

[00:00:00] **Jarek:** Cool. Um, okay, this is Jarek Zaba for the AMP Kingston project from Creative Youth, uh, exploring art, music and pop fashion heritage in the Kingston borough and beyond. Today is Monday the 2nd of October 2023 and I'm with Keith Reid at his home in Havant. Keith was a member of the Impalas rock and roll band, uh, who played regularly at the Swan in the 1960s and has been involved in music pretty much his whole life.

[00:00:25] **Jarek:** Um, Keith, do you mind just confirming your name for the tape as well as your date and place of birth?

[00:00:30] **Keith Read:** Yeah, hello, I'm Keith Read I was born in Kingston on Thames, in Kingston Hospital up Kingston Hill on the 17th of May 1949. Makes me 74. Have you ever had anybody as old as me before?

[00:00:45] **Jarek:** Absolutely, but, you know, uh, yeah, yeah, no, we, we, um, yeah, this means you can speak to, speak to the decades we want to talk about.

[00:00:53] **Jarek:** So, um, yeah, why don't, why don't you just tell us a little bit about those early years in Kingston? What [00:01:00] was Kingston like to, to, to grow up in? Uh, were you, were you fond of it growing up?

[00:01:03] **Keith Read:** Yes, yes, I went to St Paul's Church School in Borough Road off of Park Road near Kingston Hill Junior School, and then I went to Richmond Road School, and then we moved to a brand new school in, uh, Richmond Road, up near Ham Parade, and it was called Rivermead at the time, and I think it changed its name to Tudor and Tiffin Girls Schools.

[00:01:26] **Keith Read:** It keeps changing, but I enjoyed school. I loved school. I didn't really want to leave, but I did leave when I was about 16. I did, uh, O level in art. So got that and, uh, quite a few little GCSEs or whatever they were at the time.

[00:01:43] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:01:43] **Keith Read:** But, um, I soon went to work in the, in the rag trade as a cutter in Surbiton for about four or five years before I went full time professional musician.

[00:01:55] **Keith Read:** But, um, when I was about 12 or 13, some of my schoolmates [00:02:00] said they work at Kingston Market. So they said, Oh, you should get a job down there. You get a nice little bit of pocket money. So I

went down when I was 12 and they said. Don't tell anybody you're 12, tell them you're 13, because you're not old enough to get a job, so I did.

[00:02:13] **Keith Read:** I worked for this lovely little Jewish couple, um, Sid and Eva, and I had to unload their cars. They were selling all handbags and briefcases, and I used to take it down the cellar, which I don't think the cellar's there in Kingston Market now, but we used to unload every day before school, and then... After school, I'd get off my bike and go over there and help them pack away.

[00:02:34] **Keith Read:** They paid me 15 shillings a week, I think, that's working about six days a week. And, uh, I got a rise up to a pound a week, eventually. So that allowed me after 12, 12 weeks to buy my first guitar from Maxwell's Music in Clarence Street. And, um... I started playing guitar and then I got in a few bands, so that's how it all started, really.

[00:02:56] **Jarek:** I mean, do you remember the first time you picked up a guitar, [00:03:00] or the first time you decided you wanted to play guitar?

[00:03:02] **Keith Read:** Yeah, I think, funny enough, I've got a Facebook friend called Clive Wasley, and he was, he was at my junior school with me, um, St Paul's School, and he brought in a picture one day of Elvis Presley, and it had this, it's probably a girly magazine, but he was a fan of Elvis, and he showed me these pictures, and I said, wow, he says.

[00:03:21] **Keith Read:** Interesting looking chap, you know. And then I got to hear the music. Bill Haley and the Comets, Rock Around the Clock. And I was inspired. I just loved all that music. And my neighbour, Jenny, who lived next door, she was just about to get married. So she was giving me all her old records. So suddenly, I was only about 11 years old, but I'd suddenly got a nice little record collection of her old stuff, of all Elvis and Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis.

[00:03:45] **Keith Read:** So I really got into rock and roll. Been with it on and off ever since, really.

[00:03:52] **Jarek:** What was it about rock and roll that kind of appealed to you?

[00:03:54] **Keith Read:** I suppose that was the age I was, that was the pop music of the day. You know, there wasn't much radio [00:04:00] at the day. The BBC didn't play much pop music. We had to listen to Radio Luxembourg in the

evenings, which was not very good sound quality, but at least they played good music.

[00:04:09] **Keith Read:** And then very soon after, the pirate radio stations took over and they played lots of great music. Got into the Beatles, and the Stones, and the Yardbirds, and the Kinks, and all- the Searchers, all those bands, yeah.

[00:04:23] **Jarek:** Did y- you mentioned the Yardbirds there, were you aware that they were local, that, that, uh, that the Yardbirds had a...

[00:04:28] **Keith Read:** Yeah, yeah, because when I, when I joined, when, I'll get to that, but when, when I joined Impalas, I went down this pub in Mill Street in Kingston, called The Swan, right down the bottom, somebody told me about it, we went in there, and I walked into the hall out the back, and I thought... It must be a record they're playing.

[00:04:44] **Keith Read:** It sounds just like Elvis and I walked in and the singer of the band, Tony Claiden his name was, is sadly no longer with us, but he was singing Don't Don't. There was an old Elvis song and I thought, wow, he sounds just like Elvis. And he started playing guitar. [00:05:00] Just like Eddie Cochran and Chuck Berry and I thought wow I'd like to be in this band and got chatting to them, they said oh we need a bass player so I went down Eden Street and bought myself a bass guitar, I was very lucky to get a Fender bass for 21 pound which was a bargain, if I still had it it'd be worth about 10 grand now.

[00:05:18] **Keith Read:** But, um, I played bass with them for about five years and so, um, Tony, the singer, came from Richmond and he knew Keith Relf of the Yardbirds and, uh, we never actually went to see them at the time because they used to play in a couple of clubs in Richmond. They took over from the Rolling Stones in a pub opposite uh, Richmond Station. And, uh, I didn't see them in the early days. I did, um, I did lend Jeff Becker guitar who was, uh, who took over from Eric Clapton many years later when he was working at Island Records in London. Yeah, so I've been very lucky. A lot of the idols and my favourite artists, So throughout time, I've actually met, I've been very lucky, met Ringo [00:06:00] Starr, I've got Paul McCartney's autograph.

[00:06:02] **Keith Read:** I've always been a bit of a fan as well as being a musician. So, uh, I met Steve Cropper, one of my favourite guitarists, and, um, got his autograph. He gave me a plectrum, which I've got in my little cabinet up there. Yeah, I've had a great, a very blessed life. I had a lovely mum and dad, Edna and Ray, who... Also came from Kingston.

[00:06:21] **Jarek:** Well, I was just going to ask about your parents actually. Was, was music in your family household growing up? Uh, did they, did they listen to music or?

[00:06:29] **Keith Read:** Good question. They had no music, uh, in them. Apart from my mum used to like music. She was always saying, Oh, have you heard the new one by so and so? And so she loved music, but my dad was not at all musical.

[00:06:43] **Keith Read:** He probably couldn't even hold a song, you know.

[00:06:45] **Jarek:** What did they think of the whole rock and roll thing?

[00:06:47] **Keith Read:** Oh, they were very supportive. They were lovely people. I was so lucky. And, um, they, uh, helped me, uh, you know, they used to, uh, Dad didn't drive at all, but, but I was, uh, they used to spoil me in a [00:07:00] way. I was the only child.

[00:07:01] **Keith Read:** And so they were always taking me to shows in London. We'd go to the Palladium and, uh, and, uh, they always took me around all the museums. So, um, I've had a great life.

[00:07:11] **Jarek:** Yeah, well, well, it'd be, yeah, uh, great, great to hear a little bit more about that. Like, I mean, um, you mentioned some of the early, uh, musicians that you were, you were listening to, and, and I think you mentioned the pirate radio stations and how you'd listen to them.

[00:07:25] **Jarek:** How about live music? When was the first, first time you remembered seeing a band live, uh, in Kingston or elsewhere?

[00:07:33] **Keith Read:** Um, wow. I suppose. As I say, we started with rock and roll, and then the, the Cliff and The Shadows came along, so that was the next musical phase. So I was crazy about The Shadows. I bought all their records.

[00:07:46] **Keith Read:** I bought, well, Adam Faith's records. I bought a guitar that looked like Hank Marvin's of the Shadows. And uh, uh, the night I got it, I was only about, 13. I bought it from a shop called Potter's Music Shop in Crown Arcade in Kingston, [00:08:00] near the Crown Market. Uh, the, yeah, just down, just around the corner from the main market.

[00:08:06] **Keith Read:** And I went in this Potter's Music Shop, bought this guitar, and it wasn't a real Fender, but it looked like a Fender. It was called a Futurama III. And I'd brought it home and I put it by my bed. I was only about 13 or 14. And I had a torch and... My mum said, what are you doing in there? I said, I've got a torch and I used to wake up in the night and shine my torch at this guitar that was laying right by my bed and I was in love with it, crazy.

