

LITTLE BOOK OF
CLIFF RICHARD



Mike Read

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Cliff,

A heart felt congratulations on 50 years at the top!

It's a privilege to have been a part of it and a pal for the last 30 years, sharing TV and Radio shows, tennis courts, holidays, stages and parties.

Hey! We got to play for, and with, the Princess of Wales and the future King and his brother. Now that's a line-up!

I'm proud as a writer that you recorded three of my songs, More To Life, November Night and the Tsunami single Grief Never Grows Old and was equally proud to be able to give something back by flying Roy Bennett over from the States as a surprise so you could sing The Young Ones together. Who says giving is not as pleasurable as receiving!

It was also a pleasure to be asked to write books for both you and The Shadows.

I've really appreciated your support of my musicals and crikey...you've even been there in times of romantic turbulence! What a pal.

I was pleased to be there at your 40th, playing with my band at your 50th and being part of the unforgettable Mediterranean cruise for the 60th.

It was always a pleasure, to support The Tennis Foundation helping to raise money for young tennis players, be it at Brighton, Birmingham, Hampton Court or even in the depths of the Australian jungle!



Above: Cliff Richard and Mike Read performing together.

As I see it, you've made some of the best records of the last 50 years, been true to yourself, your beliefs, your friends and your music as well as being a great ambassador abroad.

We've been so lucky to be a part of such a unique musical era.

Keep on Rockin',

Mike Read

1940-1950

Harry Rodger Webb was born in Lucknow, India on October 14th 1940 to Rodger and Dorothy Webb and his eldest sister Donella was born three years later.

The young Harry started school in 1945, at an establishment attached to St. Thomas' Church in Lucknow and where he first sang in the choir.

Cliff's second sister, Jacqueline was born in 1948, the year that the family made the three-week voyage to England on the SS Ranghi which landed them at Tilbury Docks.

The Webb's arrived in Britain in September 1948, with just £5 to their name, the equivalent of a week's wages (now about £400.) The family moved into a single room in Carshalton, Surrey at a time when a quarter of British homes still had no electricity, there were only 15,000 TV sets in the whole country and most families relied on the radio for their entertainment. The long-running radio serial Mrs. Dales Diary had just started and one of the most popular radio shows was It's That Man Again (ITMA) starring Tommy Handley, Dereyck Guyler and Hattie Jacques. Popular songs in the UK at the time included Buttons and Bows, Baby Face, Red Roses For A Blue Lady, Slow Boat To China and I'm Looking Over A Four-Leaf Clover.

The young Harry was enrolled at Stanley Park Road Primary School in Carshalton, but for much of the following year his father, Rodger was unable to find work and the family struggled to make ends meet.

It didn't stop their son from finding his first girlfriend in school pal, Elizabeth Sayers.

1950-1960

Post-war jobs for unskilled workers were mainly available in factories, so the Webb's moved to Waltham Cross in Hertfordshire where Rodger got a job with Ferguson's Radio at Enfield and Dorothy found work at a factory in Broxbourne, after giving birth to their last child, Joan.

It was a new school for young Harry as he started at King's Road Primary at Waltham Cross.

In 1952 Harry failed the 11 plus exam and went to Cheshunt Secondary Modern School and the following year was selected for both the school and Hertfordshire Under 14s football teams in what was known then as 'right-back.' The family moved into a three-bedroom council house in Hargreaves Close, Cheshunt.

His first-ever public appearance as a singer was at a Youth fellowship dance in Cheshunt, which led, in the mid-50s to Harry becoming involved in the school dramatic society, being cast as Ratty in *Wind In The Willows* and Bob Cratchit in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Two teachers at the school who influenced him enormously were Mr. Norris and Bill Latham.

In 1957 Harry is stripped of his prefect's badge for playing truant from school to watch Bill Haley and the Comets at Edmonton on March 3rd. Their current single was *Don't Knock The Rock*.

Harry left Cheshunt Secondary Modern with an O Level in English and began work as a credit control clerk at Atlas Lamps in Enfield for £4-15-0d a week. Outside working hours he was singing with musical group The Quintones alongside school-friends Beryl Molyneux, Freda Johnson, John Vince and Betty Clark, the group performing at the local Holy Trinity Church Youth Club.

During 1958, drummer Terry Smart co-opted Harry into the Dick Teague Skiffle Group as vocalist and rhythm guitarist, but Terry and Harry

soon took their leave to form The Drifters, enlisting a former school-friend of Harry's, guitarist Norman Mitham.

