

[00:00:00] **Jarek:** Yeah, all that. Uh, okay, this is Jarek Zaba for the AMP Kingston project from Creative Youth, exploring art, music, and pop fashion heritage in the Kingston borough and beyond. It is the 6th of December 2023, um, and I'm with Richard Fletcher and Randy, sorry, I don't know your surname, Baldwin, and Randy Baldwin.

[00:00:18] **Jarek:** Uh, Richard is the former landlord of the Grey Horse pub in Kingston, and Randy knows his stuff about music in the, uh, in the Kingston area. Um, do you both, Richard starting with you, mind just stating your name for the tape as well as your date and place of birth?

[00:00:30] **Richard Fletcher:** Richard Fletcher, 26th born in Carshalton.

[00:00:34] **Randy Baldwin:** Randy Baldwin. Born in Horsham, Sussex on the 13th of May 1948.

[00:00:41] **Jarek:** Very good. Um, so I wonder if I could just start by getting you guys just to reflect on your relationship to this area. I mean, when did you first come to Kingston? When did you first start getting involved in the scene here?

[00:00:53] **Richard Fletcher:** Uh, I'll start. Um, I had a pub in a place called Bradford on Avon near Bath.[00:01:00]

[00:01:00] **Richard Fletcher:** And spent quite a lot of time, a year or so, looking for a pub. Because we wanted to move out of Bradford on Avon, but we wanted a music pub. Young's Brewery heard that I was looking for a pub and showed me around the Half Moon in Putney. Did I tell you this? Did you know this? Showed me around the Half Moon in Putney and, um, basically said yes, the pub is yours, me and my wife June.

[00:01:23] **Richard Fletcher:** And so we went to meet the board to have it verified in, uh, Wandsworth. And the board were all there in their boardroom. We were in the little outer anteroom, and then suddenly somebody came out and said, I don't like to tell you this, but you're not gonna get the Half Moon now. But the board would like you to, like to meet you anyway, because you've made the effort, you come up here.

[00:01:45] **Richard Fletcher:** So we went in, chatted to John Young and a few other people, and John, John Young said, Have we got anything for these nice people? And suddenly somebody said, well, the Grey Horse in Kingston is up at

the moment and we're trying to get the [00:02:00] current tenant out. That was, um, uh, what was his n- oh, weird bloke. Newt.

[00:02:06] **Randy Baldwin:** Oh, yeah.

[00:02:08] **Richard Fletcher:** Anyway, so the people running it had been running it for a year, not doing a very good job of it. So we went and had a look at it, thought great, nice stage there. And so January 2000 we moved in and just spent 15 years developing it into a full on virtually every night music venue.

[00:02:30] **Jarek:** Right, so, uh, tell me a little bit about the character of the Grey Horse before you had it.

[00:02:34] **Jarek:** Was it a live music venue then?

[00:02:35] **Richard Fletcher:** I think, as far as I know, it's always been a live music venue since the 60s, when, uh, they used to have jazz in there. Not jazz, yeah. I mean, full on jazz. I mean, proper, I had an album, a vinyl once, somebody gave me, recorded at the Grey Horse, some big jazz band. But I can't find it.

[00:02:53] **Richard Fletcher:** I don't know where it's gone. Um, so in the 60s and into the 70s it was live jazz. [00:03:00] Uh, and well known live jazz music like the Half Moon in Putney was, like the Bull's Head in Barnes was. So those three Young's Brewery pubs were all well known for live music.

[00:03:12] **Jarek:** Right, they were a sort of network of jazz venues.

[00:03:15] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah, that's interesting. How about yourself, Randy? What's your relationship to this area?

[00:03:20] **Randy Baldwin:** Well, from the age of five I lived in Tolworth till 1972. So, I was always into music as a teenager and stuff. And it wasn't until I probably started working in 75 that I started, I was working in town and I started to go down to the Marquee Club and all that in town rather than local stuff to be honest with you.

[00:03:43] **Randy Baldwin:** Although I knew there was stuff going on.

[00:03:45] **Jarek:** Yeah, I was going to ask, did you ever go to the Toby Jug?

[00:03:47] **Randy Baldwin:** I was there the opening night. Well, I lived over the road from there, literally over the road from there. When that opened, it was like, whoa. And the first night I went there was Chicken Shack. And I met some old mates from school I hadn't seen for three years since I left [00:04:00] school.

[00:04:00] **Randy Baldwin:** And we're now friends to this day. I remember sitting in the front bar there, pre- prior to the gig, and we were sitting chatting to Christine Perfect, who of course, you know, became a major star. So you think back on that, great memories of that. I used to go practically every week. I mean, the bands you saw in there were just ridiculous.

[00:04:16] **Randy Baldwin:** When you look back on it, you know.

[00:04:17] **Richard Fletcher:** Come on, name some names.

[00:04:18] **Randy Baldwin:** Fleetwood Mac, John Mayall, Captain Beefheart, um, I, I I, crazy. I mean, Led Zeppelin played there.

[00:04:26] **Jarek:** Yeah. Bowie launched Ziggy Stardust there.

[00:04:29] **Randy Baldwin:** There's a lot of local history about that recently, haven't they? They did do that. The, um, the artwork on the underpass at the Toby, which has now been all bricked up and holed up, isn't it?

[00:04:38] **Jarek:** Unfortunately, so, yeah, no, I'm, I'm involved with the, with the not-for-profit who did that. Yeah.