[00:08:32] **Keith Read:** But um, yeah, The Shadows, I learnt all their songs, I could play all the lead guitar parts, all the bass parts, all the rhythm parts, I bought the music. I play drums as well, so I've learnt all the drum parts. And coming home from school one day, I've written it in a little list of things that I used to do back in the day for you.

[00:08:49] **Keith Read:** But coming home from school, I had this picture of the Shadows in my school bag, and what are the chances of coming down Richmond Road, getting off the 65 bus, and there are the Shadows, outside the ABC cinema, [00:09:00] having their photograph taken. And, um, I was, I'd already bought tickets to go and see them in the evening with Cliff, and it's actually on record, you can buy a record of this actual show, Cliff and the Shadows, that evening, which I've got a copy of the record on CD.

[00:09:15] **Keith Read:** And, um, I, I let them have their photograph taken and I went up and bothered them. I took my photograph out of the album and they were quite impressed that I got that with me. And so Hank, Marvin, Bruce Welch, Jet Harris and their new drummer, uh, Brian Bennett, all signed my photograph and I was, uh, very proud of that moment.

[00:09:33] **Keith Read:** I was, I was so lucky to be in the right place at the right time.

[00:09:35] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:09:37] **Keith Read:** And I've been in Shadows tribute band since then and, uh, and there is a place just up the road. We're in Hampshire here and it's a place at Waterlooville where every month they get together and play all the Shadows songs and people get up out the audience and, um, have a jam session.

[00:09:53] **Keith Read:** So the music still lives on. And I've met Bruce Welch several times and I even interviewed him on Angel Radio [00:10:00] one day. He phoned me up and, uh, we did a nice little hour long chat.

[00:10:06] **Jarek:** Amazing. Amazing. And then, um, when did, what age were you when you first started performing? Um, I mean, we spoke about you first starting to play guitar, but when did that translate into going onto, onto stage?

[00:10:17] **Keith Read:** Well, yeah, there, there was a band I was with called, uh, it was my cousin's band. Ian Clemence was my cousin and he had a, He's my second cousin. He had a first cousin called Robin Clemence, played bass. Ian played drums. And one of my school friends, Ian Duffell, who eventually went on to be quite a big name in the Sony Corporation.

[00:10:36] **Keith Read:** He now lives in Australia. He was a guitarist. We played down the Kingston Boys Club in Hampden Road. Just round the back of what used to be the Robert Peel off of Cambridge Road. And, um, we used to practice there every week. I was about 12 or 13 at the time. And then we started doing gigs, er, we played at, cos my dad and Ian's dad worked at Hawker's, Hawker's Siddeley, [00:11:00] which was in Canbury Park Road and Richmond Road at one time.

[00:11:03] **Keith Read:** And so we played in their club, their sports club. Um, next to Hawker's in Richmond Road.

[00:11:09] **Jarek:** Hawker Siddeley would have been the aviation, that's right, the air manufacturers essentially.

[00:11:14] **Keith Read:** Yeah, yeah, I think my dad used to say he used to make Hawker Hurricanes in the war, and, uh, make parts of the aeroplanes and the engines and things.

[00:11:24] **Keith Read:** And um, yeah, so that's one of the gigs we did. We played at the Venturer's Youth Club in Petersham near Ham, near where Tommy still lived at the time. And um, I could tell you a funny little story about that. We were only about 14, 15, and Dave Clark Five had a hit record called bits and pieces. It goes army pieces, bits and pieces, and they used to stamp on the floor in time with the record.

[00:11:48] **Keith Read:** And so we copied all the bands at the time, all the Beatles stuff, we copied them, Stones, copied all that. But when we did it at this old youth club that called the Venturer's Youth Club in, uh, I think [00:12:00] it's now turned into a block of flats, but it, at the time, it was a very old church hall, and we started stamping on the floor in time of the music while we were singing bits and pieces.

[00:12:09] **Keith Read:** We didn't know that this was a very dirty, dusty carpet on the stage that we were stamping on. Suddenly there were big clouds of dust coming up while we were trying to sing, so that's a memorable, uh, occasion. Thing at the time. .

[00:12:22] **Jarek:** Um, and how about the Impalas? When did they, were you a founding member of the Impalas or did they exist?

[00:12:28] **Keith Read:** No, no.

[00:12:28] **Jarek:** They existed before you were, you were a member.

[00:12:30] **Keith Read:** They were a pretty big band. Uh, they uh, they sort of, um, they started in the fifties. And so Tony, the, the founder member. Tony Claiden, he was a fabulous singer, guitarist. He started it and it was quite a big band. They were in some of the Peter G Foote competitions for all the beat groups in the area and they were they were on that many times and they were one of the top bands.

[00:12:54] **Keith Read:** There's lots of great bands, there's the MI4, they used to be called the Sundowners, they [00:13:00] won one of the competitions, and I can remember going and seeing them in the Coronation Hall, and Surbiton Assembly Rooms competitions. But Tony, he'd worked his way from quite a big band with two girl singers, down to just a three piece band by the time I joined him, and it was fairly quiet down the Swan when I joined, and then suddenly the word got about that we were a rock and roll band.

[00:13:21] **Keith Read:** Nobody else was playing rock and roll at the time, everybody was playing Beatles and Stones and original stuff and Stax and Sam LaMotown but Tony was absolutely set on keeping the rock and roll tradition going. So when I joined them suddenly a few Teddy Boys turned up and a few rockers turned up on their motorbikes and before long the place was absolutely packed.

[00:13:42] **Keith Read:** It was chock a block. It's only a little hall and we used to get about 100 people. They called it the Sweatbox and another place like that we used to play. It was the Searchlight Youth Club in Cambridge Road going towards New Malden. But we had a very big following, we eventually had [00:14:00] a phone call to ask us to play at the Palladium with Gene Vincent and the Wild Angels.

[00:14:04] **Keith Read:** So, uh, that was quite a big gig for us and we made a record at the time, Lotta Lovin it was a Gene Vincent song. And we played that in, uh, recorded that in Morgan Studios with... bands like Shakin' Stevens and Matchbox. So we were probably at the beginning of the rock and roll revival in the 70s, really.

[00:14:23] **Keith Read:** After I kind of left the business and settled down, me and Pam started having kids and we had three sons who all ended up being in the music business and uh. Colin, Gary and Mark. Mark's very famous now, he's been in A1 for the last 20 years and had big hit records and he's currently off to the Philippines to do a tour over there.

[00:14:44] **Keith Read:** He's got thousands of fans over there. So, yeah, that's roughly what I've been doing over the years. I can't get away from the music.

[00:14:53] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And why would you want to when, you know, it's clearly such a passion. Um, but yeah, so. [00:15:00] Yeah, so let's talk a little bit more about those, those nights, Sunday nights at the Swan.

[00:15:03] **Jarek:** Um, I mean, so you've said, you've described it as the sweat box. I mean, I wonder if you could just paint, paint a picture of the room for me.

[00:15:12] **Keith Read:** Yeah, it was probably about, it was 20 to 30 foot. Um, and it would be chock a block. The Impalas, eventually, because they used to get such a great reaction from the rockers, the rock and rollers, you've got the greasers on the motorbikes and the Teddy Boys, they all got on quite well together, there was never any trouble down there, I never saw any trouble.

[00:15:38] **Keith Read:** And, uh, it was, they loved it, and we eventually, worked out a bit of a stage act where we used to go a bit wild. Our drummer, Keith Mott, he, um, he, he was influenced by The Who and Keith Moon, who used to smash his drums up on stage. So Keith, at the end of the show, he'd kick all his drums off the stage. I don't think they broke them at all.

[00:15:59] **Keith Read:** They must have [00:16:00] been quite, quite well made. And, uh, Tony Claiden, he used to... Put his guitar down and he'd turn into Gene Vincent and he used to hold his mic stand right up in the air and uh, a bit like Rod Stewart did in later days and swing it round and er, and um, we had lots of guest people that, Screaming Lord Such came down there one night and he was a pretty crazy character.

[00:16:22] **Keith Read:** He was a lovely person off stage, he was very quiet and shy, but on stage he was just a wild man. He just went berserk and Tony used to... Put on a really good act and the rockers loved it and, uh, they still talk about it today. One of our piano players, Trevor Hawkins, he now lives in Australia, he's just come over recently and had a reunion, uh, where he used to live and a lot of the old rockers, uh, the ones that are still alive, uh, all turned up for the reunion.

[00:16:49] **Keith Read:** So, there's lots of people on the Facebook group for this one, keep saying, oh we should have a reunion, you know, and uh, I often wonder if there is much left of the hall and the stage, whether we could hire it [00:17:00] one night and all the old crowd perhaps get back together again.

