

The Story of The Electrons

It may have been a coincidence that my mother and my music teacher gave up on me playing the piano just as Lonnie Donegan came on the scene. What I had learned would prove to be an advantage in years to come when I was recording. The guitar was my new instrument and my old school chum Brian Adams taught me to play it. After a while we decided that we should do something with our new skills and we decided that we should look for someone to form a group. A fellow apprentice Dave Elliott was up for it and so the Electrons were formed. Another band with the same name were later formed north of the border, they eventually became 'Middle Of The Road' and had a cheesy hit record late on.

It so happens, that at that time, the Parish Church were holding a Thursday Night record hop in the town and we got the chance to do the interval spot. There were mixed reactions to us but we soldiered on and eventually got to do the whole evening with the records being played in the interval. Dave had a neighbour, Julian Hawketts who was an electronics wizard who built the equipment we needed. Brian had a pickup on his guitar and an amplifier made from an old radio.

During my dinner hour from Norwich Printing school I went to Mr Wilson's shop and got myself a pickup. Dave had built himself an electric guitar which he could use to simulate a bass until he was able to buy one.

We thought that we had hit the big time when we got a booking to play in a pub in a nearby village only to find when we got there that the only plug power point in the place was in the private kitchen at the rear of the building. However we formed a friendship with a youth club at Toftwood who, over the years that followed, gave us plenty of work.

Brian had to leave us and go to college and so another friend, Eddie Millar, came in my place while I moved up to be lead guitar, buying the first of several guitars more suitable for the job. Brian and I had Rosetti Guitars which were made in Holland and were very basic.

Pete Coley joined us on vocals at that time. For the past couple of years we had no drummer and so an arrangement was made with Lennie Hamlin who was drummer with another band. He would drum for us on Thursdays and any other time when his band did not need him. Another friend, Terry McDowell was interested in playing drums for us and so David's dad did a deal with Mr Wilson and got him a kit. With Pete now on vocals the Electrons became more pop and rock'n'roll than skiffle.

When Eddie left to be a stationmaster, Norwich born singer/guitarist Tony Barber came to town. After a couple of interval slots he was invited to join the band and so Dave's dad did another deal with Mr Wilson to get Tony an electric guitar. Pete retired from singing and became co- manager. This resulted in the vocals being shared by all the band in the current fashion and we became what was then known as a beat group. We got some good gigs, one was deputising for the resident group at the Hunstanton Kit Kat Club. As a result of that we got a gig alongside some of Larry Parne's acts and a couple of Liverpool groups at King's Lynn. Eventually we had to say goodbye to Tony who went to Australia to make the big time in music there. His brother, Mike, took his spot in the band.

The band was doing well with up-to-date equipment and material written with the help of Tony. However, the writing was on the wall with Dave about to finish his apprenticeship and Terry wanting to join the Army and in April 1964 the Electrons played their final Thursday gig in Fakenham, some of which was recorded. Dave had a job in the West Country, Terry was about to join the Army and Mike and Jim were head hunted by a Suffolk band.

The Fat Lady had not yet sung and in November 1989 the Original Electrons got together with Eddie and Pete plus some musicians from Brian's son's band to hold a reunion in aid of BBC Children in Need. There was a similar event the next year.

In the future Brian and Jim would again work together in a band. Finishing after 20 years because of an unfortunate incident.