[00:04:42] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah. So that was that. Drew me out into the local circuit more, um, and of course, I think when I was at school, 65, um, I mean, the Yardbirds used to play the Cellar Club here in Kingston, I never went, I was a bit too young, I mean, I knew some mates who did go, but I wasn't out and [00:05:00] about as a youngster as much as I might have been, but, uh, um, and then from there, in 72 I moved to Twickenham, um, and, um, got very much involved in the scene in West London, the pub rock scene coming in the 70s, the pub rock stuff.

[00:05:18] **Randy Baldwin:** Stuff going on in Kingston, but I can't say I was probably going to West London more than I was coming into Kingston those days. And I was doing the travel for Stiff Records when they first started, so I was getting involved with a lot of stuff there, but as far as the local gigs were concerned, it probably wasn't really later, much later on that

[00:05:37] **Richard Fletcher:** When I arrived.

[00:05:37] **Randy Baldwin:** When you arrived, really it sort of got back into coming down to the Grey Horse and stuff. In the meantime, we'd had kids and stuff and slightly got off the scene locally. Going to see stuff and then became regulars really.

[00:05:45] **Richard Fletcher:** Early 2000s.

[00:05:49] **Jarek:** What was the year that you got involved with the Grey Horse?

[00:05:52] **Richard Fletcher:** 2000, January. Right at the beginning of 2000, so exactly 15 years because we left January 15th, 2015.

[00:05:59] **Jarek:** I mean turning the [00:06:00] clock way back, um, to, to, to, to your, your early years, I mean what are your sort of earliest memories of, of music just generally, uh, whether that be live music or on the radio or records you bought, what were your early tastes, what were your early music memories?

[00:06:15] **Richard Fletcher:** My tastes have always been fairly conservative.

[00:06:18] **Richard Fletcher:** Uh, Beatles rather than the Rolling Stones. Weird, isn't it? You had to be one or the other in the 60s and 70s. You couldn't be both, but I like both now, yeah. But what I'm saying is the early 2000s, I was being in the pub, I was trying to cover everything. In terms of playing music, when people walked into the pub, I didn't want to upset anybody.

[00:06:42] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, but I didn't want to, I didn't play jazz. It was blues, it was rock, it was middle of the road stuff. Because I didn't want people to go, oh god, and walk out of the pub. So, apart from jazz, which developed a bit later on actually, in 2013 or so, John [00:07:00] Bird brought his big blues, big blues jazz band in every Tuesday night or Wednesday night or wherever it was and that was just phenomenal.

[00:07:08] **Richard Fletcher:** So, yeah, the jazz came in a bit later on. But in the early days, yeah, trying to cover everything. But the funny thing about bands playing at the Grey Horse when I took over was if they walked through the door and, can we get a gig here, have you got a PA? Uh, no we haven't, well you can't have a gig then because I haven't got a PA at the moment.

[00:07:27] **Jarek:** Right.

[00:07:28] **Richard Fletcher:** So I had to get in a, I hired a PA to start with from a guy just around the corner. And the guy who used to run the PA for me in 2001 onwards for about two or three years was nearly my, my um, sister, he was my sister's boyfriend, I said they nearly got married I was going to say. Uh, also his name was Fletcher, uh, Matt Fletcher, and he used to play with Bross.

[00:07:56] **Richard Fletcher:** Did you know this?

[00:07:57] **Randy Baldwin:** No.

[00:07:57] **Richard Fletcher:** He used to be the keyboard player with Bross.
[00:08:00] But he, he stopped doing that, and then he became, uh, a writer of music. And he used to look after the PA, we hired it from around the corner, so anybody that wanted to play could now play in the Grey Horse. Because we had our own PA, and we had a desk like the size of this desk, do you remember that?

[00:08:15] **Richard Fletcher:** In the back room. Massive. Uh, and then when he left, uh, Matt, I started doing the PA, which was very daunting. But it was, any sort of band that came through the door could now have a gig. So therefore, what do you require? Well, we want six mics, we want this, we want that, and I'm thinking, oh dear. Um

[00:08:40] **Jarek:** Because you mentioned you, uh, you had a pub beforehand.

[00:08:42] **Jarek:** Did that pub have music, or was the Grey Horse your first experience of running a venue?

[00:08:46] **Richard Fletcher:** No, we had two pubs, both for about four years in this Bradford on Avon. And both times we turned it from a little boozier, really, into a music venue.

[00:08:57] **Jarek:** Right.

[00:08:58] **Richard Fletcher:** Both times. So we liked [00:09:00] what we were doing with the music.

[00:09:01] **Richard Fletcher:** People liked what we were doing, how we were doing it, and the type of music we were getting in. Uh, which we did again in the second pub, which was more of a community pub, but doing music, I can't remember now, three, four nights a week, five possibly. Uh, and then we, we

started an actual festival, uh, in Bradford on I Avon called the Woolley Festival, which I think is still going, but we started it from that pub.

[00:09:25] **Richard Fletcher:** And I'm quite proud of that as well, because, um, we got some good names in for that. Uh, just a, like a two thousand capacity marquee. And just local musicians, but one headliner that made people buy tickets. And we've got the scouts doing the bar and stuff like that. So we loved running a music venue. So when we came to London, it had to be a music venue.

[00:09:48] **Richard Fletcher:** And it was fortune that Young's heard that we were looking for a music venue. Via the agents. You know, some agents said to them, well we've got this couple here. So, um That's what we [00:10:00] wanted to do. We started off, uh, it was trying to get bands in any night of the week. Um, some would come in and, well, we wanted to play on a Friday or a Saturday.

[00:10:09] **Richard Fletcher:** We can't play on a Friday or a Saturday because we've got, well, we'll play on a Thursday. We can't because we've got, alright, we'll do a Monday night then. So it ended up slowly filling up Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Then we realised that seven nights a week wasn't going to work. So we cut back to like five nights a week.

