

Burton Allstars: A History, produced & edited by Anne Nichols 2010

Burton Allstars - HOW IT ALL BEGAN... 2002... 50 YEARS A QUEEN...

Burton Allstars held their first, one night, concert in the Memorial Hall, in June 2002 as part of the village's Royal Golden Jubilee celebrations. The brainchild of professional musicians, Mo and Kelly Witham, who live in the village, Mo and Kelly brought their huge professional experience to forge a band from a group of villagers, some of who had never performed in public before. No mean feat!

Looking back on how it all began, Kirstie Pelling writing in the June 2003 issue of Burton News said, "Like many modern fairy tales, it all began in the village shop. There, on an orthopaedic chair, buried under a pile of pensions, a lone man sat dreaming, while humming the theme from Titanic, and sewing pink and yellow sequins onto a lady's blouse. Later he would join his friend Mo in The King's for a half a lager and an air guitar medley of songs from the hit parade. Then one night they had a brainwave. As if out of nowhere, a hand-written advert appeared on the post office window: 'Musicians wanted for benefit gig, ask inside for details'."

"One hot summer's night, all those in Burton who weren't tone deaf gathered to hear the village band knock out a few tunes. 'Will it be morris dancing, or a recorder master-class?' they asked each other. The next four hours blew their minds and eardrums, as the Burton Allstars were born. The Queen didn't even bother to turn up despite it being a concert in her honour, but Burton sang and danced its village socks off. "

The 150 tickets quickly sold out and, after 6 months of rehearsals, the band was good to go with a selection of songs from the 50-year span of the Queen's reign. The Memorial Hall was packed out and everyone had a brilliant time, listening to the music or dancing or both! Sadly this was the only time we saw the late Pete Sandham perform - his rendition of 'Trashy Women' accompanied by some very saucy girls in feather boas will remain with us forever! Shortly afterwards Pete lost his battle with cancer.

Writing in the June 2002 Burton News, Dave Williamson said, "The whole band enjoyed every minute, and the six months of hard work in rehearsals was forgotten as the night seemed to fly by in minutes. For many in the band this was their first 'Public' performance and every one of them performed brilliantly. But, as most of you know, any performer relies on the feedback from the audience, and in this respect 'you' were magnificent. One outstanding memory for me was the performance of Mike Slinger (saxophone) who, after his first number, raised a clenched fist, as in salute to the cheers and applause of his audience. This was Mike's first stage performance, and as you may appreciate, a dry mouth is the last thing you need when playing a saxophone!" How true that must be!

The Allstars proved so successful in June 2002 that they decided to do it again - in fact, maybe make it an annual event! The February 2003 concerts (yes two nights this time!) were in aid of CancerCare and in memory of Pete, and over the two nights some £400 was raised for the charity's funds.

Kirstie's write-up for Burton News painted the scene, "They plugged up their guitars, buffed up their banjos and prepared to strut their sequined stuff in front of an adoring crowd. In the car park fans anxiously clutched tickets and huddled together for warmth. The long queue snaked around the block, peopled by the young, the young at heart, and a few

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punters who'd joined the queue thinking it was for Bingo. Then magically the doors opened to reveal a hall lit by beams of red and gold, and in scenes only matched by the autumn pre-school jumble sale, there was an almighty stampede for tables. Burton-in-Kendal was ready to rock.

And how it rocked. From Johnny Cash to Edith Piaf, no musical style was left undisturbed. And no one on in Burton, Borwick or Holme was left undisturbed either as the sound-man revved up the volume on the new village P.A. system. Burton Memorial Hall became Wembley Stadium as the lights went dim and the crowd went wild. Dave Williamson was in the building.

For the second time in their short history the Burton Allstars shone brightly. A cabaret line up of people and their musical passions, with moments of pure showmanship, flashes of humour, and more costumes than a fancy dress hire shop. Characters ranged from the tallest man in Cumbria who sang a song of 'Sylvia's Mother', to the smallest man in Cumbria complete with cowboy hat and attitude. And there was something for everyone. Mentioning everyone would fill the whole of this edition of the Burton News. But for me the highlights included the showdown (or was it hoedown) between guitar and banjo; the sex kitten Weather Girls with their red plastic brollies; a jazz singer whose Sarah Vaughan classic effortlessly lit up the room; an impassioned whirlwind musical of tour of France; and the impromptu guest spot by Bryn the Butcher. Ordering half a pound of sausages will somehow be different now. And, finally the humour and energy of the mighty Mr Williamson. I would have thrown my knickers but they'd have stuck to all the sequins on his shirt. He must have been sewing since he left the post office counter.

