



Rock around the quarries

Transcription of excerpts from interviews with
Chris Ash, Bill Pritchard and Alan Hoida
talking about live music in the quarries in the Malvern Hills

Chris: I have very sketchy memories, but it definitely, it did happen that Rob Plant, who later became part of Led Zeppelin, Rob Plant and the Band of Joy played a gig in the West of England Quarry on the back of a lorry with a generator. I almost, we must have walked there, I was too young to be driving, unless somebody gave us a lift. I suspect a few lads had heard about it through word of mouth or whatever and we walked there.

Bill: They used to have groups up in the quarry. And that was the initiation of Led Zeppelin then, was Rob Plant and the Band of Joy. And I always remember that with all my friends, my mod mates, you know, people like Kenny Pountin, Nigel Rose, Dave Allen, and all, you know all the lads. And we used to go and lie up on top of there and watch these bands just playing this little, this little amphitheatre, and like you know, it was really good.

Alan: Somebody decided to put on a gig, an overnight gig in the quarry up on the, the big quarry that's, I can't remember the name of it now. The one that runs between the Wyche Cutting and British Camp on your left hand side, before you go down the hill into the camp. Jubilee Drive, the big quarry on your left. It's not West of England Quarry, or is it? Oh, I can't remember the name. We were in that quarry anyway, and there was a massive bonfire and the Pewke

Band was there, and there were generators running, and it went on all night till about three in the morning when, lo and behold, the police and the fire brigade turned up, put the bonfire out and made us all go home [laughs].

Going back to the '60s, '65 it was actually, I used to bump into Jim Capaldi, who was the drummer of Traffic, who was a local lad actually, he played in a band called Deep Feeling. I went to see them actually, in the Foley Ballroom back in the day. And he used to hang round in the common room to the tech college where I was at. And, erm, so I got to know Jim. And everybody knew Jim Capaldi, he was such a nice likeable guy, he was friends with everybody. And one day, er, the Students Union decided to have a party on top of the Beacon for midsummer sun, to see the midsummer sun rise on midsummer's day. And I walked there, and I walked past the quarry that was down below that on the West Malvern Road, and I walked up that way, and there was a band playing in the quarry. Just a band on their own, no public, nothing. They had a big van and everything, and there was Jim Capaldi playing away, and there was a guy on vibes, and everything. And it was Traffic, who Jim Capaldi, of course, joined. And they had, er, I know they had a record--, erm, I think his name was Chris Woods. 'Cause I think it was Chris Wood out the band, I think that was his name, had a cottage. In those days all bands had cottages in Herefordshire where they'd go and write, and he had one on the River Teme somewhere in Herefordshire. And so that's probably why they were there. Anyway, they were just doing, er, playing for their own enjoyment. So I got chatting to them, I went and saw the sunrise and came back down. I remember they gave me a lift home.

Basically what I'm saying is it just pulls the fact together that there was a lot of music going on in Malvern. And it was from all different angles, there were professional bands mingling with amateur bands, there were amateur bands where the musicians kept changing band. There was a huge amount going on in Malvern, which had started just with bands playing in youth clubs, and it had sort of come up through, through to doing, you know bigger and better thing, and the different places. And eventually led to the Winter Gardens.

*Transcripts of the full interviews are available from Rock Around the Hills
rockaroundthehills@gmail.com*