[00:10:26] **Richard Fletcher:** Blues, tended to be blues because there's more of them around, and blues rock, covers bands usually. And then another success was getting Robin Bibi who walked through the door one day when I was painting. And said I run jam nights. Do you want to ram- a jam night? And I said no, we don't want to run a jam night He said it's very successful and just give us a chance and we'll do it.

[00:10:47] **Richard Fletcher:** So to cut a long story short he did it for all the time we were there, from about 2002 onwards. He did every Tuesday night Then we've got another band in, Three State Blues. Do you remember them? Three [00:11:00] State Blues did- then alternated with, um, alternated with Robin Bibi so every other Tuesday, Robin, every other Tuesday, Three State Blues.

[00:11:09] **Richard Fletcher:** So it proved that every night of the week you could get a crowd in to listen to music, basically. And then another positive plus for us was we heard one of our bands that had come down from Bristol to play in the Grey Horse were now playing at the Festival Hall, in the foyer at the Festival Hall. And so we said, really?

[00:11:29] **Richard Fletcher:** On a Sunday? He said, yeah, it's two o'clock, come down. So we went to Festival Hall on a Sunday lunchtime and couldn't believe A, how busy it was, B, how many people were up and dancing at two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon. So we thought, that's what we're going to do. We're going to do two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon.

[00:11:47] **Richard Fletcher:** And then from like the following week onwards, every Sunday afternoon, the music started at two or three o'clock in the afternoon. And then another band in the evening.

[00:11:57] **Jarek:** Yeah, I think I'm pretty sure I've been to a [00:12:00] few of those two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon gigs.

[00:12:01] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, the Sunday afternoons were great.

[00:12:03] **Jarek:** Yeah, I, I, I, I had friends who played in the Green Rock River Band, do you remember them?

[00:12:06] **Randy Baldwin:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah!

[00:12:07] **Richard Fletcher:** Jeremy.

[00:12:07] **Jarek:** Yeah, Jeremy Sachs and Bowden the bassist.

[00:12:10] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah,

[00:12:10] **Jarek:** yeah, yeah, um.

[00:12:11] **Richard Fletcher:** I saw Adam, Bowden, Bowden?

[00:12:13] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:12:14] **Richard Fletcher:** Last year I think it was in The Lamb.

[00:12:15] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, well The Lamb's my local, my regular, so yeah, I see, see, see Adam in there all the time.

[00:12:20] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah.

[00:12:21] **Jarek:** Um, yes.

[00:12:22] **Richard Fletcher:** Now him, I loved that band. Jeremy's Green Rock, what was it called?

[00:12:26] **Jarek:** Green Rock River Band.

[00:12:27] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, I loved that band. And they were regular regulars. And every time they were there, it was packed, but not with the normal crowd. And I'm pointing at you because, you know, the bluesy rock type people wouldn't come down for Green Rock because it's like, it's going to be 300.

[00:12:42] **Jarek:** Oh, oh, that's just my headphones, sorry. Thought the mics had gone. No, sorry. Did you want to just repeat what you just said cos I-

[00:12:50] **Richard Fletcher:** yeah, so a lot of people, a lot of the regular bluesy rock type people wouldn't come down for Green Rock River Band because, you know, Oh, why would we come and watch that? [00:13:00]

[00:13:00] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:13:00] **Richard Fletcher:** Tree hugger bunch of people that are going to play weird music.

[00:13:04] **Richard Fletcher:** But actually it was just brilliant music and it was such fun as well.

[00:13:08] **Jarek:** So would you describe your regular clientele for the music as more bluesy, bluesy type, type people? Yeah.

[00:13:14] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, the regular

[00:13:17] **Randy Baldwin:** It's not for me.

[00:13:18] **Jarek:** Okay, where were we? Uh, yeah, we were just talking about your sort of regular clientele and the And Randy, would you consider yourself part of that regular cli- how

[00:13:26] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, I mean, I would go and watch most things.

[00:13:28] **Randy Baldwin:** I mean, but there came a time where I couldn't be down there for five or six nights a week. And , you had to sort of pick and choose where to go. And I got to know people in the bands I'd know, so it

became more of a, a social thing as well. So I'd go and see them 'cause I know so and so in the band and stuff.

[00:13:44] **Randy Baldwin:** So it became a social thing as well as just the music. But, um, there was a stage there with, down there a lot. Yeah. Um, but sadly. He went and left us.

[00:13:55] **Jarek:** Were you, were you living locally at the time, Richard? Or were you travelling in, or? You lived above the pub? [00:14:00] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So yeah, I was, yeah, yeah. Um, yeah, yeah, absolutely.

[00:14:05] **Jarek:** Um.

[00:14:05] **Richard Fletcher:** So it was, it was a social thing for me and June as well. Rather, you know, as well as running a business office.

[00:14:10] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, you made it into something. It was almost a, it was almost a, it was a Grey Horse family. And it still is.

[00:14:14] **Richard Fletcher:** One of the things I'm most proud of as well, which has nothing to do with music, was that we made a nice atmosphere in the pub.

[00:14:22] **Randy Baldwin:** Absolutely.

[00:14:22] **Richard Fletcher:** It wasn't just the music, because the funny thing about music events is that everybody, not everybody, 99 percent of the people have come to watch the band or listen to the band. There's always the odd person that comes in, wanders off the street and goes What's going on? What's going on?

[00:14:37] **Richard Fletcher:** What's this all about then? And 99 percent of the crowd would turn on him and say, Shut up! We're listening. And that was always nice to know, it was self policing if you like. If there was an idiot amongst the crowd, that lot would get rid of that person. Yeah, I'm right, aren't I?