In short, there was something for everyone, an ensemble piece by a collection of musical individuals, who managed to cater for every taste. But the real star of the show was the sense of community the event created. I stood in the crowd waving my lighter, feeling proud to be a part of the village, and a lot warmer than when I came in.

So now, as the band pack up their costumes, and prepare to hawk their video around prospective record companies, I look forward to another week of life in Burton. But my morning walk to the paper shop will never be the same again. I'll be scrutinising every pedestrian for snatches of song, scanning my newspaper for stray sequins, and locking up my sons in case the Weather Girls are off to the butchers in their French knickers and fishnets. It seems a red plastic umbrella can hide an array of musical talent."

ALLSTARS ON TOUR!

When Kelly took the cheque with the donation to CancerCare and explained how the money had been raised, the recipients were so impressed they asked if the Allstars would be prepared to perform at the CancerCare annual conference in Manchester later in the year. Instantly Kelly said yes!

As Kirstie went on to explain in June 2003 BN, "And when the chemistry worked a second time six months later; it got them wondering about the world beyond Burton. 'Let's do Vegas,' said Mo one day, after a particularly good rehearsal in the Memorial Hall. 'I'm not sure that's on the 555 bus route,' replied Dave, finishing off his chips and wiping his hands

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on his spangled denim jacket.

But the universe was waiting for these stars to shine, and with the help of a bootleg video and some racy costumes they're now taking the next step on the road to international success. The outward leg of their world tour starts in Manchester on June 21st where it's rumoured several hundred people have paid good money to hear them.

Lennon and McCartney, Noel and Liam, Mo and Dave. Teaching the world to sing the Burton way. And to think it all started in the village shop. Me, I just go in for a pint of milk."

A coach was hired, the band and families, lights and sound, instruments and equipment were all loaded aboard, along with two undercover groupies (the editors from Burton News who were there to report back to the village!) What a trip it was... this was what I wrote in the July 2003 issue on my return, "Well what can I say?! The songs are still going round in my head... I've been singing them in my sleep even! The Allstars played the Cancer Carers Annual Conference at Manchester University and bowled them over. They rocked, they rolled, they boogied and they jived. They even sang along. It was an amazing night!

The Band left Burton at 2pm, in a 52-seater coach, and your BN editors were allowed to tag along to record it all for your delight. With nary a soul to wave us off we headed south, the air quivered with tension... nerves as taut as bowstrings... with so many butterflies it's a wonder we didn't take off! An hour or so later saw us pulling into the Trafford Centre car park - shopping therapy? - no just a stop to use the facilities - those nerves again! The problem with car parks are they're meant for cars not huge coaches and we got stuck. It took 25 minutes, several security guards and the closing of the road in to get us out! A notice by the exit said that abuse of the car park would result in the vehicle being towed away - I'd love to have seen them try! At least it broke the tension and everyone relaxed noticeably. Another 20 minutes and we reached the venue. All hands set to helping get the gear out of the bus and into the hall - upstairs or on trolleys in the tiny lift - one trolley at a time... we thought: this will take ages!

The hall - about half as big again as BMH - holds around 400 folks, and the stage soon disappeared under drums, music stands, amps, speakers and all sorts of gear. Multi-coloured spaghetti snaked its way across the boards connecting everything together and ensnared the feet of those on stage.

