

Remembering The Rolling Stones at Leyton Baths

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"Around and Around and the joint was a going round and around"

By Alan Miles ([email](#))

I think it was 1963 that the Stones played at The Leyton Baths. I and three others went there. We met at approx. 4.30pm in Winns Avenue, Terry, Les, Mick and I to see The Stones as always it was best to arrive at the venue very early and patiently wait. I still didn't know all their names, and was often getting them mixed-up as I will tell later. I actually thought that Charlie Watts was the singer, and that Mick Jagger was the drummer. Anyway, we arrived at The Leyton Baths at about 5.15pm, and already there was a queue of around 100 people ready to go in. It was chilly and we had to keep shuffling our feet to keep warm.

Anyway, at about 6pm, two shaggy haired blokes walked past everybody and climbed a few steps that accessed the entrance to The Leyton Baths. Then spontaneously, shrieks and screams emerged from numerous girls in the queue. They cried "Mick, Mick", "Oh, oh" etc. Arriving was Mick Jagger, and Charlie Watts they looked smaller than I thought. Mick and Charlie stepped promptly up the steps and disappeared to the tumultuous screams of "Mick, Mick, Mick", poor Charlie Watts I believed never got a scream.

I think it was The Downliners Sect that supported The Stones, a great R & B band from Hackney, they looked good and sounded great, and they had the London R&B Sound. I have their first single "Baby What's Wrong with You" an old Jimmy Reed number, now worth approx. £50, we paid our 7 and 6 admission fee, and we filed passed a familiar face "The Colonel", standing with the bouncers, aka Ronnie Kray, just inside the doorway. I still remember the records being played that night, they were "I wanna Hold Your Hand" by The Beatles, "Would You like to Swing on a Star" by Big Dee and Little Eva, and Dusty Springfields' "I only want to be with you". But over and over again played "I wanna Be Your Man" by the present evenings act. Really The Baths was far too packed and we were all crammed tightly together. We gradually meandered forward through ranks of mostly teenage girls, all around 12-15 years old, we were now very close to the stage where The Sect were still turning out, some great R & B Stuff like Bo Didleys' "Cops n Robbers", and Muddy Waters "I'll put a Tiger in your tank". One of The Sect wore a

deerstalker hat, their hair was far longer than The Stones and they wore smart black leather waistcoats. The compare that night was called Mick, and he actually wore a brown nylon, Beatles wig, these you could buy at a stall in The High Street, and as well shaggier, ruddy-red coloured Rolling Stones wigs. Not only that you could buy at Walworth's, black plastic shiny Beatle wigs, believe me some blokes wore these too.

One of us knew Mick (the compare) , and we asked him if he could get us back-stage and meet The Stones for a few autographs, he did oblige us after the show. Then Mick (the compare) announced that one of The Stones was late getting to The Baths, so there was a short delay, the curtains remained closed. Then underneath the curtains which left a short gap at the bottom, appeared some Cuban-heeled boots, and some drums being tapped, and guitars being tuned. Compare Mick, suddenly appeared holding his microphone shouting down it "Give me an R, Give me an O, Give me an L,". But now the noise of screaming and already fainting girls drowned out the rest of his announcement. Mick holding his wig rushed off quickly and the curtains pulled apart, and there they were ...The Rolling Stones. I was standing to the left of the stage which was only about 4 foot tall and I lent on it. To my right twisting and gyrating like an eel was Mick Jagger , to the far right (not politically) was Keith Richards, but in front of me and only a couple of feet away was Brian Elmo Jones (as was the name Brian Jones called himself at the time) himself, behind him stood a bored looking, gum chewing Bill Wyman and Charlie Watts looked just about awake playing his drums. Many girls to the rear of us pushed forward, most screaming " Brian, Brian, Brian", many of them holding up black and white pictures of Brian, a few others held up black and white pictures of Keith and of Mick. Most of the pictures though were of Brian Jones, The Golden Stone. I could see his Anello and Davide Cuban-heeled boots and tight fitting blue pants, he wore a pinned-striped waistcoat and underneath that a frilly-shirt.