[00:17:04] **Jarek:** Yeah, it would be incredible to do so.

[00:17:05] **Jarek:** And yeah, as I say, I think, I think I've been in, I think I've been in the room and I think you can, yeah, I think you can still get to that hall. So, um, so

[00:17:11] **Keith Read:** yeah,

[00:17:12] **Jarek:** no, that would be,

[00:17:13] **Keith Read:** it was very dark. The lighting, we used to have our own little lighting set up, ultraviolet lights, but it was pretty dark in there and they used to, I don't know, they managed to dance.

[00:17:23] **Keith Read:** They used to have this dance called the bop and the stroll and they'd all put their thumbs in their bouts and do this sort of dance that later got caught on with bands like Mud and Status Quo, they used to do a similar sort of thing.

[00:17:37] **Jarek:** I mean what was the, what was the Swan like as a pub more generally outside of those nights?

[00:17:41] **Jarek:** Uh, was it just, was it a rocker pub? Was it known to be a rocker pub or was it just a regular pub that just had these rock and roll nights?

[00:17:47] **Keith Read:** It would have been a regular pub with a jukebox and I knew about three or four different owners and managers. I think it was Ron and Nora were the managers most of the time and their daughter, [00:18:00] Gay,

now lives in the West Country and she's on the Facebook group and she often talks about memories on there.

[00:18:06] **Keith Read:** And, um, yeah, the pub was a lovely cosy little, nice little log, um, log fire, coal fire in the, um, the pub. Saloon bar and then the, the, the public bar they had, um, dart boards and a jukebox and, uh, I didn't go down there very often. I used to, Sunday night was when all the rockers were there. Other nights it'd be all the locals probably.

[00:18:29] **Keith Read:** I could tell you a little story maybe about, um, I had a lovely Fender amplifier which is now sought after. It was beige coloured and I used to use that on a Sunday night and I'd put it in the cloakroom. And we'd go down on a Monday night, just, Tony called it a practice, but it was more like a drinking practice.

[00:18:50] **Keith Read:** He used to go down and like to have a few drinks, and we might practice about two songs. The rest of it was all, uh, the songs we knew inside out that we played for [00:19:00] years. But, um, one Monday I went down there, and the amp wasn't in the cloakroom. It disappeared, and I thought, oh no. I only paid about 45 for it at the time, in the 60s.

[00:19:10] **Keith Read:** But, um, About six months later, I went to, um, London to go round the music shops, and there was my amp in, in Macari's music shop, in Charing Cross Road, I think it's Charing Cross or Shaftesbury Avenue, somewhere around there, and I said to Mr Macari, who owned the shop, I said, that's my amplifier. He said, it's yours?

[00:19:31] **Keith Read:** I said, it was stolen from a pub in Kingston. He said, well, they all look the same. I said, no, it's got odd knobs on the back. One of the knobs broke, and we put a different knob on, and that's, that's the one I put on, I screwed it on and rewired it. And he said, well, he said, you better call the police. And I said, well, how can I do that?

[00:19:49] **Keith Read:** And he said, all right, we'll phone them. He phoned the police. They came. And I said, that's my aunt. He said, and I explained how I knew it was my aunt. And he went and had a chat with Larry Macari. And [00:20:00] on the side, I couldn't hear what they were saying, he came back to me, he said, OK, you can take the amp. He said, did you report it at the time?

[00:20:05] **Keith Read:** I said, no, I never thought I'd see it, ever see it again. He said, OK, take the amp, it's yours. And I used it then for a few more years. And I thought, what lovely people, they were so kind to trust me and, uh, and,

uh, I always used that shop when I went to London after that 'cause I thought really good people to have, have done that.

[00:20:23] **Keith Read:** And, uh, a few years later, after I sold it and bought a new amp, uh, I looked on the, um, eBay and all that. They go for absolute thousands of pounds. Now, , I should have kept it.

[00:20:34] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:20:35] **Keith Read:** So as most of the guitars I've had all from my life, uh, whenever I get fed up with one guitar, I wanna buy a new one. I swap it in.

[00:20:41] **Keith Read:** But if I had had the money to be able to keep each one, I would be sitting on a fortune for other, guitars now.

[00:20:48] **Jarek:** Yeah. Um,

[00:20:49] **Keith Read:** Gib- Gibson, Gretches, Fenders. I had the lot .

[00:20:51] **Jarek:** Yeah. It's interesting that, um, you said that the- earlier you said there was like absolutely no trouble that you saw. Um

[00:20:59] **Keith Read:** mm-hmm.

[00:20:59] **Jarek:** But there, [00:21:00] but, but there was, uh, you know, a lot of Teddy Boys in the t- because Teddy boys were.

[00:21:03] **Jarek:** Associated with causing trouble at the time, weren't they?

[00:21:05] **Keith Read:** The originals, yeah. This was like second generation Teddy Boys. They were all teenagers. So the original Teddy Boys that came out in the fifties, that the- hear stories of them flicking knives and knuckle dusters and all that sort of, that's the image they had.

[00:21:21] **Keith Read:** Most of the ones I knew were really nice people. But when Bill Haley first came over with his rock and roll, he, um, They had riots. The Teddy Boys were so excited and they ran riot, they smashed up cinemas, broke the seats. So they say. I never saw any of that going on, but by the time in the mid 60s, because it was, um, a craze that had gone, you know, the Beatles had taken over, and the music had completely changed.

[00:21:49] **Keith Read:** So we were quite a freak sort of band, we were still playing fifties music in the late, in the mid sixties, where nobody else was. Eventually a few other [00:22:00] revival groups came along, you know, there was the um, He was our support act when I was in the Wild Angels, which was the band I joined eventually after the Impalas.

[00:22:10] **Keith Read:** And, uh, and eventually he became one of the biggest selling acts in the, in the 80s. I think his record sold massively all through the 80s. And one of our bass players, Stuart Coleman, who, uh, worked with me at the time. He produced all, uh, Shakin Stevens records. His real name was Michael Barratt, uh, Shakin' Stevens.

[00:22:28] **Keith Read:** And he's very shy, very quiet. Never- although I worked with him dozens of times, I never, don't think I ever had a conversation. He'd just turn up, come all the way from Wales with his strong Welsh accent and sit in the corner of the changing room with a pint and, uh, a lot of people said he was shy

[00:22:42] **Keith Read:** But he put on a great stage show, he could dance around like Elvis, and he'd look like Elvis with his big quiff and everything. Yeah!

[00:22:54] **Jarek:** And you, um, you supported Gene Vincent a couple of times. So, um, I think you did [00:23:00] the London Palladium in 1969 and Coronation Hall in Kingston in 71, is that right?

[00:23:05] **Keith Read:** I did the Palladium, but by the time he did the Coronation Hall, I'd left the Impalas and I'd joined the Angels and we were travelling abroad, playing in gigs all over the place.

[00:23:15] **Keith Read:** Yeah, so I wasn't on that one. He was quite a character. A lot of rock and roll people absolutely love his voice. He has got an amazing, fabulous voice, but he liked to drink and, um, he... He had a very bad motorbike accident, and when he is, if you see a picture of him on stage, he's got this leg iron, so one of his legs is very straight, and the other, and even though he was very disabled, he used to swing his mic stand round his head, and uh, jump about, and he had a really wild act, and uh, it was quite an honour to play with him.

[00:23:48] **Keith Read:** Be-Bop-a-Lula, that was one of my all time favourite records, it still sounds great today, on Capitol Records, and from 1956, it was recorded in Nashville, and his band were brilliant. His [00:24:00] drummer

sadly has only just died, Dickie "Bebop" Harrell. He screams in the middle of Be-Bop-a-Lula. And his lead guitarist was such an influence on people like Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page.

[00:24:11] **Keith Read:** Jimmy Page used to come down to Swan, he was in Led Zeppelin. But before he was in Led Zeppelin, he was a session guitarist and he used to come down to Swan and he was a big fan of our guitarist Tony Claiden. He loved his guitar playing and uh, but he seemed to do quite well a few years later.

[00:24:27] **Jarek:** Yes. Well,

[00:24:28] **Keith Read:** always a, very respected as a session guitarist. You know, he played on PJ Proby's records with Big Jim Sullivan and, um, I've never met him, but he used to, before I went down the Swan, he was a regular down there. He came from Epsom.

[00:24:42] **Jarek:** Right. That's interesting. I can't, I can't remember the date, but we know Led Zeppelin played the Toby Jug as well. You know, they're one of the, the, the many bands, um, of that kind of psychedelic rock, um, um, genre that played, uh, Between 68 and 72 though.

