

Bill Parkinson

Bill Parkinson went to Skerton Secondary School and excelled at football, athletics and swimming. He played for Skerton Old Boys and the Red Rose Boys Club in the North Lancashire & District Junior League and represented Lancashire Boys Clubs on several occasions as well as playing for England Boys Clubs against Germany. As a teenager he formed a group called The Leaders with Mel Dean and John Boardman who was a bass player from Morecambe. The group rehearsed in an empty Fish & Chip shop just behind the promenade, with Mel singing and Bill and John plus temporary drummer, Ray Walsh, later to be followed by Bas Dixon and then Eric Broadbent. The type of music they played was mostly American Rock - Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley and most of the contemporary rock artists of the time. The boys played at the Tivoli Bar in Morecambe and when they started playing there the place was empty. The whole band was paid the grand total of £10 to play upstairs and they loved every minute of it. Quite soon the Tivoli was filled to overflowing to such an extent that the ceilings had to be reinforced due to people bouncing up and down in time to the music. At this juncture they had to move downstairs until the work on the ceiling was completed. After finishing a gig at the Tivoli they would pack all the gear into their van and set up one hour later to play at the Floral Hall where they played several nights in the week. At this point in time the popularity of the band was enhanced because of Bill's ability as a songwriter and the fans absolutely loved his compositions.

All this time Bill was working as a driver for Standfast Dyers & Printers on Caton Road and used to deliver goods all over the north of England but he always had an old guitar behind the driver's seat and would pull into a layby when he had finished his deliveries and get in some practice.

In the late 1960's Bill backed Tom Jones for three years and did two Royal Command Performances with him and his last gig with Tom was the investiture at Cardiff Castle of Prince Charles as the Prince of Wales in July 1969. Possibly the biggest regret of Bill's career was when he turned down an offer from Elvis Presley. Tom Jones and The Squires were playing in Las Vegas when Elvis Presley and his wife Priscilla walked in and sat in the front row about ten feet away from Bill. During the show there was plenty of interaction between Bill and Elvis so much so that Elvis was out of his seat dancing and after the show one of the "Memphis Mafia" as Elvis' employees were known came backstage and said that the great man wanted Bill to play for him.

Over the years Bill worked with many of the greats of the music world including Tom Jones, P J Proby, The Fourmost, Shirley Bassey, Dusty Springfield, Screaming Lord Sutch and Kathy Kirby. He also played a session at the Abbey Studios for producer Phil Spector on the Beatles last album "Across the Universe".



Tom Jones, seated front with his backing group "The Squires"
Bill Parkinson is 2nd from the right

In his 30's he wanted to get really fit and took up Judo, quickly becoming Essex Open Champion.

Always having an interest in history he bought a metal detector in 1972 and five years later he found a massive hoard of Celtic gold and silver coins for which he was rewarded with £100,000 tax free. Another interest was his ability to draw and paint and at the age of 40 he started to do it professionally and any of his work can be bought and seen online on his website.



Skerton School 1953-54

Back Row (L-R): Brian Taylor, Bill Parkinson, John Cross, Lawrence Postlethwaite, A. Dixon, A. Walmsley, G Mawson

Front Row (L-R): Peter Bleasdale, P Pedder, Peter Simpson, George Atkinson, C Hudson, J Butcher, R Wallbank, C Metcalfe



Skerton School in season 1953-54 pictured as proud winners of the William Smith Shield at the Giant Axe celebrations on Easter Monday 1954

Back Row (L-R): John Cross, A. Walmsley, Peter Simpson, George Atkinson, Bill Parkinson, Alan Dixon, Brian Huntington

Front Row (L-R): Ray Denver, P Pedder, Peter Bleasdale, G Mawson



Red Rose Juniors pictured at Morecambe prior to beating Catholic Young Boys 6-1 in the Lancashire FA Youth Cup with only ten players

Back Row (L-R): Harry Bland, Ralph Hewittson, Jimmy Hannon, Bill Varey, Terry Stackhouse

Front Row (L-R): Dave Moorby, Roy Hannigan, Bernard Wearing, Nodder Muckalt, Bill Parkinson

Bill was obviously an excellent footballer and in season 1957-58 he was selected to play for Lancashire Boys Clubs and following that for England Boys Clubs against Germany at Peel Park, Accrington. The selected team can be seen in the extract from the game programme and also shows Frank Eldridge from the Lancaster Lads Club in goal. The letter sent to all the players gave them three options. They could report for tea at 4.30pm to Howard & Bullough, Globe Works, Accrington or report to reception at the Town Hall at 5.30pm or to the ground at Peel Park at 6.30pm ready for the 7.15pm kick-off. They had to provide football boots in good repair and shin pads and for those who needed overnight accommodation they had to inform Mr Arthur Llewellyn whose office was in China Street, Lancaster.

From a personal point of view I joined Red Rose Boys Club from the Lancaster Lads Club immediately after they beat Catholic Young Boys 6-1 and met up with Bill at that point. I quickly recognised what a talented sportsman he was but never realised at that time he would go on to great success as a guitarist and composer in the world of music. Bill Parkinson is certainly a talent that Lancaster can be proud of.

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MONDAY, MAY 5th 1958

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4 Bell (Redcar)	9 Jones (Hyde)	10 Crookall (Wigan)	11 Davies (Newcastle)
7 Humphries (Sunderland)	8 Lawrence (Newcastle)	Linesmen: Mr. R. Borwick, Oswaldtwistle (Red Flag)	
Referee: Mr. Ivan Kay, Accrington		Mr. J. Clark, Oswaldtwistle (Yellow Flag)	

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 6 Tauber 5 Butterwek 4 Rock
 3 Dochlal 2 Kuhlwetter
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ENGLAND

Eldridge
 (Lancaster)

2 Bramhall
 (Sheffield)

3 Wilkins
 (Durham)

4 Bell
 (Redcar)

5 Parkinson
 (Lancaster)

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 (Hartlepool)

7 Humphries
 (Sunderland)

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(Red Flag)

Mr. J. Clark, Oswaldtwistle.
(Yellow Flag)

11 Karcher

10 Schonborn

9 Ebert

8 Emler

7 Schneider

6 Tauber

5 Butterwek

4 Rock

3 Dochlal

2 Kuhlwetter

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