A panic as George Isherwood realised the lighting control box was locked and an appeal went out for someone with a key. Some time later two students appeared and between them and George managed to make the spotlights face the stage not the crowd - George precarious on the balcony manoeuvring them into place by hand. Sound checks followed - Mo Witham testing each mic in turn, "One two, One two," "Huh," as he went past... a drum solo turned out to be Iain having a practice... he usually plays bass guitar, maybe he fancied a change, or drummer Steve was catching five? Snatches of keyboard from Gary Lancaster as he got himself sorted... Mike Slinger playing "When the saints go marching in" on the harmonica whilst Dave Williamson, wearing a yellow baseball cap backwards, rushed around adjusting the Allstars sign on the backdrop before whirling wife Sue around the dance floor, as Kelly Witham, dragged from the dressing room in nothing but a nightie and Mo's fleece top, belted out "Then he kissed me" for yet another sound check. Everything seeming to be ready, Allstars launched into a rendition of "Sex Bomb" with Kelly and Dave fronting the vocals as George made final tweaks to the lights.

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So how did Allstars come to be playing so far from home? Cast your minds back to the February concert here in the village which raised £400 for the Cancer Care charity. When Kelly took the money to them they were fascinated by the idea of the village band, and asked that Allstars play at the conference. Being as it was for charity workers Kelly agreed and the rest, as they say, will become part of Burton's history.

The time between finishing setting up and the gig starting was filled with eating before everyone disappeared backstage to get into their costumes. The tension rose perceptibly again as the hour approached - will anyone actually come? Small groups trickled in holding glasses and looking bemused - they really did not know what to expect. Some people looked worried as the groupies (those of us who went to support the band) moved as far away from the stage as possible... what did we know that they didn't?... It'll be loud!!! Finally by 8.30 pm the hall was around half full - some 200 folks all waiting for the curtain to rise. Paul Rossi - resplendent in black and white - did his compère routine, the curtains parted to reveal the Allstars in all their glory launching straight into the Glitter Band classic, 'Come On Come On'. The dance floor magically filled with writhing, wriggling, jiving bodies and they were off. From number to number, the Allstars kept going for over an hour - with country, rock, instrumental, pop. Wendy Barker and Paul Rossi's duet 'Baby It's Cold Outside', John Macbeath & Val Still covering the Sinatra number 'Something Stupid', and 'Ring of Fire' sung by Bill Whewell (not Johnny Cash just Shorter Cash) took us to the last of the first set - Mo Witham and Dave Allsop's amazing 'Duelling Banjos' which almost brought the house down.

A break followed, with Kelly leading the 2nd set with an old Crystals number 'Then He Kissed Me' and Owens Park trembled with the boogying feet. The lighting students and security men up on the balcony were loving it as much as the dancers. "Are you really all from one village?" we were asked more than once. Denis Wood's 'Sylvia's Mother' and Cyril Procter's trumpet number 'Cherry Pink' were interspersed with 'Preacher Man' from Helen Jones (introduced by Paul as the butcher's wife) and 'All Shook Up' from hubbie Bryn (famous for his sausage). 'Hoots Mon' featuring Cyril's golden trumpet and the two Sax men John Tyson and Mike Slinger closed that session.

Another break then the final set opened with Val Still and Antoinette Sansby as the 'Abba girls' - complete with white knee boots, silver frocks and big hair - got folks bopping to 'Waterloo' and 'Dancing Queen'. Jane Lancaster second spot was the Billie Holliday song 'Come Rain, Come Shine' whilst Ray Guy and Mo raised a storm with their version of 'My Old Man's a Dustman' - with everyone singing along. Dave Williamson's 'Addicted to Love' kept the dance floor filled and brought the session to an end, but shouts of More! More! brought him back on with 'Honky Tonky Woman'. Even then the crowd hadn't had enough and Kelly rounded off with a wonderful rendition of 'Steamy Windows'.

Four hours and fifty songs had passed - I don't know about the band or the crowd but this groupie was exhausted! Folks drifted reluctantly away with appreciative comments. The business of packing away the gear began, Allstars climbed out of the sequins and back into jeans and t-shirts to load everything back onto the coach. Not only do they sing and play but they are their own roadies - I bet the Rolling Stones don't carry their own drumkit! Finally on the road at 1.30 am and heading for home. The coach lights dimmed as the air hummed with gentle zzzzz's - most of the band slept their way home, and after dropping a

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few off in Carnforth we landed back in the village hall car park at 3.35 am - totally shattered but still on a total high. It was, as someone remarked The Longest Day, but it'll be remembered for even longer as the night the Burton Allstars showed the world how to rock."

