



WELL I ASK YOU

GREAT BRITISH RECORD LABELS DECCA

rockhistory.co.uk

CD1

- 1 EDEN KANE Well I Ask You
- 2 THE BIG JIM SULLIVAN COMBO You Don't Know What You've Got
- 3 RAY BENNETT Go Away Little Girl
- 4 GARY MILLS I'll Step Down
- 5 MARK WYNTER Angel Talk
- 6 ROY LEE Two Initials (In A Heart)
- 7 TREVOR PEACOCK Can I Walk You Home
- 8 DICKIE BISHOP & HIS SIDEKICKS Prisoner's Song
- 9 HARRY ROBINSON'S XV Heavy Date
- 10 JET HARRIS Some People
- 11 BRIAN POOLE & THE TREMELOES Blue
- 12 TONY & THE VELVETS Sunday
- 13 OLIVER REED The Wild One
- 14 JIMMY POWELL Remember Then
- 15 THE VERNONS GIRLS Do The Bird
- 16 JOE BROWN & HIS BRUVVERS Man Mountain
- 17 JOHNNY & CHAZ & THE GUNNERS Bobby
- 18 DEL CARSON I Told Myself A Lie
- 19 GLENDA COLLINS Take A Chance
- 20 VINCE EAGER & THE VAGABONDS Soda Pop Pop
- 21 JESS CONRAD Just The Two Of Us
- 22 TERRY DENE This Is The Night
- 23 BILLY BOYLE My Baby's Crazy 'Bout Elvis
- 24 EDDIE HICKEY Lady May
- 25 DANNY RIVERS & THE ALEXANDER COMBO My Baby's Gone Away
- 26 THE BOB CORT SKIFFLE GROUP School Day
- 27 THE CUTTERS I've Had It
- 28 LORD ROCKINGHAM'S XI Lord Rockingham Meets The Monster
- 29 CRAIG DOUGLAS Oh Lonesome Me
- 30 KARL DENVER Wimoweh
- 31 THE BACHELORS Charmaine
- 32 THE TORNADOS Love And Fury
- 33 ALAN FIELDING Building Castles In The Air
- 34 BILLY FURY Last Night Was Made For Love

CD2

- 1 TOMMY STEELE The Writing On The Wall
- 2 STEVE PERRY Ginny Come Lately
- 3 DOUG SHELDON Book Of Love
- 4 DON CHARLES The Hermit Of Misty Mountain
- 5 MIKE PRESTON Just Ask Your Heart
- 6 THE BACHELORS Why Can't It Be Me
- 7 PERRY FORD & THE SAPPHIRES Baby, Baby
- 8 LEE CORVETTE Tender Love
- 9 KENNY HOLLYWOOD Magic Star
- 10 ROB STORME Five Minutes More
- 11 THE THREE BARRY SISTERS Spoilsport
- 12 TONY VICTOR There Was A Time
- 13 JERRY DANE You're My Only Girl
- 14 THE CANNONS My Guy's Come Back
- 15 LYNN CORNELL What A Feeling
- 16 GERRY DORSEY Crazy Bells
- 17 JOEY CASTELL I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone
- 18 WEE WILLIE HARRIS Wild One
- 19 DEAN PARKER & THE REDCAPS Blue Eyes And Golden Hair
- 20 THE MOST BROTHERS Whole Lotta Woman
- 21 RUSS SAINTY with the NU-NOTES Too Shy
- 22 DAVID HAMBER I Found Carol
- 23 LITTLE JOHNNY & THE THREE TEENAGERS Baby Lover
- 24 THE JETSTREAMS Tiger
- 25 RHET STOLLER Walk Don't Run
- 26 JACK GOOD'S FAT NOISE The Fat Noise
- 27 LISA NOBLE Who's Sorry Now
- 28 ALEX MURRAY Teen Angel
- 29 MARKE ANTHONY Why Didn't You Tell Me
- 30 BUDDY BRITTEN & THE REGENTS The Beat Of My Heart
- 31 THE JOHNNY BOYS Sleep Walk
- 32 RAY ADAMS Venus In Blue Jeans
- 33 THE LONNIE DONEGAN SKIFFLE GROUP John Henry
- 34 ANTHONY NEWLEY Do You Mind

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RHGB 35

Released March 9th 2015

Decca Records were formed by financier Sir Edward Lewis, the man who would famously run the company from its inception in 1929, right up until his death, in 1980. The name itself can be traced back even further, to 1914, to a portable gramophone called the "Decca Dulcephone", manufactured by Barnett, Samuel & Sons, who subsequently changed their name to The Decca Gramophone Co Ltd. Lewis, whose firm acted as their stockbrokers, tried to persuade Decca to expand into making and selling records, as an adjunct to musical instruments and gramophones. He'd discovered that The Duophone Record Company, who had a manufacturing plant in South London, were in financial difficulties and ripe for a takeover. Consequently, when Decca demurred, Lewis put together a consortium and purchased both companies, merging them to create The Decca Record Company.

