

MERTHYR TYDFIL 1955-75

MEMORIES OF POPULAR MUSIC
ATGOFION O GERDDORIAETH BOBLOGAIDD

A SNAPSHOT OF 1965



By 1965, it is clear that the musical landscape has changed in Merthyr. With the 'What's On' advert in the Merthyr Express now taking up the back page of the paper, the first popular music event of the new year is at The Palace Cinema, featuring local band Peter Lovis & The Spirals on Friday, Jan 1st, with a 3/- entrance fee, followed on the Saturday by a 'Big Dance', costing 4/6 admission.

It is also noticeable that Bingo has now emerged, featuring every Tuesday at The Palace Cinema. By 1965, a 'bingo club' was also starting at the Kirkhouse Hall, Georgetown, every Saturday and Sunday. Bingo at the Palace Cinema progressed to every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from June 4th, replacing one of the music nights, possibly because there was not enough new music to keep public interest.

Interestingly, The Temperance Hall, Theatre Royal and the ABC (formally the Castle Cinema) are still showing films, making the Palace Cinema the main popular music venue in 1965. At this time however, it is important to point out that dancing appears to be more important than the name of some of the popular music groups. For example both the Friday and Saturday nights advertised in the January 8th, 1965 edition of the Merthyr Express advertised the event as featuring 'top pop groups' followed by 'two top groups', with no band names mentioned.

At the Capital in Cardiff, a venue recently frequented by The Beatles, Chuck Berry is headlining on Thursday January 14th, with the Graham Bond Organisation and The Moody Blues supporting. The Hollies are also advertised as playing in the Market Hall in Brecon on May 26th, 1965.

Significantly, by 1965, neither the Miners Hall or the New Drill Hall are now being used as popular music venues, although a performance of Rigoletto took place at the Miners Hall on Thursday October 28th, 1965.

