

## **History of Waltham Forest Band – The Karilion**

**The band started out in 1963 as a four piece band doing cover versions of popular hit songs.**

Brian McCarthy (Lead Guitar – Leyton)

Roy Wallis (Rhythm Guitar – Leyton),

Fred Field (Drums – Leyton),

Norman Moore (Vocals – Walthamstow).

First gig was at Leyton County High School.

Followed by other gigs at schools and youth clubs around the Leyton & Walthamstow area.

### **In 1964 line up changed.**

In came Paul Gittings (Keyboard – Leyton),

In came Geoff Nash (Bass Guitar – Walthamstow).

In came Geoff Hammond (Drums – Leyton) replacing Fred Field who went to University.

Still retaining:

Brian McCarthy (Lead Guitar – Leyton),

Roy Wallis (Rhythm Guitar – Leyton),

Norman Moore (Vocals – Walthamstow).

The two Geoff's & Paul were more experienced musicians, Geoff Hammond the drummer having recently returned from Hamburg. Geoff the bass player had drive and motivation, while Paul Gittings was an all-round multi-talented instrumentalist.

Initial gig with this line up was at the Adam & Eve Public House in Homerton High Street followed by The Lion & Key in Leyton. This was followed up by playing at friend's wedding receptions and twenty first birthdays.

### **In 1965 line up changed again.**

In came Geoff Castle (Keyboard – Stoke Newington) at that time a 16 year old genius destined to play keyboard with the London Jazz Orchestra.

Paul Gittings switched to (Tenor Saxophone / Flute / Trombone / Ocarina – Leyton).

Roy Wallis switched to (Bass Saxophone – Leyton).

Still retaining:

Brian McCarthy (Lead Guitar – Leyton),

Geoff Nash (Bass Guitar – Walthamstow).

Geoff Hammond (Drums – Leyton),

Norman Moore (Vocals – Walthamstow).

During this period the direction of the band change to a white soul band doing covers of Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, Geno Washington's Ram Jam Band, James Brown, Stax and Motown numbers.

With Geoff Castle's influence numbers like Alan Price's "I Put a Spell on You," Mel Torme's "Coming Home Baby," and Chicago Transit Authority "25 & 6 to 4," "South California Purples" & "I'm A Man" were added to the set.

Circa 1965 – 1966 – The Band played regularly at The Bell – Walthamstow most Sunday Evenings for almost a year, our fee was £8.00 total and had to pay for our own beer. That split between seven

band members did not go far. Another monthly regular gig was The Saint Ignatius Rugby Club close to Charlie Browns Roundabout, Woodford, where the social secretary "John Kingsnorth" would get up and sing Bobby Darin's "Things" accompanied by the Band. One other popular yearly gig was The Micanite & Insulators Limited Christmas Party. The Band got this gig because Norman Moore & Roy Wallis worked there.

Around this time The Band went into a studio in Walthamstow to produce some recorded material for promotion purposes.

The line up on the Demo 45 of 'I PUT A SPELL ON YOU' & 'YOU DON'T KNOW LIKE I KNOW' I believe was:

Geoff Castle (Keyboard – Stoke Newington).

Paul Gittings (Tenor Saxophone / Flute / Trombone / Ocarina – Leyton).

Geoff Hammond (Drums – Leyton).

Brian McCarthy (Lead Guitar - Leyton).

Norman Moore (Vocals – Walthamstow).

Geoff Nash (Bass Guitar – Walthamstow).

Roy Wallis (Baritone Saxophone – Leyton).

After the recording session Norman Moore was persuaded to learn to play the trumpet to give a bigger sound to the brass section.

This line up continued till early 1967 when Geoff Castle left due to commitments with the LYJO, his place being taken by Barry Raven (Keyboard – Walthamstow) formally with Vandal's Blues.

Geoff Hammond (Drums – Leyton) also left at this time to further his career professionally to be replaced by Pete ????? (Drums - ?????) Also formally with Vandal's Blues.

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May 1967 was "THE KARILION'S" Ultimate Achievement.**

**They appeared live on the centre stage as the support band to The Jimi Hendrix Experience at the Imperial College, South Kensington, London, SW7 2AZ.**

**This being a cruel act of fate on the original band 1984 destined for this spot. The lead guitarist of 1984 was Brian May a student at Imperial College and on the social committee, who booked Jimi Hendrix for the gig with the intention of 1984 supporting him on the same stage. Two other unknown bands playing on the floor above and floor below. One of these bands being 'The Karilion.'**

**The reason 'The Karilion' got the centre stage, was that they were the first band to arrive and were given the centre stage by default, when 1984 arrived it was too late to change as Jimi Hendrix Road Crew and Karilion were working on sound checks.**

**The line up of the Karilion for The Jimi Hendrix support I believe was:**

**Paul Gittings (Tenor Saxophone / Flute / Trombone / Ocarina – Leyton).**

**Brian McCarthy (Lead Guitar - Leyton).**

**Norman Moore (Vocals – Walthamstow).**

**Geoff Nash (Bass Guitar – Walthamstow).**

**Barry Raven (Keyboard – Walthamstow).**

**Roy Wallis (Baritone Saxophone – Leyton).**

**Pete ????? (Drums - ?????).**

During this period we were under contract to NEMS Enterprises a company formed by Brian Epstein of Beatles fame.

Around this period was the most exciting time and the band reached the pinnacle of its success.

**The core members had good jobs, and although we were approached on a number of occasions with lucrative offers to turn professional.**

**We remained a semi-professional band and played some interesting gigs!**

Audition at Cook's Ferry – Edmonton.

The Wake Arms – Epping. - **(Where we never got paid!).**

Coloma College Convent Girls School – West Wickham. – **(A very strange gig, but very enlightening).**

University of Surrey – Where we supported a band called – The Screw – The loudest band I have ever heard.

Overseas Visitors Club – Earls Court, London.

Bank of England Vaults – Threadneedle Street, London.

### **Circa 1969.**

Pete ????? (Drummer - ?????) left to be replaced by Eric ????? – (Drummer – Shoreditch) – A right head case but oh so likeable!

Liked a drink and would lose his rhythm and timing in the second set.

Would bang 6” nails into par key flooring to stop his drums moving around the stage.

Around this period the band started to lose the drive and passion and reverted back to playing the local circuit again.

The Bell – Walthamstow.

The Plough & Harrow – Leytonstone

The Dukes Head – Walthamstow.

Micanite & Insulators Limited – Christmas Party.

Saint Ignatius Rugby Club – Woodford where we played Christmas Eve - 1969.

Plus one of the most memorable gigs – New Years Eve 1970 at the Woodford Cricket Club which ended prematurely due to a mass punch up.

The Karilion limped on through 1971, 1972 and finally through in the towel and disbanded sometime in 1973.

**These are my recollections with some input from my old friend and lead guitarist Brian McCarthy.**

**Any additional input or corrections to the history would be welcomed.**

**Norman Moore. 30<sup>TH</sup> November 2019**

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