Playing more Rock & Roll based music, they rehearsed at the Webb's house and after a gig at The Five Horseshoes in Hoddesdon, 18-year-old teddy boy John Foster was so impressed with Harry's singing that he offered to be their manager. Under his management they extended their gigs, but at one show in Derby the promoter let it be known that he didn't consider Harry Webb & The Drifters to be a very commercial name and suggested that Harry, at least, should change his name. After initial suggestions of Cliff Russard and Russ Clifford the name Cliff Richard was decided upon and after a gig at London's 2i's coffee bar bass player Ian Samwell joined the group.

In the early summer of 1958 John Foster's parents put up £10 to enable Cliff and The Drifters to make a demonstration record of Lloyd Price's Lawdy Miss Clawdy and Jerry Lee Lewis' Breathless at the HMV Studios in London's Oxford Street. The Drifters line-up that recorded these demos was Cliff, Ian Samwell, Norman Mitham, Terry Smart and Ken Pavey.

Cliff and The Drifters were the star attraction at a Carrol Levis Discovery talent show at The Gaumont Theatre, Shepherd's Bush. They cleverly offered to top the bill without having to take part in the contest a masterstroke that led to agent George Ganjou agreeing to sign them to his agency.

After hearing their demonstration record and being impressed, producer Norrie Paramor agreed to take Cliff and The Drifters into Abbey Road Studios in July, where they laid down Schoolboy Crush and a song written by Ian Samwell, Move It, following which he signed a long-term contract with EMI's Columbia label. After the recording the group undertook a nine-week residency at Butlin's holiday camp in Clacton-on-Sea, with Ken Pavey replacing Norman Mitham.

Schoolboy Crush was scheduled to be the A side of the first release, but Norrie Paramor's daughter told her father that Move It would have far more appeal to teenagers, so on September 12th Move It entered the chart with Cliff making his debut on ABC TV's Oh Boy, the following day singing Move It and Don't Bug Me Baby.

As the record moved up the chart, Cliff and The Drifters were booked to appear on a nationwide tour with The Kalin Twins, Hal and Herbie and the

Most Brothers, Mickie Most and Alex Murray. John Foster went to the 2i's coffee bar to try and recruit guitarist Tony Sheridan for the tour, but he was at the cinema and Hank Marvin, formerly with Newcastle's Railroaders Skiffle Group and Pete Chester's Chesternuts was recommended to him.

Hank agreed, but only if fellow Railroader and Chesternut, Bruce Welch could come in on rhythm guitar. The Drifters line-up on tour was Hank, Bruce, Terry Smart and Ian Samwell, with Most Brothers bass guitarist Jet Harris also playing for them on the tour, after which he replaced Samwell full-time.t

Realising the need for professional management, the experienced Franklin Boyd came on board, with John Foster still working as part of the team.

Following his radio debut on the BBC's Saturday Club, Columbia released Cliff's second single, High Class Baby, which peaked at No 7 and established him as a new artist for whom a bright future is predicted. After just two hit singles, he landed the part of Curly Thompson in the film Serious Charge, alongside Anthony Quayle, Sarah Churchill and Andrew Ray.

1959

Cliff later commented on his role in the film *Serious Charge*; ‘The people who made the film must have been daft. I was cast as Curly, but instead of simply changing the name of the character, they went the painful and complicated procedure of curling my hair with hot tongs every morning before the day’s shooting!’

Early in 1959, both Franklin Boyd and John Foster were dismissed, as Tito Burns became Cliff’s new manager at the time of the third single, *Living Doll*. Although the single only reached No 20, it’s noteworthy, as it’s the first time that Hank, Bruce and Jet have played on one of Cliff’s singles.

Move It was voted Best New Single in the NME as drummer Terry Smart left to join the Merchant Navy and was replaced by a drummer suggested by Jet Harris, Tony Meehan, who had formerly played behind Adam Faith, Vince Taylor and Vince Eager. Tony joined just in time to play on Cliff’s first album, a live studio session at Abbey Road and on a session that yielded *Dynamite* and *Never Mind*, the latter being released as a double A side with *Mean Streak*.

Part of Cliff’s deal with his role in *Serious Charge* was that a single had to be released, but both he and The Drifters weren’t keen on the up tempo rock & roll track *Living Doll*. Bruce Welch suggested a much slower, almost country tempo that transformed the song to such an extent that it topped the chart and became a million seller, winning Cliff his first Gold Disc. With the emergence of Cliff as a major star, the American Drifters insisted on a name change for Cliff’s group, Jet Harris suggested the name that would be enthusiastically adopted: *The Shadows*.

Only a year after the paper had referred to him as ‘a crude exhibitionist,’ the *New Musical Express* described Cliff as ‘The most electrifying and dynamic vocal talent to emerge in recent years,’ and included a four-page tribute. Cliff commented, ‘One short year and yet I seem to have