ALLSTARS THE MOVIE?

Now an established village favourite event, March 2004 saw two more nights booked at the Memorial Hall. Despite some losses as members moved away, the line up was still strong with several new faces and the nights were once more a huge success. Kirstie tells how she took some visiting friends along as well, "Shine on you crazy diamond Allstars." she said, and expanded on this, "A few weeks ago a friend from the South rang to ask if she and her family could visit us soon. 'Of course,' I told her, 'But the evening you're thinking of is Allstars night. You'll have to come and see the village band.' She said she'd be delighted. 'You're all as mad as coots in Burton. We're still dining out on stories about the onion show.'

And there they were, in Burton Memorial Hall at eight o'clock on a windy Saturday night: a London barrister and a screenwriter, eagerly waiting for the event to begin, and wondering what on earth they'd be experiencing. 'Is it a talent show? Will there be clog dancing? Or is this Burton's answer to Calendar Girls?'

While clog dancing was just about the only musical genre that wasn't represented, and no one got their kit off all night, her comment contained a certain element of truth. Allstars and Calendar Girls are examples of a rural community getting together to show off and celebrate the talent within it. They're both high in public risk-taking, exposing individuals to the scrutiny of the wider community (literally, in the case of the W.I.); and for each of these projects, the initial start up was a brave leap of faith. And both have reaped the rewards from their venture. On a financial level, local charities have benefited. On an emotional level, the sense of confidence, pride and self-worth of the individuals taking part are obvious to all; and on a community level, it's such a positive way of bringing people together. On nights like this, you feel proud to be part of the village - and you also get the chance to have a dance.

The third Burton Allstars concert was as impressive and eccentric as ever. One of the band's main strengths is always their ability to shift gear: one minute adopting the Latin rhythms of a jazz ballad, then effortlessly moving to Johnny Cash. They do pop, and country, and they can even sing in French. The guitarists were brilliant, only their costumes were louder than their beat; and Steve Green was an animal on the drums. The brass section had a unity and confidence and the show was carried by the five female vocalists, led by Jane Lancaster. Paul Rossi linked the whole event smoothly and professionally. Performances by Marion Stretch and Wendy Barker deserve a special mention, and new talent is emerging in the form of Barbara Rossi. And just like Calendar Girls there were two people whose drive and professionalism made it all happen: Mo and Kelly. But for me there wasn't nearly enough Dave Williamson: a natural front-man for the band, his wit and energy give the show an added sparkle whenever he pitches in with a song or off-the-cuff comment.

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So what did our friends from the South make of it? They had a blast. 'Better than the Calendar Girls movie, and without a doubt better than clog dancing,' they agreed. And while the Allstars can't match the Calendar Girls for global reach, they can definitely match them for confidence and talent. So what next? Naked Allstars? Please don't suggest it to Dave Williamson. A Hollywood movie about Burton-in-Kendal? Well, there did just happen to be a screenwriter in the house!"

2004 was an eventful year, ending in December with the catastrophic underwater earthquake and subsequent tsunami which caused such devastation and loss of life in Asia. Burton and the Allstars were stunned, along with many others throughout the world, at the awful tragedy. Burton's response was for the Allstars to do a benefit concert for the disaster fund in January 2005. This time we were asked for help directly... here's what happened.

OH WHAT A NIGHT! (OR DID THE EARTH MOVE FOR YOU?)

"Early one morning the phone rang - it was Ray Guy of Allstars, asking if Barry and I would be willing to 'do the door' at a planned concert to raise money for the Tsunami Disaster Appeal. Being still half asleep and not in full control of my wits I had agreed before I realised what I was doing! On the big night we arrived at 6.15pm to meet Tony Jolley, the other member of the door team, and were closely followed by Boots, Jennifer and Ivor Wetherill, who looked after the raffle.

Places at the concert were limited so we expected a big queue - not quite the 61,000 due at the Cardiff concert for the appeal being held the same night, but we were ready and braced for the rush. We didn't have long to wait - faces appeared at the door, money was exchanged for tickets and the hall gradually started to fill. By 8pm we'd sold just short of 100 tickets and the band were ready to roll, and rock, and swing, and jive!