[00:14:53] **Randy Baldwin:** And it was a place too though, I mean my wife would go down there on her own if I wasn't going to go, and feel comfortable in it.

[00:14:58] **Richard Fletcher:** That's what I was going to say, yeah, that's
[00:15:00] what I'm most proud of. Ladies could come in quite, yeah.

[00:15:08] **Jarek:** Yeah. Was there, um, much going on elsewhere in pubs in Kingston in terms of live music at this time? The Fighting Cocks are obviously still going, yeah, yeah.

[00:15:20] **Richard Fletcher:** Apart from big nightclubs, no, I think people used to try it thinking, oh, this is an easy way to make money.

[00:15:28] **Richard Fletcher:** And so they'd put a band on. Pay them 150 quid or whatever and then

[00:15:33] **Randy Baldwin:** not really go out the way to promote it even

[00:15:35] **Richard Fletcher:** no and then you know you get 30 people in and think, hmmm, what went wrong

[00:15:39] **Randy Baldwin:** Wouldn't even advertise it outside the pub or something stupid like that.

[00:15:42] **Richard Fletcher:** Whereas we did it full on everybody knew if they walked in most nights of the week there'd be a band on or something.

[00:15:49] **Jarek:** And how did it work in terms of sourcing your musicians? I mean you mentioned some of them just walked in and wanted a gig. Is that how you got most of them or was there a sense of you scouting around? Did you look for bands or did they all come to you?

[00:15:59] **Richard Fletcher:** No, [00:16:00] they looked for you. It got easier as the years went by as well, so from the third year onwards.

[00:16:07] **Richard Fletcher:** I was thinking about this the other day, when we knew we were going to talk. I was thinking, by September, by the end of September, I had booked the following year, most of the

[00:16:17] **Randy Baldwin:** What, of your first year, when you were first year there?

[00:16:19] **Richard Fletcher:** Every year. So from the end of September, every year, I would book the year ahead.

[00:16:24] **Richard Fletcher:** Because you know you had to get Bad Influence, Papa George, you know, Bibi and all that lot. You had to get them before they booked in somewhere else. So, you know, all right, well, Bad Influence is going to be here once a month or once every six weeks. Papa George is going to be here every six weeks. So you'd end up filling all the spaces in, saving the best, you know, the Thursday, Friday, Saturdays and Sunday afternoons for the ones you knew were going to, I wanted to see as well as everybody else wanted to see.

[00:16:50] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:16:50] **Richard Fletcher:** So it became easier. I'd get a load of demos through the post. Obviously loads of demos, yeah.

[00:16:56] **Jarek:** You were like John Peel.

[00:16:58] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, the most annoying, [00:17:00] can I just tell you the most annoying story, was a band, uh, I can't remember what they were called now, but they sent me a demo, and I played it and I thought, that's quite tasty.

[00:17:11] **Richard Fletcher:** So I rang them up and said, where have you been playing? So they gave me a list of places they've been playing. Not so much internet though, not internet, Facebook and stuff like that, it just wasn't around in early 2000s. And so I booked them, and then, do you remember Nigel Marriott?

[00:17:27] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah.

[00:17:28] **Richard Fletcher:** Nigel Marriott, they started doing their soundcheck, and Nigel Marriott came back to the front bar and said, it doesn't sound like the same band.

[00:17:35] **Richard Fletcher:** So I went out and I said, are you a new singer? He said, yeah, the other one couldn't make it today. So they did their gig and I thought, this is just not right. So I paid them anyway and not many people stayed. But then I found out they'd just taken, they'd ripped off a band from America, just taken their CDs, copied a few onto their own CD, passed it off as their own.

[00:17:58] **Randy Baldwin:** Bloody hell.

[00:17:59] **Jarek:** That [00:18:00] is a cheek.

[00:18:01] **Richard Fletcher:** So, yeah, and I can't remember what the name of the band in America is, but I started, I phoned all the pubs that I knew that did live music, and said listen out for this band, do not listen to th- do not take them. But that was so annoying afterwards when I realised, the Gimme Gimmes, America, they were fantastic.

[00:18:20] **Richard Fletcher:** They still are. I've still got lots of their stuff. But the Gimme Gimmes in America have been ripped off. I even emailed the Gimme Gimmes.

[00:18:29] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, as you should, yeah, yeah. God. Well, I've never heard of that in music before, because, you know, musicians are normally, you know, look out for one or the other kind of people, aren't they?

[00:18:40] **Richard Fletcher:** I know, yeah, and what a bunch of idiots to think that they could get away with it. I mean, they did get away with it, because I paid them. Initially.

[00:18:47] **Jarek:** Yeah, they can't have got away with it for long.

[00:18:49] **Richard Fletcher:** No.

[00:18:49] **Randy Baldwin:** You blacklisted them.

[00:18:51] **Richard Fletcher:** One bloke who didn't get away with it though was a bloke who came in, a big tall bloke with a very pretty girlfriend one Sunday afternoon, watching whoever it was [00:19:00] playing on a Sunday afternoon and she came up to the bar and I was like, I'd fallen in love with her as soon as she walked through the door, I fell in love with her.

[00:19:05] **Richard Fletcher:** She said, my boyfriend does this kind of stuff. And I said, what, him? She said, yeah, he does it better than this. And so I said, okay. She said, he doesn't want as much as these guys have got. So I booked him, cut a long story short, I booked him, he came in, had a stack of stuff, and a guitar, and a microphone, he had all the gear for the front room.