[00:24:56] **Keith Read:** Yeah,

[00:24:57] **Jarek:** At the Toby Jug, there were just loads of those. Fleetwood Mac as [00:25:00] we mentioned earlier. And

[00:25:01] **Keith Read:** yeah, he was, um, a good friend of Jeff Beck's. They used to get together and, um, practice together and I think probably Jimmy Page pinched a few of Jeff's ideas and uh, but it worked well. With Led Z- his first album and a lot of the stuff was based on what stuff Jeff Beck was doing.

[00:25:18] **Keith Read:** Jeff Beck lived in Wallington, but he used to travel on the bus. All the way over to, I think, Down Road, it was Down Street or Downs Road in Epsom. And, uh, two of them, a friend of mine said that he remembers Jimmy Page practicing on a Sunday morning on his guitar with his windows open and he always used to say, stop that noise.

[00:25:37] **Keith Read:** All the neighbours.

[00:25:38] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, so, uh, yeah, so you, so you must have left the Impalas somewhere at the end of the, towards the end of the sixties. Is that right?

[00:25:49] **Keith Read:** 1970 I left s-

[00:25:51] **Jarek:** So how many years were you with them?

[00:25:53] **Keith Read:** It's 1965, I think I joined them, uh, till 70. Yeah, about five years, just [00:26:00] over five years. And, and then I used to, me and Pam used to go, well, we weren't together at the time, but we used to go and see a band in Hammersmith called the Kingpins.

[00:26:08] **Keith Read:** They're a really, really good, um, country group, comedy country group. There are a couple of Irish singers and they, they were so funny, so entertaining. And the drummer, I got chatting to him and he knew that I knew a lot about rock and roll and he, he was a rock and roll expert and I lost touch with him and suddenly he phoned me up and said, uh, Oh, would you like to join the Wild Angels?

[00:26:30] **Keith Read:** Uh, he said, I'm just going to join them on drums. And I said, Oh, I don't like the Wild Angels much. I'm not that impressed with them. I prefer the Impalas. I think we're better than them. Even though the Wild Angels were more professional and they were doing big gigs.

[00:26:44] **Jarek:** More established yeah

[00:26:45] **Keith Read:** yeah. But he twisted my arm and said, Oh, they've got a festival in Palermo they're playing in a couple of months.

[00:26:51] **Keith Read:** I said, well, I haven't been to a hot country like Sicily or anywhere like that. I said, maybe I'll give it a try. And I joined them and I was there for like four or five [00:27:00] years with them. And Jeff eventually went on to, he left the Wild Angels and joined a bloke called Paul McCartney who was in a band called Wings for a couple of years.

[00:27:09] **Keith Read:** He went to Nashville and New Orleans and made records with them, Venus and Mars with Wings and uh, uh, Jeff now lives in Spain, I haven't spoke to him for quite a while now, but.

[00:27:19] **Jarek:** And the Wild Angels were sort of straight rock and roll as well. Uh,

[00:27:22] **Keith Read:** yeah,

[00:27:23] **Jarek:** in, in a similar stuff.

[00:27:24] **Keith Read:** A bit, bit more polished. The, the, like the, we were a bit rough and ready in the Impalas and as I say, we didn't use to practice.

[00:27:30] **Keith Read:** We used to, uh, wing it and bus it and uh, but the Angels used to rehearse and they made records and uh, um, they came from Croydon area, most of them around that way. Yeah. In Catford.

[00:27:44] **Jarek:** And I, I, I was sent a song, I'm not sure if it was by you, it might have been, uh, but I was sent a song, uh, a link to a song, which We Are Going Down The Swan on a Sunday Night.

[00:27:52] **Keith Read:** Oh yeah.

[00:27:52] **Jarek:** Uh, by, by Wild Angels. So did you write that?

[00:27:55] **Keith Read:** Yeah. Yeah. I wrote that song and, um, I, I sang on it, [00:28:00] played guitar in it, and we recorded it in Sweden. I think it was, uh, Yeah, I just spoke about all my memories of going down the Swan, going down Mill Street on a Sunday night and it was always on Sundays and we used to do a little disco on a Wednesday called the Kingston Rock Club, so that was a rock and roll disco, I used to do that as well.

[00:28:21] **Keith Read:** But, um, yeah I wrote a few songs and we were lucky to get them recorded, I was with Decca Records. Uh, in 1972, and, uh, we, we parted company with the lead singer of the Wild Angels, and I took over on lead. And, uh, we recorded a song called I Fought the Law and the Law Won, that was originally done by the Crickets, Buddy Holly's group, the Crickets.

[00:28:43] **Keith Read:** Uh, Sonny Curtis wrote it, and then, uh, Bobby Fuller Four had a big hit with it in America. We recorded it, and we got to number one in Sweden with that song. So, we did a lot of tours of Scandinavia promoting the song, and we, uh, We did quite well. I don't think I got any money for it, but I do remember [00:29:00] it, seeing it in all the magazines that we were number one, uh, 1973, above Elton John and, and all the other people at the time.

[00:29:07] **Keith Read:** So that was quite a buzz to be able to do that. And I've still got fans over there that I keep asking me to come back to Sweden and do it, do a tour and do. Because we reformed. I was only there in the Wild Angels for

about three or four years. Split up and played with local bands. Me and Pam had our own band called Triple Echo and then eventually called Diamond.

[00:29:31] **Keith Read:** And then reformed the Wild Angels about ten years ago. They asked me to come back and we did a Swedish tour. And then Mud asked me to join them because I know two of the original... Players in Mud, Rob Davis and Ray Stiles, and they were reformed about 10 years ago, so neither the Wild Angels nowadays or Mud do many gigs, they only do about one or two a year if you're lucky, because Ray, the guitarist, the bass player in Mud is now with the Hollies, [00:30:00] so they're very busy, so they just fit in the odd request to reform every now and then.

[00:30:06] **Keith Read:** Yeah, yeah. It's all very enjoyable. It's all, uh, Mud's, uh, Mudd had three number one hits, uh, Tiger Feet, Lonely This Christmas, and a Buddy Holly song called Oh Boy. They're all number ones. So they're still very famous. Yeah, yeah. I was lucky to be asked to do

[00:30:22] **Jarek:** that. I mean, did you write songs with the Impalas as well, or was that just covers?

[00:30:26] **Keith Read:** No, that was all, our whole repertoire was Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis, Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent, um, Fats Domino, Carl Perkins, so we did all their greatest hits, Blue Suede Shoes, Great Balls of Fire, A Whole lot of Shaking Going On, all those classics, which are still popular and I still love them.

[00:30:47] **Keith Read:** I was lucky enough, on my 70th birthday, Pam treated me to a big trip all around America. And me and a mate of mine, we went over there, went on this coach, went from Hank Williams, Montgomery town [00:31:00] to New Orleans. Went to Fats Domino's house and went to his, went to the recording studios in Memphis, Tennessee, Sun Music recording studios and, uh, I was asked to play piano in Nashville in the RCA Victor Studios. It's the same- my hands were shaking. I'm not the best piano player in the world, but I did play a little bit on it. And it was the piano player, the piano that Elvis played on every night. And Floyd Kramer, and it was on all those records by Jim Reeves and Patsy Cline and so that was quite a buzz. That was about four years ago that Pam treated me to that trip. That was fantastic.

[00:31:38] **Jarek:** And actually, speaking of Pam, you were telling me just before we started the interview that you actually met your wife at the Swan.

[00:31:43] **Keith Read:** Yeah, yeah. I'd seen her down there. She was a bit younger than me.

[00:31:48] **Keith Read:** Four or five years younger than me, and um, she was one of the regulars down there, used to dance down there, and then I was, at the end of the gig on New Year's Eve, it [00:32:00] seems customary to go and kiss somebody on New Year's Eve when the clock strikes twelve, and she came over and gave me a kiss, and it just blew me away, and suddenly I was in love, and a few years later we got married.

[00:32:14] **Jarek:** Lovely.

[00:32:15] **Keith Read:** And she was just 17. When we got married . And 50, nearly 52 years later we're still together.

[00:32:23] **Jarek:** Lovely. Um, and in terms of Kingston more widely, uh, in terms of its music scene, did you frequent any other venues? Were there, I think, I think you've mentioned the Cellar Club. Uh, did you, did you play the Cellar Club?

[00:32:34] **Keith Read:** Played the, yeah, the Impalas have played there. They played there with one of my all time favourites, Johnny Kidd and the Pirates. I never saw Johnny Kidd who's one of my all time favourite singers and the saddest thing in the world is he died when he was only about in his thirties in a car crash in 1966, and he, he had number one hit record Shakin' All Over, and he made about 17 records with EMI.

[00:32:59] **Keith Read:** But [00:33:00] there's absolutely no footage in the world as far as I know of Johnny Kidd performing.

[00:33:05] **Jarek:** Really? That's fascinating.

[00:33:07] **Keith Read:** If you go on YouTube, you can see singers from the twenties and thirties singers, you can see people from a hundred years ago performing, but Johnny Kidd, who was there just from 1950 on to 1966, there is no footage.

