

# ***Pretty Thing***

***By Alan Miles – email***

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Once I was at Cookes Ferry, I befriended a girl called Sandra. She was a keen Pretty Things fan, and she wore a white t-shirt with their name printed across her substantial breasts. She was a very keen fan of The Pretty Things, this was in early 1965. I had bought their first record called Rosalyn. When I play Rosalyn these days I think that the Pretty Things and this record was the prototype of the future Punk Rock.

I chatted to Dick Taylor of The Pretty Things for a while, he told me that he was the founder of The Rolling Stones, but he could not continue with them, as he had to go to the The Royal College of Art. At that point, The Stones were called "Little Boy Blue and The Blueboys" ! Fortunately, and as legend has it , Brian Jones changed the name to The Rolling Stones, not to be confused with the North London band who were also known as The Rolling Stones, who were around at that time. I got to know Phil May the sleepy-eyed singer of 'The Things'. He used to talk to me, he would regularly throw his head back in a nodding fashion, his eyes sleepily closed and his huge main of dark hair swept over his head and down passed his shoulders.

I asked him once where they lived, whilst sitting down for a drink with him in a short break. He replied that they lived in Belgravia; I fell silent for a little while because I did not know where Belgravia was. I said "I thought it was in Eastern Europe or somewhere". He replied "No, it's around the back of Buckingham Palace". He also told me that one of The Rolling Stones lived with them. I later found out that Stone was Brian Jones, who in a fit of rage once, crashed a guitar over Viv Princes' head; he was The Pretty Things Drummer. This was because Viv 'was taking the mickey' out of the first album The Stones made. Also Brian once 'borrowed' Phil Mays' black and white striped T-shirt, which quite often you can see Brian wearing in old Stones footage. Phil never saw his t-shirt again. Phil also gave me three of his nearly 'clapped-out' harmonicas.

The last time I saw The Pretty Things was when they played at The Leyton Baths. As usual the audience was mainly made up of hysterical young girls. My mate and I were privileged to stand in the wings at The Leyton Baths, and we watched them play from there, they were really good, and not a second rate Rolling Stones. When they had finished

playing and started to pack away their equipment Dick Taylor, asked us if we could give them a hand with their amps. In the back streets behind Leyton Baths, we loaded the equipment into the van for them. What a contrast to what was happening inside The Baths, it seemed so quiet and empty outside. The Pretty Things just seemed like five ordinary long-haired blokes, and Dick Taylor gave us half a crown each (enough for two pints in those days) for payment. I'd like to say thanks Dick. Off they drove into the night and I never saw them again.

Alan Miles, December 2012