[00:19:25] **Richard Fletcher:** And then, again, Nigel Marriott funnily enough, came over and said, You know he's not plugged in, don't you? What? His guitar's not plugged in, sa- and I realised he was miming. He was putting CDs in and miming very well, you know, face right up against the mic, it's difficult to

tell. So at halftime I said to him, this is taking the piss mate, and you know, I can't- he said, what?

[00:19:50] **Richard Fletcher:** I said, well your microphone's not plugged in, you're miming, he said, no. So I said, here's half your money.

[00:19:57] **Jarek:** He did well to get the half to be fair. [00:20:00]

[00:20:02] **Richard Fletcher:** But it was like, I was already paying him half what I would normally pay, so I thought, ohh, trying to be cheeky.

[00:20:08] **Jarek:** Am I right in saying you had multiple stage areas within there as well?

[00:20:12] **Jarek:** Because I remember seeing Green Rock in that front, that front room, but then you also had the back room and then you had the Ram Jam.

[00:20:17] **Randy Baldwin:** Ram Jam, yeah, yeah.

[00:20:18] **Richard Fletcher:** In 2004, Kingston Council, in their wisdom, set up a, um, an awards thing for businesses around Kingston. One of the awards was Entertainment Provider of the Year.

[00:20:31] **Richard Fletcher:** The Grey Horse won the Entertainment Provider of the Year, and do you know who was second? Chessington World of Adventures. Chessington World of Adventures was second and I was away at the time my daughter went and represented us. And she said it was really funny because they'd gone through the pub filming the pub as they come through the door. Filming some musicians playing and then they'd gone through the back and filmed some more musicians playing. They must have cut obviously, because there weren't two bands playing at the same time And then they'd [00:21:00] walk through to the Ram Jam and filmed comedy or whatever was going on there And it was like, wow, this is some special place.

[00:21:07] **Richard Fletcher:** She said it made it look really good.

[00:21:09] **Randy Baldwin:** It was.

[00:21:09] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, but nothing better than me being in the Ram Jam, which is a little building at the back, watching 70 people watching a famous comedian, because that's what we had on a Friday and a Saturday night, comedy. And then walking down the alleyway to go and get something else,

and listening to a Led Zeppelin tribute band, and thinking, this is, this is heaven, you know, I've got Andy Parsons doing the comedy out there, Boot Led Zeppelin in here, place is rammed, and I'm loving it, you know, not just the music, not the comedy, but, I mean, the whole thing.

[00:21:42] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, um, Randy-

[00:21:45] **Richard Fletcher:** so in answer to your question, there was the front bar, then there was the back room, and there was the Ram Jam.

[00:21:51] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, I mean, that must be quite unique in terms of a triple, a triple venue venue

[00:21:56] **Randy Baldwin:** It made use of every space.

[00:21:58] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah

[00:21:58] **Jarek:** Yeah, it makes me think of when I've been [00:22:00] to Nashville They have the you know, different different stage on every floor of a bar and you know, it's kind of it's kind of like that.

[00:22:06] **Richard Fletcher:** Have you been to Nashville? You have haven't you?

[00:22:07] **Randy Baldwin:** Sadly not no.

[00:22:09] **Jarek:** It's amazing. It's amazing. Well, especially if you love your country, but but yes, it's just amazing for live music full stop But Randy, do you have any particular like individual memories that stand out from the Grey Horse? Any nights that really stick in the memory?

[00:22:26] **Randy Baldwin:** There's so many, I mean, we've had various family birthday parties in there, using the Ram Jam and the main bar, but um, specifically as, specific gigs to recall, there was such - I know it sounds ridiculous to say, so many good ones, I can't really pull out a special one that stood out particularly.

[00:22:43] **Richard Fletcher:** I think for me, you'll probably agree, there were people like Willie Finlayson. Papa George, Steve Simpson, Peter Bruntnell that just seemed to get better as the years went by and every time the crowd would get bigger. [00:23:00] I remember somebody walking in one day and saying, this Peter Bruntnell you got on Sunday, is he the recording artist?

[00:23:06] **Richard Fletcher:** And I said, recording artist? Because, I didn't know, it was early days.

[00:23:09] **Randy Baldwin:** He's so low key, it's ridiculous.

[00:23:10] **Richard Fletcher:** But he comes, at the time he was living in Surbiton, I said, I don't know, he's a bloke who lives in Surbiton. But he's done a lot of albums and I didn't know he was that well known, but he just

[00:23:21] **Randy Baldwin:** in inner circle.

[00:23:22] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah,

[00:23:22] **Randy Baldwin:** he's like under the radar.

[00:23:23] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah. But he, he just almost took over the Grey Horse, you know, he'd be playing there most weeks, wouldn't he?

[00:23:30] **Randy Baldwin:** Bit like he's done now somewhere else.

[00:23:32] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah.

[00:23:33] **Jarek:** He mentioned Papa George a couple of times. I understand he's, he's a bit of a, a deal, isn't he? Um, in sort of blues, blues terms.

[00:23:38] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, he does. He wins awards.

[00:23:39] **Randy Baldwin:** He's the best.

[00:23:41] **Richard Fletcher:** In terms of blues, rocky blues.

[00:23:43] **Jarek:** Is he a guitarist?

[00:23:44] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah,

[00:23:45] **Randy Baldwin:** singer,

[00:23:45] **Jarek:** singer, guitarist. Yeah,

[00:23:46] **Richard Fletcher:** but yeah,

[00:23:47] **Randy Baldwin:** and again, you say that. I mean, I see a lot of these bands still somewhere else. Um, and, and you say that about getting better, you think like Bad Influences on Sunday at the Cavern and you think every time I see them, [00:24:00] which is at least once a month, they seem to get better.