[00:33:20] **Keith Read:** His band, The Pirates, did reform and they did lots of gigs. I went to gigs with them and my favourite guitarist, Mick Green, came and played on one of the Wild Angels records. He played on Running Bear that we recorded in Decca and so I was friends with them and there's lots of footage of

them. No footage- if anybody knows of footage of Johnny Kidd, please come forward and share it with loads of his fans that would love to see it.

[00:33:45] **Jarek:** Absolutely. There's a public call out. Um, yeah, I mean, that's incredible, really, because Shakin' All Over is a huge record.

[00:33:51] **Keith Read:** Yeah, it's one of my all time favourites. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:33:53] **Jarek:** No, no, it's an incredible record.

[00:33:55] **Keith Read:** We recorded it, but I was a bit embarrassed to record it, because nobody can do [00:34:00] it like the original. Even Led Zeppelin messed it up. They did it. You can go on YouTube and hear Led Zeppelin trying to play Shakin' All Over, and they were busking it. So... Jimmy took a little while to work out the riff.

[00:34:11] **Keith Read:** It was originally played by a chap called Joe Moretti, a session man from Glasgow. And, uh, I was talking about Gene Vincent earlier, just another thing I was going to say, because of his injury on his leg, it didn't put him off of performing. A friend of mine, Vic, who played drums with him, said he helped him take his leg iron off at the end of the night, and there was lots of blood on his leg, and he didn't hold back.

[00:34:33] **Keith Read:** But he, he, he used to drink a lot to kill the pain and, uh, I don't know if there was any drugs involved, but I know he used to. When we did the Palladium, I think he drank a bottle of Martini before he went on and, uh, and that gave him an ulcer. So he sadly died at a very young age of only about 33, I think he was.

[00:34:52] **Keith Read:** He went back to America and, uh, and sadly. He was gone.

[00:34:57] **Jarek:** But yeah, what was the, what was the Cellar Club like?

[00:34:59] **Keith Read:** That [00:35:00] was a great venue, like up in, up north. We recently went to the, the Cavern where the Beatles played and it's all recreated there and it's, it's got the same atmosphere. My grandson came over from America.

[00:35:13] **Keith Read:** And he's only 16, he's 6ft 4' tall, and there's not much he doesn't know about the Beatles. He can probably tell me things that I didn't

know, even though I'm a massive fan. And, uh, the Cavern had a great atmosphere, and I suppose the Cellar Club was a similar, Kingston's answer to the, the, the Cavern, because it was a similar sort of, bit of a dive.

[00:35:33] **Keith Read:** It was right by the river, I think it was up at, I suspect it's demolished now, but I think it was up on a platform,

[00:35:40] **Jarek:** yeah,

[00:35:40] **Keith Read:** right near the river.

[00:35:41] **Jarek:** I remember people telling me you had to go upstairs, which is kind of counterintuitive when it's called the Cellar, but yeah, you had to go upstairs to the Cellar.

[00:35:49] **Keith Read:** I think the owner of it was Hugh O'Donnell, I think his name was.

[00:35:53] **Jarek:** And the Animals played there and the Small Faces.

[00:35:57] **Keith Read:** All the bands. There's a thing on... I don't [00:36:00] know if it's on Facebook or whether it's just on its own website, all about all the acts that played there. Everybody played there. One of our local groups, the Tuxedos, I used to see them.

[00:36:10] **Keith Read:** They were very good. They actually had a hit record. They were from Kingston. Shall I tell you a bit, I know quite a bit about this group, because my dad was-

[00:36:20] **Jarek:** I haven't come across them before, but we're interested in any of the bands that come out of

[00:36:24] **Keith Read:** Kingston.

[00:36:24] **Keith Read:** They were very good. The guitarist, um, Tony, he went to live in America, in Ireland, he joined a show band over there, but the Tuxedos was...

[00:36:35] **Keith Read:** Uh, Tony Creswell, uh, sorry, Pete Creswell and his brother Paul Creswell went to school with him. Pete Creswell was a guitar. Johnny Kent, who worked in Kingston Market, was the rhythm guitarist. I saw

him in a pub in Ham a little few years ago. He was still around and, uh, he was in the, um, the Brewers...

[00:36:55] **Keith Read:** Brewers... Brewer something, in Ham, [00:37:00] and I met him, and then there was the bass player was, uh, Oh, I didn't know all their names off the top of my heart, but they actually made a record with a chap called Bobby Angelo, and he got in the charts, and Tony Claiden was originally from the Impalas, he was originally in the Tuxedos.

[00:37:18] **Keith Read:** And Pete Creswell took over from him and, uh, Tony O'Toole was the drummer and I think they got in the top 20 with this song called Babysitting and, uh, and it still gets played nowadays now and then and it wasn't a massive hit, it was just a one hit wonder for them. But my dad worked at Hawkers with their manager so he used to tell me a bit of things about them and, um, you used to go and see them down the Swan.

[00:37:42] **Keith Read:** Yeah, great memories, I nearly forgot about them.

[00:37:44] **Jarek:** Yeah, and were there any other venues that you sort of would either play regularly or visit regularly?

[00:37:51] **Keith Read:** Yeah, a lot of them were in like little church halls. There was a little church hall in Kingston Hill. I used to go and see the Sundowners. They were [00:38:00] just a carbon copy of The Shadow- Cliff and the Shadows.

[00:38:03] **Keith Read:** They got all the right sounds. And I went to school with Andy Poulton, the drummer. Uh, and he was only 14 and he used to do the same drum solo that the Shadows did, that Tony Meeham and Brian Bennett did, and it was a brilliant drum solo. He's gone for about 10 minutes and, uh, and I used to say he was 14, I must have been 13 at the time.

[00:38:21] **Keith Read:** He was a year older than me at school, he went to the same school as me, um, St Paul's. I don't know whatever happened to him, he had curly blonde hair, I remember him very well. And his brother, Clive Poulton, he played in a band called the Ministers of Beat. They were another local band. You could play with local venues.

[00:38:38] **Keith Read:** You, mainly, not so many clubs in them days. It was more youth clubs and, uh, church halls. Uh, there was a church hall in Park Road, near where I lived. I used to walk down and see the Sundowners in there.

And, um, that was in the middle of Park Road flats. And, and I think it's, uh, a day group, nursery. Still there.

[00:38:58] **Keith Read:** Exa- looks exactly the same, I [00:39:00] think they have little kids in there and mums in the mornings. I haven't been in it since. Be interesting to go and have a look at it, really.

[00:39:08] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah. And, um, the Impalas continued after you, after you left. How much longer did they, did they go on for? And were they continuing on at the Swan, uh, all through the 70s?

[00:39:20] **Keith Read:** Still played at Swan, but they used to travel about. I think they, they got... A few new members, Keith Mott who was with me in the in the Impalas, he carried on on drums and uh, I've seen his posts and he puts posts on his Facebook of the lineup who went on, Trevor Hawkins was on piano and he um, He joined Shakin' Stevens and Sunsets later.

[00:39:43] **Keith Read:** And we used to get a guest artist from the Nashville Teens. The Nashville Teens used to come from Addlestone. I think they're still around, still going. The singer's still, Ray Phillips, still with them. But the piano player who played on their big hit, Tobacco Road, he did a lovely piano solo. [00:40:00] Very tall chap, Johnny Hawken, he now lives in New York.

[00:40:03] **Keith Read:** He had very long fingers, very tall, slim chap. And he played just like Jerry Lee Lewis, he could play classical music, which he did with a band called Renaissance in the 70s. But um, lovely person and fabulous piano player and if you listen to his song Tobacco Road written by John D. Loudermilk, they got, I think they had a number one with that one.

[00:40:22] **Keith Read:** That was their biggest hit, uh, his piano solo is brilliant, I love it. And he used to come down the Swan and sit in with Impalas sometimes on his nights off. We used to have quite a few famous people who used to hear about the Swan and go down there. A chap called Clarence "Frogman" Henry from New Orleans.

[00:40:39] **Keith Read:** He had a big hit called I Ain't Got No Home and another hit called. I Don't Know I Love You But I Do. Big worldwide hits and he was, he was working with Fats Domino in New Orleans and he, he was playing on the Granada one night on one of his package tours and they told him about a rock and roll venue, The Swan, and he went down there [00:41:00] after and he got up and sang with the band before I joined them.

[00:41:03] **Keith Read:** And Sandy Denny... is another quite famous person that I don't know much about her but she did actually get up and play a Gene Vincent song with the Impalas one night and I can't remember it happening so maybe it was before I joined or after I left.

[00:41:17] **Jarek:** Oh that's interesting, yeah, because she, yeah, she was Fairport Convention.

[00:41:20] **Keith Read:** Yeah, I think she was possibly local.

[00:41:23] **Jarek:** Yeah, she is, she is, yeah, yeah, she's, she's brought up a few times as someone with local links.