However, to the right of me stood a crowd of " Greasers"(Rockers), they started Head-Banging , although it was very cramped, some of them started hurling insults at The Stones, shouting out things like " Hello Darling" and " Is that a boy or a girl?". Mick Jagger wriggled and twisted like an eel sticking his bum out in defiance, to which some of the " Greasers" shouted out "Fancy You Lovie" and others shouted out " queers" and worse than that, which I don't care to mention.

I found out now that the drummers name was Charlie Watts, nobody seemed to be screaming out for Charlie, so I shouted out "Charlie, Charlie", I doubt that he heard me!

But back to Brian Jones, I noticed he played a beautiful spearmint green Gretsch guitar, and on his middle finger, he had a tubular piece of steel. I thought he was wearing it for a support or something for a broken finger, for it was the first time I had ever seen someone play a slide guitar. The crowd surged further forward and I was fully trapped between fainting girls and Brian Jones, then Brian looked down at the sea of Stones fans, his lips moved, and he seemed to be saying "Who's That?" as he scrutinised some of the black and white photos of him, well by now lots of girls were fainting all over the place, and many were being ferried up on to the stage, and many members of the audience helped out with this task, some instances it looked embarrassing for the girls, with their underwear on display and dignity not intact. Then Brian perusing the audience looked down straight into my face, and I looked straight back at him. He then nodded at me approx. three times, I think indicating he approved of my dress-sense, probably because my hair had grown over my collar, I wore a jacket like Bill Wyman wore, and I also wore a pair of Cuban-heeled boots that I had bought from Anello and Davide. I was a right little Rolling Stone duplicate.

The screams were so very loud that I could not hear the songs that they were playing, but also Bill Wyman's bass, and Brian Jones guitar work, drowned out all else along with the screaming girls. I think they did play "Mona" though. Thereafter, the show closed we rushed towards the steps to the left of the stage, and we asked Mick if he would let us go back-stage to meet The Stones in their dressing-room. As we waited outside the dressing room door, it opened and closed constantly, so I was able to get glimpses of Mick Jagger walking about, talking to the press reporters with cameras flashing. We waited a little bit and Mick (the compare) came out of the dressing room, adjusting his wig, and said "The others have gone, but Bill is still here if you want to meet him". We all walked into the dressing room and sitting on a table, was Bill Wyman, smiling and looking at us. He looked at me and said with an enquiring tone "HELLO", I think because I was wearing a jacket like he was wearing, walking towards him my knees began to knock, and I was feeling faint for here sat a God! I sat down next to Bill on the table, and attempted to chat to him. I told him that I had heard that Keith's guitar cost £150, Bill chuckled and said "No it didn't, he bought it secondhand for £30". Out of the top lefthand pocket of his coat, he pulled out a packet of 20 cigarettes, they were called New World, and he offered me one. I asked Bill if he could autograph the cigarette, and he said "I gave it to you to smoke", but he tore off a piece of card from the cigarette packet, and signed that for me. However, the friends that were with me started picking up the guitars which were in front of us, propped up on the table. Two of them grabbed hold of Keith's guitar, and one started to strum it. Mick (my friend) suddenly picked up Brian's Gretsch and another grabbed at it too, I was alarmed at this and was afraid that they would break the guitars. I

shouted out to them "Put that f*c*ing guitar down you might F*c*ing break it!" Bill then got up to leave and we said our farewells, sadly I lost Bills autograph years later. However, Brians Gretsch and Keiths' harmony guitar was left safe and intact thanks to me.

As we left The Baths there , waiting outside were a couple of coaches waiting to take any fans to the Chez Don Club in Dalston, but reluctantly we 15 year olds were far too young to go, there were still lots of girls outside in the forecourt laying on stretchers and crying , with St Johns Ambulance Men in attendance. The night was filled with the smell of Two Stroke Oil as scooters, driven by Mods road up and down Leyton High Road. The whole area around The Baths seemed to be swamped by sobbing, laughing, giggling young girls, occasionally still screaming "Mick" or "Brian" but not Charlie .

Fings ain't what they used to be, exactly they ain't, I'm glad that I was a teenager then.