microphones, leads and recording equipment provided a final touch of professionalism to what had been a very amateur existence. Thankfully we produced several good takes which only history will appreciate or otherwise. This was the last time we were to play together.

From then on the group went their separate ways. Richard and I left school while Brian and Steve remained. Reappraisal and reorganisation of both remnants of The Nomads and The Squares followed with Richard and Steve playing together again with some of The Squares, forming "The Lost Souls", a group which later involved itself in more professional circles than we ever even dreamt we could. In this sense, to an uninvolved observer of the pop world of the time, even to those who were in the group and have since raised to higher things, this story may appear somewhat trivial. But even if the professional quality was not present, the enthusiasm and excitement when it was happening, at a time of great change in the British music scene, was very real and significant to me and I believe to Brian, Richard and Steve, and make this small chapter worth recording.