[00:24:03] **Randy Baldwin:** It's a ridiculous thing to say. It seems to be a cliché, but they do, you know, they do. And it's just like such.

[00:24:10] **Richard Fletcher:** And you think, why aren't they on television? Why aren't they more famous? What?

[00:24:17] **Randy Baldwin:** One of them was.

[00:24:19] **Richard Fletcher:** Oh yeah. But in The Grey Horse, we've had moments where we've had, you know, people like Rick Astley.

[00:24:26] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah.

[00:24:26] **Richard Fletcher:** You know, who played a couple of, I think they did three gigs there. And people go, the Rick Astley? Not a Rick Astley tribute? No, the Rick Astley. Because he's doing his own little rock band, rather than doing his commercial stuff. But yeah, that's kind of special nights where he

[00:24:46] **Jarek:** Was it ever ticketed or was it always, uh Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:24:51] **Richard Fletcher:** Stuff like, yeah

[00:24:52] **Randy Baldwin:** The Ram Jam stuff was

[00:24:54] **Jarek:** I guess, yeah, the stuff in the front room I guess wouldn't be ticketed, because that's your public bar, but then the back

[00:24:59] **Jarek:** and the Ram Jam, yeah.

[00:24:59] **Randy Baldwin:** The room [00:25:00] at the back was occasionally ticketed, wasn't it?

[00:25:01] **Richard Fletcher:** Often ticketed, yeah, often. I mean, we had, um, young band nights or, uh, my son Richard used to run them sometimes.

[00:25:12] **Richard Fletcher:** Um, I'm looking for the word. Anyway, it doesn't matter. They're young bands and he used to charge and then give them most of the money and keep a bit for himself. But, um, some of the names came out of that. Those, I think. I can't remember. Off the top of my head. This is why you're here, Randy.

[00:25:31] **Randy Baldwin:** On top of your head.

[00:25:35] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, there were some bands that went through on, I think they were a Wednesday night or a Thursday night where he used to do like every night, but four or five bands even that just play for half an hour, might come down from Wales or Scotland or North or wherever, and some of them went on to do, um, Green, I was going to say Green Rock River Band, that's um, it's tip of my tongue there's another band I'm thinking of.

[00:25:59] **Richard Fletcher:** Anyway, [00:26:00] carry on.

[00:26:01] **Jarek:** The Ram Jam Club, is that something that existed before you, uh, went there? Or is that something you came up with?

[00:26:06] **Randy Baldwin:** It was a stables weren't it.

[00:26:07] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, because the Grey Horse was a coaching place, the coach and horses would pull in under that alleyway. They'd look after the horse and the coach, coaches down there and feed the horses overnight.

[00:26:20] **Richard Fletcher:** And when we took it over, it was just like junk, wasn't it? It was, literally junk. Anything that you didn't know what to do with, you threw in there. And, uh, we just, we've been there about a year, and we said, why is it just- So we said to the brewery, will you help us do this? And they said, yeah. So we paid.

[00:26:40] **Richard Fletcher:** They decided how they were going to do it, which is fair enough. You know, they played- they put in the wooden floor, which is nice, because it's still there. Um and did the flat upstairs, which is, uh, which is good. But yeah, it gave us, and did the cellar, a separate cellar for that. So it gave us another opportunity, which is when [00:27:00] the comedy, which was in the back of the Grey Horse, then moved into that.

[00:27:05] **Richard Fletcher:** Because they didn't, you can't have comedians going, Oh, hold on a minute, there's somebody coming through to the toilet. You know, hold on a minute, there's somebody else coming through to the

toilet. Which gave us some magically funny moments at times, when people were walking through the back room to the toilets, and the comedians would rip into you,

[00:27:23] **Jarek:** I can imagine, yeah,

[00:27:25] **Richard Fletcher:** ten yards of walking, you're gonna get ripped to shreds walking those ten yards.

[00:27:29] **Richard Fletcher:** Where you going fella? You know, that kind of thing. But yeah, so when you moved all that into the Ram Jam, and um, so two comedy nights, and maybe a jazz night or another band night, it was, it was-made a big difference to us.

[00:27:44] **Jarek:** So was it primarily comedy then, the Ram Jam?

[00:27:46] **Richard Fletcher:** No, just two nights a week. But we used to do like a quiz night, we did a film night in there.

[00:27:51] **Richard Fletcher:** We'd put a screen up and

[00:27:53] **Randy Baldwin:** private parties.

[00:27:54] **Richard Fletcher:** Private parties, yeah, lots of private birthday parties.

[00:27:57] **Randy Baldwin:** I had my 60th there.

[00:27:58] **Richard Fletcher:** Did you?

[00:27:59] **Randy Baldwin:** Private party

[00:27:59] **Jarek:** I [00:28:00] saw my friend perform a one man show in there actually. It was the one one about Ronnie O'Sullivan.

[00:28:04] **Richard Fletcher:** Oh, that was great.

[00:28:05] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah. Andy, Andy Currums is, uh, is is he used to, he used to run the festival at this charity actually.

[00:28:10] **Jarek:** Um,

[00:28:11] **Richard Fletcher:** that was, I really thought that was gonna go places that, that little show. It was all about Ronnie Sullivan Sullivan.

[00:28:17] **Jarek:** Sorry, not Ronnie O'Sullivan. Alex Higgins.

[00:28:18] **Richard Fletcher:** Alex Higgins, yes.