Mo Witham and his 'Blue Suede Shoes' set the pace from the start, and with ample dance floor space people got up and boogied, hit followed hit, with Denis Wood's version of 'Lola' being followed by Barbara Rossi in her white knee boots covering the Nancy Sinatra song, 'These boots were made for walking'. Kelly Witham's 60's medley had almost everyone on the dance floor, whilst Marion Weymouth's rendition of 'Autumn Leaves' gave time to catch our breath again before Mo and Dave (Allsop) launched into the fantastic 'Duelling Banjos'.

After a break we were delighted by Jane Lancaster's 'Shoorah Shoorah' and Ray Guy's 'Blueberry Hill' and much more, until the second set closed with Bill Whewell giving us 'Crystal Chandelier'. Another break followed where the raffle was drawn - one prize was a specially printed t-shirt signed by the Allstars, then into the final set where Marion got us going with 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' and Dave Williamson belted out 'Mustang Sally', followed by Wendy Barker thrilling us with 'Walking on Sunshine'. During one of the songs in between Ray was persuaded to raffle his tangerine sequined stage shirt and raised £50 for the appeal. Kelly's 'Hot Stuff' brought the evening to an end, where we learned that we had raised over £1000 for the Tsunami Disaster Appeal. Thanks to all the Allstars for yet another fabulous concert - 32 wonderful songs - and everyone said what a wonderful night it had been."

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REPRISE

Not deterred by having performed once in 2005, the Allstars then planned 2 further nights in April, to raise funds for the cash-strapped Recreation Trust in the village. Huge support for these popular facilities raised £1573, and once again the Burton News groupies were there, although this time it was Barry Morgan who wrote it up for the May 2005 issue: "Saturday night and, although the weather was rather dreary, a gaggle of Burtonians wended their way to the Memorial Hall for the 5th annual Allstars concert. They were not disappointed!

From the opening bars of Tony Christie's recently revived 'Amarillo' it was clear that we were in for a great evening of entertainment. It was also clear that all the band had been rehearsing well. Due to the work of the sound engineer Ian Rock we could hear every note and nuance of the performance - maybe the Bacardi helped but I didn't hear a bum note all night, and I didn't have that many - honest!

Hot rocking tracks mixed in with evocative ballads followed one after the other - from 'Gypsy Woman' to 'I Hear You Knocking' to 'Blueberry Hill' to 'Mustang Sally'. Every one doing full justice to the original and then adding in the special Allstars mix. Mo 'Twinkle Fingers' Witham did a Shadows spot of course, but not one of their more well known ones. In fact 'Sleepwalk' was only ever released on their first album in 1961 plus a 1963 EP called 'Shindig', never as a single. Great stuff all the same!

When the second set started we all thought that George Isherwood had fallen asleep and forgotten to turn on the lights. It was, though, for Paul Rossi - who upstaged Tom Jones (no mean feat!) with a fantastic rendition of 'Delilah' that brought the house down!! Think 'Phantom of the Opera' mixed with Marcel Marceau and a sprinkling of Freddy Mercury and you won't be far off the mark. Sheer magic!

That wasn't the only high point by a long shot. All the girls proved that they could hold their own as solo singers. Jane Lancaster with 'Love Letters' and 'You're No Good'. Marion Weymouth with 'Hymn de L'amour' and 'Girl From Ipanema'. Wendy Barker with 'Someday' and 'One Way Or Another'. Barbara Rossi with 'Jambalaya' and 'You Belong To Me'. Kelly Witham of course in fine voice with 'Manic Monday' and 'Hot Stuff' completed the line-up.

Paul Rossi wasn't the only male to show that he has a great voice. Ray Guy, Dennis Wood, Mo Witham, Bill Whewell and Dave Williamson have all been heard singing before but on the opening bars of 'All The Young Dudes' I was really taken by surprise by Gary Lancaster on keyboards. Being out of view from where I was, he had me convinced that Mott The Hoople's lead singer Ian Hunter (no, not the one that used to be in Allstars!) was in fact singing backstage and was going to leap out and do a guest spot!