[00:41:27] **Keith Read:** I think she sadly died young and, uh,

[00:41:30] **Jarek:** yes, yes,

[00:41:31] **Keith Read:** yeah.

[00:41:32] **Jarek:** I mean, it's interesting the, um, the Impalas at the Swan thing, just because, so I was interviewing someone who, um, who said that, uh, in the, he, he, later on in the 70s, late, late 70s, he would go to the Swan for rock and roll nights, but they'd still use the name the Impalas, but there was no live band, of which, which sort of suggests that they just kept the name, uh, as just the name for the rock and roll nights.

[00:41:56] **Keith Read:** Yeah, I think it was a chap called, uh... Derek, I think he calls himself [00:42:00] Rockin Rebel. I think he had a band down there that took over from the Impalas later on. Yeah, he'd be quite a bit younger, I suspect, but, um, yeah, the Impalas, carried - they did a, I think Keith Mott, the drummer, put pictures of them. They worked with Heinz, who was in a band called The Tornadoes, and he had a hit with Just Like Eddie, which was an Eddie Cochran tribute.

[00:42:22] **Keith Read:** Yeah, so they carried on. I used to keep in touch with them because they played at my wedding at the Toby Jug. The Impalas came down, I'd left them, but they came down to the wedding and Pam's dad was out in the jellied eel bar out the front of the Toby Jug. And we, it was quite a funny thing because we had lots of Teddy Boy followers that turned up at our wedding and they came in and watched the Impalas and the Wild Angels both play at the wedding reception. It was a nice little room in the Toby Jug. We were outside welcoming people to come in at the front, at the side [00:43:00] entrance, it all

got demolished very sadly, but it was a nice little hall and we stood there shaking hands kissing people as they arrived to the wedding reception.

[00:43:07] **Keith Read:** They all went in and me and Pam said, I think they're all in now, we'll go and have a look. See what's in it. And there was a great big, when we arrived, there was a great big long table, about 30 foot long, full of food. By the time we'd said hello to everybody and we went in, it was empty. There was just a few crumbs left.

[00:43:22] **Keith Read:** So that was one of my memories. But the Teddy Boys, they laughed their head off when Pam's dad, Pam's dad was very musical. He was a lovely chap. We lost him 10 years ago. Rusty, he was 90. And he was a good piano player and performer as well as a, he owned a big business and, uh, in the wholesale business, but he, uh, he surprised Pam and he'd got a professional piano player there, a chap called Frank Barber, who was quite big in the business.

[00:43:51] **Keith Read:** He played piano and Pam's dad got on the mic and he looked at Pam and he said, uh, Keith, I hope you'll look after my daughter now you're married and keep her in the [00:44:00] comfort that she's accustomed to and he said, because, and at that point Frank Barber played a big arpeggio on the piano. She's my little girl, my little girl.

[00:44:10] **Keith Read:** He'd written this song especially for the occasion which was a bit corny and a bit embarrassing for Pam but all the Teddy Boys just laughed their head off when they heard him.

[00:44:19] **Jarek:** I can imagine.

[00:44:20] **Keith Read:** Breaking into song. Yeah.

[00:44:22] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:44:22] **aa:** Another lovely memory.

[00:44:23] **Jarek:** What year was that? What year did you get married?

[00:44:25] **Keith Read:** 1972, June the 10th.

[00:44:28] **Jarek:** That's very, yeah, that's very interesting because that's basically right at the end of the period of the Toby Jug as a, as, as this kind of le- so the Toby Jug Blues Club, Rhythm and Blues Club, uh, is where David

Bowie played, Led Zeppelin played, Yes played, Jethro Tull played. So like, yeah, that, and 72 is basically, and the, and the year, uh, uh, that Bowie played and, and then that's kind of when the big names kind of came to an end at that year. So

[00:44:52] **Keith Read:** yeah,

[00:44:53] **Jarek:** very, very, um, pertinent time to be getting married at the Toby Jug.

[00:44:57] **Keith Read:** Yeah, I didn't see any of that actually. I do remember [00:45:00] seeing the posters that said Fleetwood Mac were there.

[00:45:02] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:45:03] **Keith Read:** And because eventually when I was in the Wild Angels, our manager... Also managed Fleetwood Mac, so I used to meet quite a lot of them. Mick Fleetwood was in our office one day, and he's a very tall chap, the drummer of Fleetwood Mac, and he was sitting there, and his legs went right across this little waiting room, and I had to climb over his legs to have a meeting with the manager in the other room, and we used to cover for them.

[00:45:24] **Keith Read:** Sometimes they couldn't make gigs. I know poor old Peter Green, who is a local from New Malden. Fabulous guitarist, he unfortunately took a dodgy drug at one point and he was never the same after that. So, occasionally we sat in for Fleetwood Mac. One of our drummers worked with Fleetwood Mac and when Mick Fleetwood couldn't do it, Jim Russell used to do it.

[00:45:47] **Keith Read:** And we did quite a bit. Kensington Town Hall, or Knightsbridge Town, or one of those, and it was right at the last minute, Fleetwood Mac weren't well enough to make it, so we were brought in four o'clock in the afternoon to do this [00:46:00] student, students, uh, we used to do loads of students, uh, university gigs, and it was in this town hall, and we used Fleetwood Mac's equipment, all their roadies had the PA there, so we just had to go in with our guitars and jump on stage and do the gig, I don't know what, whether Fleetwood Mac fans were happy about rock and roll instead of blues, which- rhythm and blues they were more suited to.

[00:46:24] **Jarek:** Yeah, I was just going to say that whole, that Toby Jug scene is probably slightly separate to your scene, I guess.

[00:46:30] **Keith Read:** Yeah.

[00:46:30] **Jarek:** Rock and roll on one side and that's more kind of blues, psychedelia on the other.

[00:46:33] **Keith Read:** Yeah, I still like, I love all Fleetwood Mac's records. You know, um, uh, what was their first record? I Need Your Love So Bad.

[00:46:44] **Keith Read:** That was Mick Fleetwood and Peter Green and all the original line up and then later, um, the young lady who died recently, what's her name, um, she was this piano player and singer with it, um, used to do some [00:47:00] gigs with her, she was in Fleet, uh, Chicken Shack, that was another. We played at the, um, Speakeasy nightclub with the Wild Angels.

[00:47:07] **Keith Read:** We did a night for Sha Na Na, their party, we played at. And there was always lots of famous people who used to turn up there. Mark Bolan was at the bar of T. Rex. I said, would you like to come and join in with us? Mark and I were having a bit of a jam session and he said, Ohhhh, he didn't look quite well enough to play.

[00:47:27] **Keith Read:** But Ginger Baker of Cream with Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce, he got up with us. And he was, some people say he was the greatest drummer in the world, but he was terrible. He couldn't play rock and roll. And maybe he was a bit inebriated as well but he didn't like our drummer's drumsticks because he used great big thick military sticks and they were a bit too heavy for him.

[00:47:48] **Keith Read:** He was more of a jazz drummer and he was moaning and uh, but it was quite a, quite a, um, An honour to play with all those famous people at the place. That was a speakeasy nightclub, that [00:48:00] was um, I think that was down in the basement, or was it upstairs? It was in St. Margaret Street, just off of um, um, right in the middle of London, Oxford Square, Oxford Circus, right near there, you know, it's a lovely club, lots of famous people played there.

[00:48:15] **Keith Read:** Sha Na Na who had their party there, we played for them, they were in the film Woodstock. They played in that festival. But most of the Wild Angels gigs, around about 72, were all universities. We played Strathclyde University in Glasgow, um...

[00:48:30] **Jarek:** Did you play Kingston Polytechnic?

[00:48:32] **Keith Read:** No. Has that been going long?

[00:48:35] **Jarek:** Well, I mean, these days it doesn't really have many gigs, but in the sort of mid, mid to late 70s into 80s, they had like, uh, Queen and Elton John and you know, um, a lot of, and Bowie himself also, also played the Polytechnic as well. So there was a, there was a period where the Polytechnic would put on a lot of quite high profile.

[00:48:57] **Keith Read:** I've got a lot of old diaries upstairs. I'll [00:49:00] have to look through if we did. I know we did loads of polytechnics and loads of universities.

[00:49:04] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:49:05] **Keith Read:** Everywhere, you know? Yeah. And we had an old prison van. It was like a coach. And the back part was for the equipment. The middle part was bunks, four bunks. The next part was for sitting there playing cards.

[00:49:16] **Keith Read:** And then the front part was the cab, and it was an ex prison van. So they're all bars on the windows. So, uh, they couldn't steal our equipment very easy . But it only went about 30mph. So if we played Aberdeen or Inverness, it was an all day drive and we'd fall asleep on the way. Lucky enough to have a good roadie who could drive us up there.