[00:28:19] **Jarek:** What am I talking about? Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:28:23] **Richard Fletcher:** No, that was good. I really enjoyed that. Didn't he do it twice there?

[00:28:27] **Jarek:** I think so. I think so. Yeah.

[00:28:29] **Jarek:** Yeah. Um, but yeah, I mean, great use of the space.

[00:28:33] **Richard Fletcher:** Who was the lady that put that night together?

[00:28:36] **Jarek:** Oh, I'm not sure. I couldn't tell you that. Um

[00:28:38] **Richard Fletcher:** Because I thought she was going to

[00:28:41] **Jarek:** If it was part of the festival, I can't remember if it was

[00:28:43] **Richard Fletcher:** Was it Pippa or so-

[00:28:44] **Jarek:** oh, yes, Pip, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, Pip, that's a, yeah, that's a friend, Pip Whateley a friend of mine.

[00:28:50] **Richard Fletcher:** Pip Whateley!

[00:28:50] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, um, yeah, she, she, she, she and Andy go way back, yeah, yeah. Um, yeah, um

[00:28:58] **Richard Fletcher:** I'm thinking of other names in the Grey Horse, though, [00:29:00] that, uh The other thing about the Grey Horse, it attracted good enough musicians where people like Randy would say, course you know he plays with so and so, don't you?

[00:29:11] **Richard Fletcher:** No. Really? You'd have those magical musicians.

[00:29:14] **Randy Baldwin:** The tentacles going in.

[00:29:15] **Richard Fletcher:** Like Vic Martin. Who played with Eurythmics,

[00:29:20] **Randy Baldwin:** Amongst others.

[00:29:20] **Richard Fletcher:** Um, and it'd be like he plays for Eurythmics, you know, and he does, he does that magical bit on that song, and that's him stood there, you know what I mean, it's like, I love those moments.

[00:29:32] **Jarek:** Um, I think you mentioned The Cavern earlier, is that the one in Raynes Park, is it? Yeah, yeah, um, I just wonder if, yeah, is there many others sort of in the wider kind of region that were doing this at the time, the Grey Horse, the Caverns, were there were many others.

[00:29:47] **Randy Baldwin:** The Cavern really kicked off around just prior to Richard leaving, but he had, the guy had owned the pub a long time.

[00:29:57] **Randy Baldwin:** And had tried to put music on there, but I think there's some stra- [00:30:00] problems with the music thing because somebody complained about it so he had to put it on hold until she died, some story like that. Uh, so it was only around 1999, I I'm not sure about this, that it really started to take off because then Richard moved on, a lot of those bands moved over into there.

[00:30:16] **Jarek:** It's like they found a new home.

[00:30:17] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, I mean he knew he run the cartoon and stuff for us. He knew the music was in there, so, yeah. After the Grey Horse went, the Oak, further up the road, tried to take on s- and still does. But it's very, without being rude, half hearted. They're nice guys, they do it, but it's, it's, it's It's o- they still do music most Saturday nights.

[00:30:40] **Randy Baldwin:** Most Saturday nights have a live band in there and they do their best and everything. But it's, uh, it's, it's

[00:30:45] **Richard Fletcher:** Then there's The Lamb.

[00:30:45] **Randy Baldwin:** The Lamb of course is quite special, isn't it?

[00:30:48] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah. I mean the Lamb has just sort of gone, whoosh, in terms of how much music it's offering. You know, um, Adam and Liz when they first started running it weren't, uh, didn't intend it as a music venue.

[00:30:57] **Jarek:** And then in the last few years it went [00:31:00] from like one night a week to two nights a week and now three or four, you know. And the festival every summer, Lambstock and

[00:31:05] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah. That's what I went to last, two years ago, I think it was.

[00:31:09] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:31:10] **Randy Baldwin:** Lambstock.

[00:31:11] **Jarek:** No, it's good fun.

[00:31:12] **Randy Baldwin:** Lambstock.

[00:31:13] **Richard Fletcher:** Lambstock yeah.

[00:31:14] **Jarek:** Yeah. Um. Yeah. Um.

[00:31:17] **Richard Fletcher:** But outside of Kingston area, you've got to go to Twickenham and places like Isleworth, haven't you?

[00:31:23] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah.

[00:31:24] **Richard Fletcher:** To get another pub that might be doing music.

[00:31:26] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, because the number of ones in that, in the last 20 years have disappeared and gone. Um.

[00:31:33] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:31:33] **Randy Baldwin:** Uh, yeah, I mean. The Red Lion in Isleworth is now picking up again, having stopped doing it for a while.

[00:31:40] **Jarek:** I mean, yeah, because we talk a lot in this project about venues closing. I mean, when you guys were growing up in your respective hometowns, were there lots of pubs and places offering music back then?

[00:31:54] **Richard Fletcher:** No. I wasn't really into live music then. A, I went to boarding school. B, [00:32:00] my dad was in the army so we moved around a lot.

[00:32:02] **Richard Fletcher:** So I was never really interested in it.

[00:32:03] **Randy Baldwin:** And you never anywhere long enough to sit and get into it.

[00:32:06] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, to get my feet under the table.

[00:32:08] **Randy Baldwin:** And as I said, I lived in Tolworth, so in the area for most of my growing up life. So, yeah, but um

[00:32:15] **Richard Fletcher:** I suppose in those days I was living in Windsor.

[00:32:18] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:32:18] **Richard Fletcher:** And there was somewhere doing live music, but it always seemed to be rough.

[00:32:22] **Richard Fletcher:** It always seemed to be, like, punch up every time you were there.

[00:32:24] **Randy Baldwin:** Well, that's Windsor for you.