One curious item that was explained later - why was Dennis Wood seen shaking a banana at one point? Strange as it looked, Dave Williamson assured me that it was indeed a musical instrument. I bet a lot of folks will still be unconvinced and think it really was a banana that Dennis picked up by mistake or as a joke to see if anyone noticed. If so - gotcha Dennis!

There was a serious side to all this, and the two nights brought in a terrific £1573 for the

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Recreation Trust. Well done to everybody!"

REVIEWING THE SITUATION

In October 2005 we were asked to listen to the CD made by Allstars. This was something that had been worked on for several months, and we were privileged to receive an early review copy. Thrusting it into the CD player immediately, we sat back and listened as the house flooded with the sounds of Allstars. Our own private concert - wow! Reaching the last track we realised this was the only recording of the late Pete Sandham and it had been taken from the first live concert. Although there was a difference in quality it was wonderful to hear again Pete's wonderful 'Trashy Women'.

Writing our review later, we said, "BN was given a rare copy of the first Allstars CD (only three existed at the time) and asked to produce a review. What an enjoyable task this turned out to be! From the opening track of Mo 'Twinkle Fingers' Witham and Dave Alsop with 'Duelling Banjos' to the last track of Pete Sandham with 'Trashy Women' (taken from a recording made at the very first Allstars concert for the Jubilee celebrations) the sheer quality of performance shines out, as does the excellent job of production done by Ian Rock. This 51-minute, 16-track CD would not disgrace any collection.

Needless to say, the CD got more than a few plays, not just because we were doing a review of it, and will be in the player often when we get our very own official copy (sadly, we have had to return this review one.)

As this was a first copy there was no artwork to scan and show BN readers, but the final version is eagerly awaited (no clues as to what may be on the cover, we haven't been told that.)

'So what else in on there?' you may ask - well here's the full track listing to whet your appetite ...

Mo Witham & Dave Alsop - Duelling Banjos
Marion Plowright - Autumn Leaves
Cyril Proctor - Cherry Pink
Bill Whewell - Sixteen Tons
Barbara Rossi - These Boots are made for Walking
Dave Williamson - Mustang Sally
Mo Witham & Dave Alsop - Nuage
John McBeath & Wendy Barker - Something Stupid
Wendy Barker - Perfect
Denis Wood - Love's Made a Fool of You
Ray Guy - We've Got to Get out of This Place
Janie Lancaster - Never Loved a Man
Paul Rossi - Mac the Knife
Mo Witham - Shake, Rattle & Roll
Kelly Witham - You're My World
Pete Sandham - Trashy Women

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A good and varied selection to show off the range of musical talent there is in Burton, and still plenty more of where it came from for a second (third, fourth?) CD from the greatest 'village band' that we think has ever been brought to life.

In conclusion, don't stand behind the door when this hits the streets or you'll be bowled over in the rush - as you will be bowled over by the CD itself."

MELLIFLUOUS MELODIES, RAUCOUS ROCK AND BRILLIANT BALLADS

In 2006 Burton News advertised, "The Annual All Star 'gig' takes place on Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd April in the Memorial Hall.

If you don't want to miss an extravaganza of Mellifluous Melodies, Raucous Rock and Brilliant Ballads then now's the time to book the babysitter, dust off your dancing shoes and get the suit out of the pawn shop!!

But... first you need a ticket...

These will be available when you boogie-on-down to the Memorial Hall on either Saturday 1st or Saturday 8th April between the hours of 10.30 am and 12.00 noon, where you will be attended to by a couple of ageing rockers. Alternatively you can ring 'Big Bill' Whewell.

Don't Forget - Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd April

* New Show

* New Songs

* Amazing New Singers

* Fabulous new brass line-up

Come along - have a great night and support local charities

BE THERE OR BE SQUARE! DON'T FORGET.....TICKET ONLY"

Sadly on this occasion, a regular face was missing from the line-up as we reported in the May issue of the News, "The annual Allstars gig in April introduced new faces and new songs to an enthusiastic audience. We went on the Friday night and were sad to hear that David Williamson wasn't up to performing - he was missed! Opening with a fabulous rendition of the Shadows' hit, 'Apache', Mo "Twinkle Fingers" Witham led the band into a wonderful evening of songs we knew and some we didn't recognise but enjoyed all the same!