[00:49:38] **Jarek:** Yeah. Um, and then in terms of some of your other projects, I think you mentioned you've worked with the Jordanares, who are Elvis's...

[00:49:44] **Keith Read:** Yeah, that was lucky, yeah. A chap called Johnny Earl is still around, he's still a local boy down this way, and he was the top Elvis Presley impersonator. He sang just like Elvis, he made lots of albums, he had the Jordanares backing him, Scotty Moore, the [00:50:00] guitarist of Elvis, and DJ Fontana, the drummer.

[00:50:02] **Keith Read:** From Elvis back, Johnny Earl and then he suddenly found me and he used me on a lot of records, and suddenly there was a 20th anniversary of, of the passing of Elvis, uh, from 1977. So 197- 1997, he was doing a big event in Holland in a place called Arnhem, which was quite famous in the war for a parachute event.

[00:50:25] **Keith Read:** Um, a sad event. And, um, so we, I, I got. But he quite good money for going there, because I was sitting in for James Burton. And

when I arrived, it was Charlie Hodge, who was Elvis's best friend. I used to give him his scarfs and glass of water in Las Vegas. He was on guitar, and he asked me to tune his guitar.

[00:50:45] **Keith Read:** And the Jordanares, the original line up that played on nearly all Elvis's records in the 60s. They were all there. Some of the nicest people I've ever met. They were all Nashville gentlemen. And, uh, sad there's only, three of them died [00:51:00] since. Gordon Stoker, who sang harmony for Elvis, he's gone. But Ray Walker, the bass singer, who sang now and then there's a fool such as I is still living in Nashville and I met him four years ago.

[00:51:12] **Keith Read:** Got back together with him. He's a lovely man. And that was an absolute honour. That was one of the biggest honours of my career. Very lucky to do that.

[00:51:21] **Jarek:** Yeah. And then these days you're involved in the radio, Angel Radio. Tell us a little bit about that operation.

[00:51:26] **Keith Read:** Yeah, yeah. Still busy, still do gigs most weeks and with two or three different bands.

[00:51:30] **Keith Read:** And if ever I'd get together, I did the Half Moon at Putney about three or four weeks ago. We did that, it was packed, sold out venue. In between, me and Pam do two or three radio, uh, Angel radio programmes on a Monday morning, Thursday afternoon, do two hours mostly, mainly requests, but it's a nostalgia station and most of the listeners, it was aimed at people who retired to the Isle of Wight.

[00:51:58] **Keith Read:** Just down the road and, uh, or [00:52:00] over across the Solent, uh, they all liked it, to hear all the old nostalgic music. Bing Crosby, Vera Lynn, uh, Andrews Sisters, The Ink Spots, The Mills Brothers, Al Bowley, all those, uh, Al Jolson. And, uh, that's how it started out, but since we've been there, me and Pam have got slightly younger taste in music, so we've managed to... twist their arm and make them play a few 60s songs. So we even do a few psychedelic records every now and then, but ma- um, we do any requests. So it's, it's good fun. It keeps out mischief. It's- don't get paid a penny for it, but it's very rewarding to know people all over the world are listening in online.

[00:52:39] **Keith Read:** And it's on the local DAB FM 98.6, so it's very popular and we love it, it keeps us busy. We have- do competitions every week.

[00:52:49] **Jarek:** I guess, um, yeah, I guess the world of radio has come along since you were listening to pirate radio in, uh, growing up. And now, and now you're broadcasting to the other side of the world.[00:53:00]

[00:53:00] **Keith Read:** Well, when Angel started, the chap who runs it was trying to copy the pirate radio, he actually had a pirate, excuse me, he had a pirate radio station, and he got closed down, the police took all his equipment away, but eventually he got a licence, so it's all legal now.

[00:53:16] **Jarek:** Yeah. And, uh, yeah, just coming towards the end.

[00:53:19] **Keith Read:** I'll just have a glass of water.

[00:53:20] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, go for it, of course. Yeah, we're just, we're just coming towards the end anyway. Um, so yeah, just to close off, um, I guess it'd be good just to talk a little bit about, um, I know you said you don't, you don't make it back to Kingston that often these days, but when you, when you have been recently, I mean, how, what have you noticed that's different?

[00:53:39] **Jarek:** Uh, how, uh,

[00:53:40] **Keith Read:** Wow, it's changed a lot. I'm on a Facebook, a friend's group of Kingston area- or two or three of their groups and when you see pictures of it now because when me and Pam used to go when we first knew each other it was a place called Brady's Arcade it was down Eden Street um [00:54:00] just not far from where the old post office used to be the old post office was on the corner and we know all the shops in that area from the 60s and 70s.

[00:54:10] **Keith Read:** Even her dad owned a shop right near Brady's Arcade. But I loved the arcade. I don't know if you've heard of it. It was, it was really lovely old fashioned place. You go down there, it'd be a mannequin with all funny clothes on. They sold all the, um, psychedelic clothes back in the 60s. All the military outfits like the Beatles wore and Sergeant Pepper.

[00:54:31] **Keith Read:** And they had two record shops down there and I used to go down there every day. on my bike and um, go all through the records. They were three and sixpence at the time, uh, and I bought the Beatles first two singles on the Red Parlophone label. Many years later I decided I've got them on CD so I don't need to keep them.

[00:54:51] **Keith Read:** I sold them for about 30, 40 pound each and I'd only paid three and sixpence for which is like about 20p or something. And I bought [00:55:00] loads of albums. I've got two Gene Vincent albums that he signed for me at the Palladium. One I sold for about 60, many years back, so the other one's probably worth about 100 now.

[00:55:11] **Keith Read:** And I bought one of my first guitars down the Arcade, and then it was all demolished I think around about 1973. And so when I go back now it's, I can't recognise it, they built all that Eden Walk around there. I used to go to the art, the old art shop, the original art shop, and then add a new art shop in the Eden Walk that used to supply with, uh, art materials.

[00:55:33] **Keith Read:** There is a art shop, I think, in, uh, Fife Road now, and they actually listen to Angel Radio. They send us messages saying, uh, Claire from the art shop says, can you play so and so?

[00:55:43] **Jarek:** I know, I know the shop. I know the shop.

[00:55:45] **Keith Read:** Yeah. Oh, that's, it's, it's right near Bentalls old entrance.

[00:55:49] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:55:50] **Keith Read:** Right near the old Bentalls entrance, there was a pub called The Dolphin, and we used to play down there a lot on a Sunday night after I left the Wild Angels, me and Pam had a little [00:56:00] trio called Trip.

[00:56:01] **Keith Read:** We used to play in the Dolphin every Sunday. And um, used to play in a pub called, uh, Rising Sun in Sudbury Hill, near Harrow, uh, with a Australian piano player who's an absolute genius. He was one of the greatest entertainers I've ever seen. Sadly no longer with us, but he was such an entertainer. The pub would be chock a block.

[00:56:19] **Keith Read:** It had to put sign on, seven o'clock, sold out. Nobody could go in and we didn't go until nine o'clock. And, uh, that was very successful and very good, but the Kingston market, I used to love working down the market, but it's, last time I went, it was, all the fruit and veg stalls seemed to disappear, all the fish stalls seemed to disappear, uh, we, we had a cloth stall, there was a Jewish chap who used to sell yards of cloth for people to do their own dressmaking, there was a jewellery store, there was Alf the book man who lived up near, um, Waterloo Bridge, and he used to come down every day sell all these second hand books, and it was a lovely atmosphere, the

market, I loved it. But a lot of people [00:57:00] seem to be moaning that it's just lost its character now, it's, uh, I don't know what they got, I think they did a lot of, um, food stalls last time I went, you know, could get a nice little...

[00:57:11] **Keith Read:** little snacks from all these, which is probably nice for people working in the area to go for their lunch snacks. But, um, it's not the same as it used to be.

[00:57:20] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. No, I think, I think a lot of people would say the same. Um, and also, you know, you've spoken about the fact that, uh, well, you, you've been involved in music for six, 60 plus years or, um, and then you've got children who are involved in music as well. I mean, um, how do you reflect on how music is in terms of how you get yourself out there as a musician. Is it less about live these days are more about an online presence and that sort of thing.

[00:57:47] **Keith Read:** Yeah, that's all changed as well. I feel sorry for a young person wanting to make it in the music business nowadays because back in the day you had to have a bit of luck and you had to have a bit of talent as well.

[00:57:59] **Keith Read:** [00:58:00] Lucky that my son was in the right place at the right time. Mark was in a place where they were doing an audition for A1. He joined them. Six months later they had a number one hit and then he wrote a load of songs. Now he works with Kenney Jones, the drummer of... the Kenney Jones Gang that used to be with The Who, took over from Keith Moon, and he was with The Small Faces and Rod Stewart's Faces, so he's a bit of a legendary character, he's still around, still playing drums, and Mark, my son Mark, when he's not working with A1, he plays keyboards for the Jones Gang, and they do all their old stuff from their hits, they've probably got about um, twenty number one hits amongst the whole band, you know, they're all...