Fast-forwarding some twenty-odd years, by the 1950s, Decca was established alongside EMI as one of the UK's two major Majors. Indeed, from a perspective of "Popular Music", Decca pretty much had the UK market sewn up, their roster including artists like Billy Cotton, Winifred Atwell, Dickie Valentine, Ted Heath, David Whitfield, Lisa Roza, Mantovani, The Stargazers, Joan Regan, Jimmy Young, Cyril Stapleton, ad infinitum, alongside licensed-in American repertoire on their London, Brunswick and Vogue-Coral labels.

However, from your average British teenager's perspective, the 50s didn't really get going until 1955, when Bill Haley and his chums made their considerable presence felt. Up until that point, what passed for "Popular Music" in the UK had remained rooted to a bygone era, still looking and sounding much as it had some fifteen or twenty years earlier.

The record that belatedly dragged Britain into the 1950s was, of course, Lonnie Donegan's frenzied 'Rock Island Line', a pivotal recording which kickstarted the UK Skiffle boom and reshaped an entire generation of teenagers' expectations of what Pop Music should sound like. Skiffle subsequently spread like wildfire, and Decca should have swept up. But they inexplicably let Lonnie slip through their fingers; he'd famously recorded the disc as an ensemble member of Chris Barber's Jazz Band, and it seems that nobody thought it relevant to offer him a solo contract (NB: 'Rock Island Line' can be found on *Freight Trains, Last Trains & Rock Island Lines*, RHGB 23; its rather splendid flip, 'John Henry', is featured herein).

Ironically, Donegan aside, Decca had little success with Skiffle and swiftly moved on to the altogether more interesting nascent R&R scene. They even allowed one or two of their failed Skifflers an alternate shot at chart glory, which is how The Bob Cort Skiffle Group came to record perhaps the most bizarre cover of a Chuck Berry song ever committed to wax (c.f. 'School Day') whilst elsewhere, former Donegan sideman Dickie Bishop was unlucky with several fine releases, notably his cover of Warren Storm's 'Prisoner's Song'.

Decca's first 'proper' Rock'n'Rollers of any real note were Tommy Steele and Terry Dene. Of course, cover versions had long since been the staple diet of UK artists and in the context of R&R, the competition to cover US hits intensified. Mind you, there were never any guarantees of success; despite their best efforts.

The Godfather of British R&R was undoubtedly Jack Good who brought us *Six-Five Special*, *Oh Boy!* and *Boy Meets Girls*. He also worked for Decca as freelance A&R guru, unearthing and producing all manner of acts, most notably chart-toppers Lord Rockingham's XI. Good also produced artists like Billy Fury, Joe Brown, Karl Denver, Jet Harris, Jimmy Powell and many more.

By 1960/61, R&R was becoming increasingly softer and less frantic, string-driven rather than guitar & sax-propelled - a classic example, perhaps, being Edén Kane's home-made, chart-topping 'Well I ask You'. Covers of major US hits were still big business, although Steve Perry's winsome 'Ginny Come Lately' lost out to Bryan Hyland's original, whilst Ray Adams and Ray Bennett were trumped by rival UK covers (both, ironically, by Mark Wynter, by now recording for Pye). A couple of singers, Craig Douglas and Gary Mills, had enjoyed their biggest successes a couple of years earlier, on the Top Rank label, whilst bizarrely, Decca even contrived to have two entirely different groups called The Bachelors.



RockHistory.co.uk is an on-going historical project to record the background stories and the anecdotes from the people who participated in greatest British musical explosion that started back in the 1950s and that went on to reverberate right round the world. Tales about the origins of the songs, the roots of the groups and the front of the performers. These CD releases are part of a series of multi-media release that are all linked via the www.RockHistory.co.uk