

There was still the odd trip to Liverpool to play at some ballroom or at places like 'The Blue Angel', 'The Iron Door' and 'The Waydown' where we met Bob Wooler the DJ from 'The Cavern'. He was a decent bloke, friendly and easy to get on with. 'The Waydown' booking was an all-nighter and I do remember some 'scally' from a Liverpool group nicking one of our mikes. Thankfully he had no class and only nicked one of our old but reliable Reslo's. He probably thought it was the latest model.

As we moved into August 1964 the group got the break it was looking for. The managers had done some deal and had purchased a demo song called 'I'm Not Running Away' for us and we were set down to do a recording for release on 'Parlophone' records. Or so I thought!!

It became very obvious right from the start that I was on the outer where this recording was concerned and that I wasn't going to be doing the vocals. I didn't particularly like this soft pop song and I was not getting to rehearse any of it at all. I was told to meet them at 9am, Central Station, for the trip down to London to do the recording. I was hanging around the station for two hours, nobody turned up. I was to be told the next day that something had come up, only then finding out that the recording had been completed.

The way things turned out it wasn't all bad that day. Whilst I was waiting I went for a cup of tea in the station cafeteria and managed to talk a very attractive waitress into coming to the Twisted Wheel with me that night, she had never been there before. I saw her a few times after when I

had the chance. She lived in Salford, just a short bus ride away. Salford was to play a big role in my life very soon.

I was not being told things and there were whispers and goings on behind my back. In truth I was just being told a load of lies and being betrayed by guys you thought were your friends and two managers who said yes, meant no, but really didn't give a damn. Fame and stardom or the slim chance to achieve it can be very unforgiving and cruel; a lot of people can get hurt. But this is the stuff many groups were made up of; initial friendship, common desire, conflict and eventual betrayal.



'I'm Not Running Away / So Sweet' (Parlophone UK: R 5216) was recorded at Tony Pike's studio in Putney, London, with all session men playing on it. The record was

released in the UK on December 11th 1964 and in the USA (Capitol Records: 5356) a couple of weeks later. Only the vocal tracks were put down by Terry Fitzharris and Mike Wroe. Jeff Beck, (pre Yardbirds) is supposed to have played at sometime on the session and it is well documented. But regardless it contained a great guitar introduction and it was the highlight of a soon to be forgotten pop record. Personally I thought the 'B' side, the original Terry Fitzharris/Mike Wroe written '*So Sweet*' was a much better pop song.



Early in October 1964, 'Fitz and Startz' and I parted company acrimoniously during a midweek lunchtime session at the 'Plaza' ballroom on Oxford Road. We had been playing there quite regularly at lunchtimes during August and September. Upon entering the dressing room at the far end of the dance floor you could sense that some thing was in the air as there was a real moody atmosphere and both managers were present and that was not normal.

Berisford and Platt told me I was not required anymore, actually Platt told me whilst Berisford took a few steps back. As I left the room I got a few gobby remarks from certain group members, but that was to be expected. Some people just can't help themselves.

After I left the room, DJ Ray Teret gave me a quizzical look as I walked passed him. "*What's going on?*" he asked? A shrug of my shoulders to him and it was over, I was gone. My P45 arrived in the post a couple of days later.

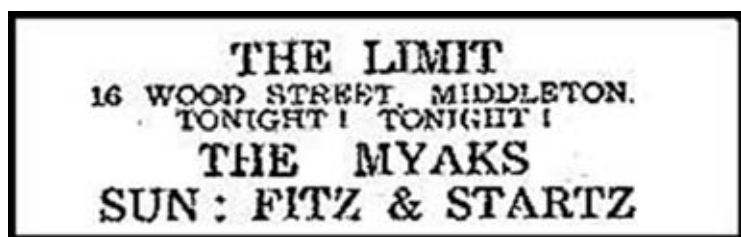
| |
|--|
| <p>PLAZA, MECCA DANCING Afternoon Beat 3 pm—5 30 pm. 2/-. BIG BEAT NIGHT! FITZ 'N' STARTZ DJ: DAVE LEE TRAVIS 7 pm—11 30 pm. 5/6. COME SUNDAY SHAKIN' with the Sensational REV SLACK & THE ROCKING VICKERS All the Top Pops with DJ DAVE LEE TRAVIS 7—11 pm. Members 3/-. Guests 4/-. Next Tues: IRISH NIGHT OUT with the BLUE ACES SHOWBAND</p> |
|--|



**Plaza Ballroom
Oxford Road**

I always got on really well with all the DJ's at the clubs we played. For those who can remember and were able to see and hear Dave Eager, Ray Teret, Jimmy Savile and Dave Lee Travis working, they were the best and most extravagant of DJ's. You could always count on them promoting and making the group they were presenting that day or night feel as if they were a chart topper.