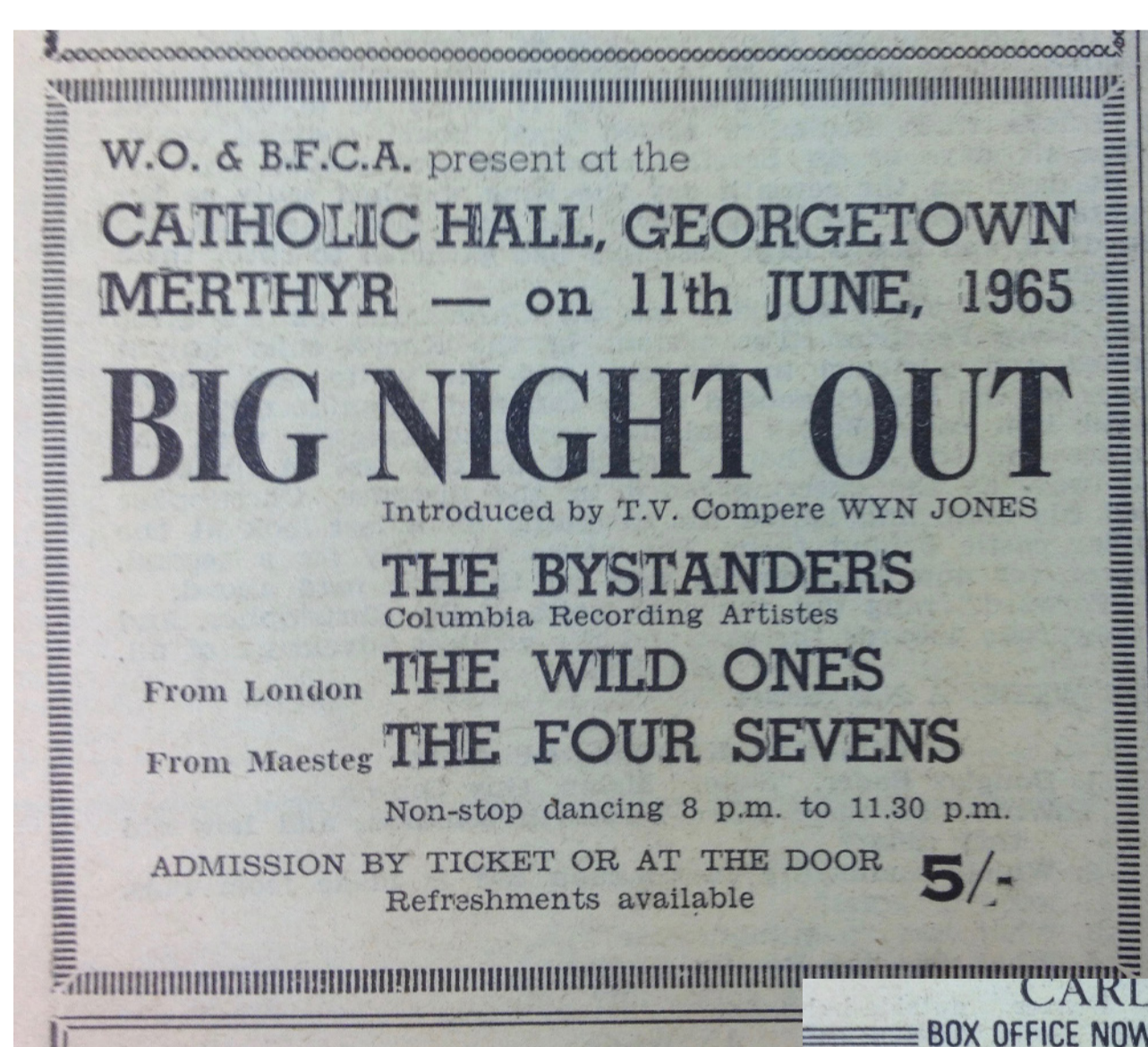
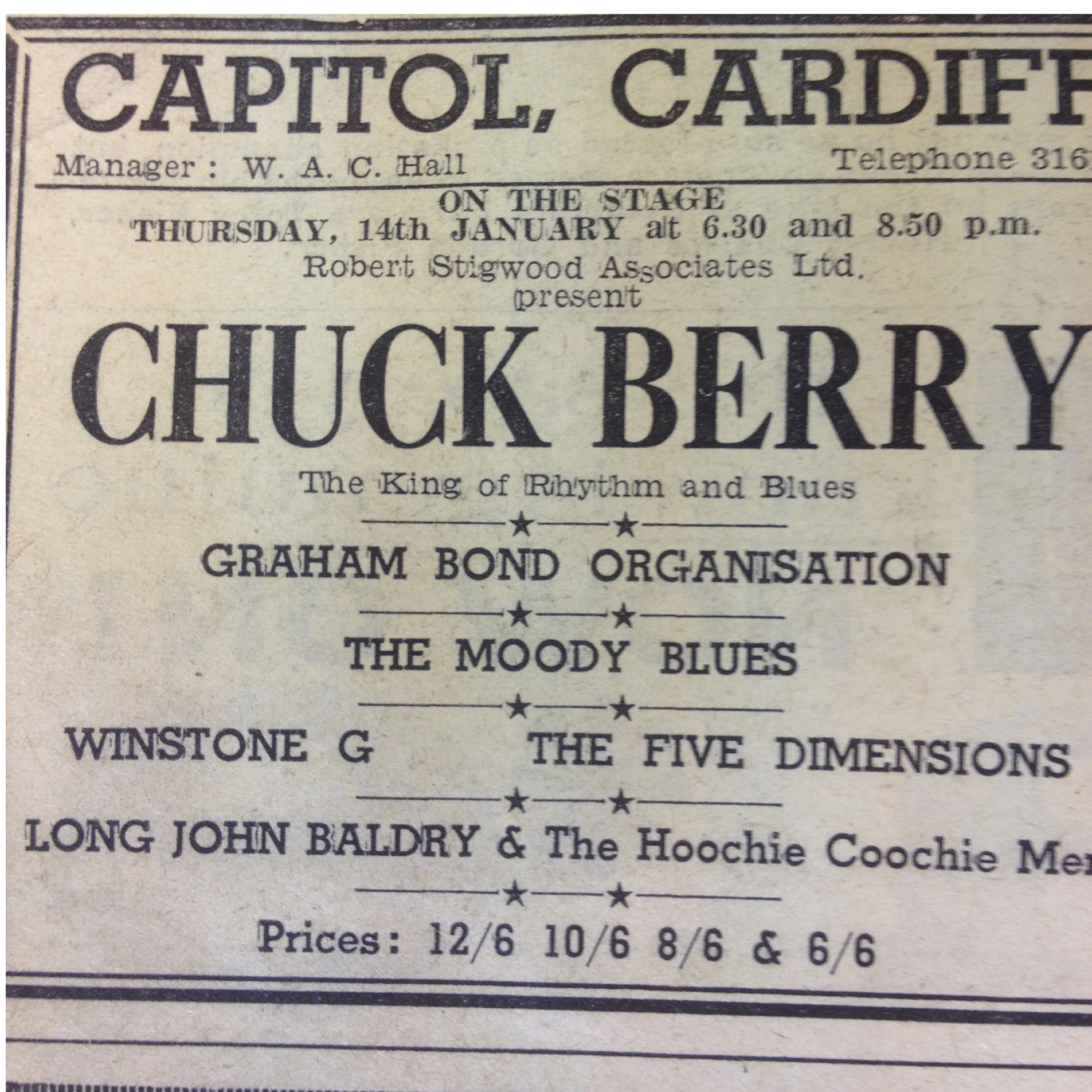
Regarding popular music activities in other venues, on Saturday June 11th, 1965, a 'Big Night Out' is advertised at the Catholic Hall in Georgetown. Introduced by 'TV compare' Wyn Jones, Merthyr Tydfil's own The Bystanders perform there, proudly announced as 'Columbia recording artists' and supported by The Wild Ones and The Four Sevens.

The June 4th, 1965 edition of the Merthyr Express also advertised a 'Dis-Ko-Tek at the Go-Go bar' in Aberdare.

This play on words, seeming to combine 'discs' and 'technology' is mentioned again in the August 27th edition of the paper, this time spelt as 'DiscoTheque' when advertising an event at the Kirkhouse, Georgetown, in Merthyr. By September 10th, 1965, this appears to become a headline event at the venue, with a membership fee of 2/6 per year. On Mondays and Wednesdays, the first 100 people get in for 1 shilling.

As this venue started as a bingo club at the start of the year, this appears to be a good development for live music. Bands who played there in 1965 included The Boston Tea Party and The Cheating Hearts, who played there on Wednesday October 13th, 1965. Other valley based venues who advertised popular music at this time included The Express Ballroom in Abercynon, who advertised Laurence & the Arabians and Tawney Reed and the Flower Pot Men on Saturday March 13th, 1965 and Monday March 15th respectively.

The Go-Go Bar in Aberdare also occasionally featured popular music, with The Swinging Blue Jeans performing there on Wednesday April 14th, 1965.



All Photos Courtesy Merthyr Express.