From Wendy Barker's 'First Cut is the Deepest' to Ray Guy's 'You Ain't Seen Nuthin' Yet!' the music ranged across the years and in tempo. Making it a family affair was Jane Lancaster's bluesy 'I Can't Stand the Rain', husband Gary's 'Sorrow', and newcomer, Caroline Lancaster's 'Like a Bird'. It must be daunting to come into an established group like Allstars and sing in front of people you pass in the street or meet in the pub, but Caroline did it, not just once but three times and did it very well! It was great to hear another new female voice too - Pam Burgess showed she could handle songs as varied as the Bond theme - 'Nobody Does it Better' and 'I Feel Like a Woman'. We look forward to seeing both Caroline and Pam again on stage.

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That Richard Selvidge could play bass we knew, but we didn't know he sings as well... 'The Weight' was another song we didn't know but we enjoyed Richard's rendition of it. Paul Rossi was on good form as ever, both as compère and singer: from 'Beyond the Sea' to 'Mini the Moocher' and 'Sway' he entertained us, and his saucy comments about the ladies had us (and the band!) giggling. Barbara Rossi's enthusiasm with 'Hey Good Lookin' and 'Walkin' Back to Happiness' got us giggling in our seats, whilst her outfit for her cover version of Sade's 'Smooth Operator' made some of the men's eyes pop out!

Bill Whewell stepped away from his usual Johnny Cash numbers, and gave us instead, 'Only Make Believe' and 'Walk on By', whilst Denis had us chuckling with his versions of 'Urban Spaceman', 'Not Fade Away', and memorably with audience participation, Chuck Berry's 'My Dingaling'. Mo's 'Moon Dance' was everything we expect and more from his twinkling fingers, whilst Kelly was fabulous as ever with 'Gloria' and, one of my favourites, 'Evergreen'.

Over all it was a great night - we enjoyed it tremendously. It was shame there weren't more people there on the Friday night but I heard that Saturday made up for that. My only gripe was there were no crisps on sale at the bar, nor any bitter lemon, but I reckon if that's my only grumble it was a very good night!

Thank you to all the Allstars who put so much time and effort into arranging these nights for us... you really are all stars!"

A VERY TALL ORDER

In 2007 Dave Williamson received a letter from the Rosemere Cancer Foundation based at the Royal Preston Hospital, asking for help in raising a massive £650,000 to pay for a much-needed I G R T machine for cancer treatment. Once more the Allstars came together, determined to help in whatever way was possible.

Realising that the sum needed was going to take some raising, Dave talked to other groups within the village and there was a series of events held which, along with personal donations, the annual Onion Show and the November Allstars concerts, raised the staggering amount of £6,750 towards the appeal. As Dave reported in the December 2007 Burton News, "I delivered the cheque to the Cancer Centre at Preston on Tuesday, 13th November and they were over the moon. £6,750.00 represents just over 1% of the required £650,000 they need for the new machine, which they hope to have in about a years time, and for this amount to come from a small village is fantastic. Well, what can I say. I could use all the superlatives, Fantastic. Wonderful. Great. But I'll just settle for THANK YOU. To the people of Burton, and beyond. If this turns out to be the last 'Allstars' gig, which we all think it is, but never say never, at least we went out on a high, and it was for a good cause. The problems we have in just getting the band together nowadays are a logistical nightmare. But get together they did for two nights for the 'Ray of Hope Appeal'."

ALL GOOD THINGS MUST END SOME DAY

Sadly this was indeed the last Allstars concert. At their AGM on 14 April 2010 it was

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decided to wind up the band, and the following notice appeared in the May issue of Burton News: "At the meeting held in the Memorial Hall on 14th April, it was agreed that the remaining funds should be divided between Macmillan Cancer Support and the Alzheimer's Society, and cheques for £294 each have been sent."

It marked the end of an era. Allstars had given so much pleasure to many people, raised thousands of pounds for needy causes, and brought together a community. They will be much missed but fondly remembered. I hope this history will help keep them alive in the memory of our village. Thanks for all the music and the fun, you crazy diamond Allstars!

Produced & edited by Anne Nichols © 2010
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