[00:58:43] **Keith Read:** involved in Bad Company and Free and other bands like that. Yeah, so it's nice to know that they were lucky enough to make it, but nowadays it's, some people just sort of write a song and they record it in their bedroom and if they get millions of hits [00:59:00] on YouTube or Spotify, they might make it if they're lucky.

[00:59:05] **Keith Read:** I've got a pair of jeans on and there's a little tiny pocket here that you get. A friend of mine says, that's for Spotify royalties, you might have to cut that out if

[00:59:19] **Keith Read:** you do-

[00:59:19] **Jarek:** very good, very good. And just to round off, I just want to sort of have a look at some of the physical items, the printouts you gave us earlier. So, just to have a look. So, when would this picture have been taken? That's the Cellar Club.

[00:59:35] **Keith Read:** Yeah, that was a very enjoyable night. Yeah, I was on my th- second guitar I ever had. A Futurama III, which I used to shine me torch on at night. I'm only about 14 there.

[00:59:46] **Jarek:** That's you on the far right, is it?

[00:59:47] **Keith Read:** Yeah.

[00:59:47] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

[00:59:48] **Keith Read:** And that's Ian on the other guitar that- also a Futurama that he, he now lives in Australia and he did very, very well with the Tony, the Sony Corporation.

[00:59:58] **Keith Read:** He helped [01:00:00] introduce the Walkman, Sony Walkman, and the CD when that first came out. He was involved in the, uh, with the bosses of that. So he's done quite well for himself. Uh, Robin is, he went to university. I haven't seen him for years. He was my cousin, Ian, who was a drummer. He was his first cousin and Ian's my second cousin.

[01:00:20] **Keith Read:** So Ian's, they've all retired from music. Nearly everybody I know from back in the day have all retired from music. Now I'm the only one still doing it.

[01:00:27] **Jarek:** So this, this band is, this isn't the Impalas?

[01:00:29] **Keith Read:** No, this is just before I joined Impalas. Yeah.

[01:00:32] **Jarek:** Right.

[01:00:32] **Keith Read:** That, that was, I think we were called Pieces of Four.

[01:00:34] **Jarek:** Pieces of Four, Oh, that's what it says in the guitar there. Yes, of course.

[01:00:37] **Keith Read:** On the drum. Yeah. It's um, we were called the Cyclones originally.

[01:00:41] **Jarek:** Right, right.

[01:00:42] **Keith Read:** All the bands had funny names like that in them days.

[01:00:44] **Jarek:** That's you and Pam, is it?

[01:00:46] **Keith Read:** Yeah. Our. A publicist, a chap who eventually became known as a bit of a naughty boy, Max Clifford, he was doing a publicist, his publicity for the Angels in 1972 and he got, [01:01:00] took a picture of us sitting on a Harley Davidson chopper motorbike and we got all the rocker gear on and um...

[01:01:06] **Jarek:** That's not your Harley Davidson though?

[01:01:07] **Keith Read:** No, I'm a fake. They thought I was a rocker but I never rode a motorbike ever. The rest of the band all did. The, the, um, the, the, the drummer had a lovely big, um, triumph. Triumph Bonneville 750, and a singer we worked with in Sweden had a, um, Suzuki 850, which he, he gave me a lift on the back through Stockholm in, in Sweden, and he reached 120 miles an hour and I was absolutely terrified, I didn't know what to hold on to, but I've never been into motorbikes, I've sat on hundreds of them for photographs. I'm a fake.

[01:01:47] **Jarek:** I think Pam looks quite at ease there.

[01:01:50] **Keith Read:** Yeah, she would have probably been on more motorbikes than I had.

[01:01:54] **Jarek:** And then we do have a picture of the Impalas here.

[01:01:56] **Jarek:** Would this have been taken in the Swan or?

[01:01:58] **Keith Read:** Yeah, yeah, that's in the Swan. That's the [01:02:00] early days, before the rockers started really filling the place up, because we had the girl singer, Tony our singer and guitarist, his wife Una was a girl singer. She used to sing stuff like Peggy Lee songs and um, a lot of 60s pop stuff.

[01:02:15] **Keith Read:** And then suddenly when the place was, she stopped singing when she had children and a couple of daughters. And um, we ended up

as a three piece and it was all um, rock and roll for- back to the rock and roll after all the Teddy Boys turned up at the, at the Swan

[01:02:32] **Jarek:** and I, I notice it says Keith on the dr, on the bass drum, but is that, is that Keith Mott or is that yourself?

[01:02:36] **Keith Read:** Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

[01:02:37] **Jarek:** Yep. Yeah,

[01:02:37] **Keith Read:** That's his, yeah. Some people said, oh, your name's on the drum and I'd say, no, it's not, it's the drummers. And that - got the same name as me.

[01:02:43] **Jarek:** I meant to say actually Keith Mott, you're still in touch with?

[01:02:46] **Keith Read:** Uh, yeah, is - he unfortunately doesn't get about much now. I saw him on Facebook and he, he looks the same.

[01:02:52] **Keith Read:** His face is exactly the same, but he's had a lot of leg trouble. So he doesn't get about much lately, but he's, he's always been a [01:03:00] mad pigeon fancier. He's, he's, he's in big groups of people that are crazy about pigeons and they, they race pigeons. Some of them sell for 60, 000 pounds for one pigeon and it's an unbelievable business.

[01:03:15] **Keith Read:** And a lot of people are massively into it. But back in the day, in the late 60s, we, he cleared his pigeons out of his shed in the back garden and we made some records in there. I've still got copies of some acetates we made, uh, Shakin' All Over and Summertime Blues in there.

[01:03:33] **Jarek:** Yeah, and then that's you with Mud in 2014.

[01:03:36] **Keith Read:** Yeah, I've known them all their life, Ray and Rob, and Les sadly died ,the singer. Dave Mount, who's a good friend, he sadly died about 12 years ago, but um, they do reform. If somebody says, we want Mud and they want the original Mud, they're still the originals. So, uh, we, we're going- we're doing two in December.

[01:03:58] **Jarek:** And is this, is this a cutting [01:04:00] from?

[01:04:00] **Keith Read:** That was in a local magazine. It was a chat- the agent called Peter Foote, Peter G. Foote, who used to run an agency, he'd book all the bands in the local venues and he ran a magazine, a little black and white A5 sized magazine and he was always featuring all the local groups in it, showing little articles about them, so that's a, a little cutting off of it and uh, and then I wrote a story when- in another magazine there's a chap in called John Taylor in Thames Ditton who writes the magazine called Pipeline and it's all about instrumental groups like the Shadows and the Ventures and all the surfing groups back in the 60s, Dick Dial and everybody and he does this magazine and he got me to write an article about my life in music so I told the story about when I met the Shadows coming home from school and uh, and I, that article is there so you can have a copy of that if that's any use.

[01:04:57] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, no, it's all [01:05:00] fascinating. Um, but yeah, I think that covers most of what I wanted to cover. Is there, is there anything that you think we haven't spoken about that you think is relevant or any good stories that you haven't right now?

[01:05:11] **Keith Read:** I think I've probably given you quite a bit.

[01:05:14] **Jarek:** You've given me plenty, you've given me plenty.

[01:05:16] **Keith Read:** You're lucky I didn't ramble on even more. Sometimes they shut me up because I do a little programme on another Portsmouth radio station called Victory online and I do a 60s show on a Sunday afternoon on that so um, sometimes they say we've run out of time you'll have to shut up. Because I'm a music- Not only a musician, I'm a music fan, I've always been a fanatic about all the music.

[01:05:41] **Keith Read:** That's why I like meeting people in the music business. I've met loads of my, uh, idols. I've got some pictures in the office out there of me and Ringo Starr and people like that.

[01:05:51] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah.

[01:05:51] **Keith Read:** Um, I've met lots of people. I've been really lucky. But, um, I know on this Victory show we do that and, uh, every [01:06:00] Sunday and they, listeners send in messages saying, Oh, we can't believe your knowledge of music.

[01:06:05] **Keith Read:** And it's, uh, you know, I don't, I don't want to be a big head or anything, but I, I just, I can remember everything back in the day, you

know, I can even remember so many details of when I first started and all the bands and all the names of the bands and when they came out and what who wrote the songs and what label they were on what kind of labels, so I've got a lot of knowledge just from being a music fanatic.

[01:06:26] **Jarek:** It's good. It's good that you've retained it.

[01:06:28] **Jarek:** Yeah, I can't remember

[01:06:28] **Keith Read:** what I had for breakfast yesterday. But uh-

[01:06:29] **Jarek:** Good stuff, Keith. Thank you so much for your time.

[01:06:36] **Keith Read:** Thanks for