When I look back on my time with ‘The Daltons’ and ‘Fitz and Startz’ I learned heaps about the music business in that short period. I kept my head down and tried to keep my mouth shut. I absorbed and witnessed many different things and I learned very quickly. It was a boom time for groups; you could work every night of the week.



There were many funny moments with Fitz and Startz, like getting asked to leave the stage at the ‘Embassy’ club by the MC after putting my ‘cuban heeled’ boot through one of the stage floor lights. As I left the stage the group played on and I walked back through the audience. Mike Beresford just laughed but by the look on Bernard Manning’s face he was not amused, definitely a time to be out of range of Bernard’s cutting wit and mouth.

I hadn’t got very far through the audience when I was suddenly grabbed and finished up sitting on the lap of the wife of one of Manchester’s biggest gangsters for the rest of the set. She was very tasty and all her girlfriends wanted a kiss and cuddle and to share me around. Their husbands thought it was really funny, a big laugh to them, but I wasn’t complaining!! It was probably much safer that way!!

Playing at the College Club I was mothered by the strippers which pissed off the other guys they thought they were really in with a chance, sorry guys. Back stage at the College club there was a strange arrangement where if you were caught short you had to use the brown sink attached to the wall down a darkly lit passageway. It didn't matter how big a star or who you were!!!



College Club

With all the musical and personal indifference between the group and me, it's funny how things eventually come around. I had occasion to be in contact with Terry Fitzharris forty years later. I asked him the question of why none of them ever mentioned my name when talking or being interviewed about the original members of Fitz and Startz.

I didn't really get an answer!!

Sorry boys!! I was there right from the start and was not a figment of your imagination. Anyway, Terry on another later occasion said that he wished he had listened to me a bit more and gone down the same road as I did. It had been a great education whilst it lasted but I didn't really want to be in a group that was based on cabaret and pop. As expected there was a downside to leaving the group in that over the months Michael Beresford had regularly given me money to buy LP's that I liked to get material off for us to play. I had amassed a good collection of Blues and R&B albums and I had to give them all back.

I never saw them again after I left the Plaza ballroom. I heard 'I'm Not Running Away' a couple of times on the radio, but I couldn't have cared less, I had moved on. It was really a great relief to be away from them.

The truth is now set right, nothing more to say. The End.

A lot of younger muso's think that back in 64 the gear used and instruments that were being played dated back to the late fifties, not the case. Terry played an electric Gibson J160E, Mike played a sunburst Fender Precision Bass and Brian played a Fender Stratocaster. The guys played through Vox amps until Mike got these huge Selmer bass cabinets and amp. Our PA was the very first generation Marshal PA speaker cabinets, with two x 12" speakers in each powered by a Phase Linear 30 Watt RMS amp and Beyer mikes. 30 Watts doesn't seem much by today's standards but a 30 Watt 'Class A' amp had some grunt and was loud.

The only mikes we used were for the vocals, the audio light and shade came directly from the stage. There was nothing miked up and we had no modern day front of house mixing desk, but the sound was great.

After Fitz and Startz it gave me time to look around for another group and the music scene was changing. I swore I would never ever get involved with a group like them again. I was soon approached by a couple of groups to join them but they were just doing the same old stuff.



Fitz & Startz brick in the memorial wall at
The Cavern, Mathew Street, Liverpool

Not having any group commitments was a chance to get back down to the clubs, check out what was going on and to catch up and get back out with my best friend Ken. We

quickly caught up with lost time and he took me to some of the haunts and dives he had been going too recently in the Moss Side, Rusholme, Fallowfield areas.

The places Ken had found were 'Shebeens' and small late night drinking clubs in the basements of old Victorian style residential houses that had been converted into flats. We were well under age but they didn't care, Ken seemed to know somebody at all of them.

One Friday night he introduced me to Indian food, at a restaurant on Wilmslow Road. I was a real novice to spicy Indian dishes. Ken being the expert ordered for both of us and it was hot!!!! I'd never had Indian curry before and after a few mouthfuls I couldn't taste a thing so I didn't have a clue what was in it. What was written on the menu didn't make any sense or help either, but I did quite like the 'Onion Bhaji's' that we had first.

After we finally got out of the restaurant Ken said "let's go to this club I know down Princess Road" so off we went to the 'Nile Club'. I had heard many things about this West Indian club, mostly bad but usually from people who had never been there.

Through the doors and up the stairs into 'The Nile Club', it was a bit different!! Quite dimly lit, hot and crowded, the men and women in there were mainly of Caribbean origin.

This was not a teenage beat club!! We finished up going to the club a couple of times over the next few weeks where we got accepted and I never had any trouble in there. Ken

and I had known a couple of local Jamaican girls from Moss Side whilst we were at school and I met a few at the time I was in the group but this was my first real introduction to Caribbean people, culture and their music.

The pulsating rhythms' of Bluebeat, and Ska, lead by the music of Prince Buster and Desmond Dekker was great stuff.



The Nile Club

‘Reggae’ was still to come.