[00:32:27] **Jarek:** I mean, did you ever go to, there's, I mean, we know of the Swan, uh, on Mill Street uh, kind of near Fairfield Park.

[00:32:32] **Randy Baldwin:** Yes, actually, yeah, a friend of mine back in the 70s, that was a bit of a rockers hangout.

[00:32:39] **Jarek:** Yeah, well it was rock and roll in the 60s and 50s, yeah.

[00:32:41] **Randy Baldwin:** In the 70s, there's, there's still a bunch that used to hang out down there. A friend of mine, um, who was very much involved with Flip City, Elvis Costello's first band.

[00:32:51] **Jarek:** Okay.

[00:32:51] **Randy Baldwin:** The guys used to hang out in the, um in the Three Fishes pub, which once was in Kingston.

[00:32:56] **Jarek:** Yes, that's one that's come up a few times.

[00:32:58] **Randy Baldwin:** I met my wife [00:33:00] in there.

[00:33:00] **Jarek:** Oh, really?

[00:33:00] **Randy Baldwin:** In 1971. Um, couldn't hear a thing. But it wasn't live music in there. It was just this massive DJ. He had all the latest American imports. And he, you know, massive volume. This bank of speakers in the lounge, with the baseball bat behind the bar. If anybody spoke out of turn. There was never any trouble there.

[00:33:19] **Randy Baldwin:** Never. Anyway, that's diversifying. The Mill Street thing though, my mate, he started a little, like, country rock themed club on a Friday night, a Saturday night, and it didn't last very long, but it was great fun doing it, and getting people in there, like the Balamallee Geysers and stuff, who used to do the geezer in the the pub and bands in the 70s and stuff, because he knew people, but So that was my experience of Mill Street, briefly.

[00:33:48] **Randy Baldwin:** Lovely little place.

[00:33:49] **Jarek:** Did you ever go to Surbiton Assembly Rooms? Or there any gigs there?

[00:33:52] **Randy Baldwin:** Yes, I saw, I remember, I saw um, Frankie Miller there, once. And he ordered [00:34:00] at the bar, the bar was basically, the elderly lady, who was probably younger than I am now, taking coats in and serving you drinks, because it wasn't the proper bar.

[00:34:09] **Randy Baldwin:** And he walked out there and he said, I'll have a pint of brandy and coke. And she said, sorry love, pint of brandy and coke. I'll never forget that. And he walked off and did his gig, but that was Frankie Miller. Great voice, great drinker. And I saw Yes there.

[00:34:26] **Jarek:** Oh did you? Ah, so yeah, they were another Toby Jug band I think.

[00:34:30] **Randy Baldwin:** I think at least once.

[00:34:32] **Jarek:** And I think they played Kingston Polytechnic as well, which we've been looking into quite a lot as well.

[00:34:37] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, well, because those days were - the great thing is all the Polys around here had their own, you know, I mean, I was never at college or anything, I just went on all the student gigs.

[00:34:49] **Jarek:** Well there was a student circuit essentially?

[00:34:51] **Randy Baldwin:** Absolutely, and in London as well. All the great gigs, some of the great gigs I saw in the 70s, all the student places. Um, yeah, so um, [00:35:00] saw Yes on I think it's Kingston Poly with supporting them was,

[00:35:06] **Jarek:** Queen?

[00:35:06] **Randy Baldwin:** Queen. And Queen got booed off stage.

[00:35:09] **Jarek:** Really? See, I knew about the gig, I didn't know about the booing.

[00:35:13] **Randy Baldwin:** Queen got, I say booed off stage, I certainly remember some night, because everybody wanted, you know, the, yeah. When you think back on that, it's like, really?

[00:35:22] **Jarek:** Yeah, mad to think back, yeah.

[00:35:24] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, that was certainly a scene in itself, I mean it was so great for live music, I mean.

[00:35:28] **Jarek:** Yeah, I've interviewed a few people.

[00:35:30] **Randy Baldwin:** The bands and tours that were going on around all the, you know, down at Guildford Uni and, it was phenomenal.

[00:35:36] **Jarek:** That was another Bowie one, he did Toby Jug and then he did the Poly a few months later.

[00:35:39] **Randy Baldwin:** Happy days.

[00:35:41] **Jarek:** Yeah, Angie actually went to the Poly as well, so, um, yeah, so there was a personal link there.

[00:35:46] **Randy Baldwin:** Different world.

[00:35:47] **Jarek:** Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely, yeah. No, I find the whole university student circuit thing really interesting, because when I came to uni here in 2006, there was absolutely none of that going on, you know, um, so, um. Richard, um, [00:36:00] I wonder if you could just tell me why your time at the Grey Horse came to an end, um, how come?

[00:36:06] **Randy Baldwin:** Exhaustion.

[00:36:08] **Richard Fletcher:** Fifteen years I think was a long enough time, certainly for my wife.

[00:36:11] **Randy Baldwin:** She said she was going to leave you.

[00:36:13] **Richard Fletcher:** But I've always said that I enjoyed it so much, I wish I'd started pub life earlier. I wish I'd got into it as a younger man, but um

[00:36:24] **Jarek:** What were you doing as a younger man out of interest?

[00:36:26] **Richard Fletcher:** Uh, all sorts of stuff.

[00:36:28] **Richard Fletcher:** I mean, I spent a few years out in Saudi Arabia working in a hospital. Owned shops. I've done - I've worked in-

[00:36:36] **Randy Baldwin:** you haven't got long enough.

[00:36:37] **Richard Fletcher:** Worked at Heathrow for a few years. No, I enjoyed it, uh, and I think we just naturally felt

[00:36:45] **Randy Baldwin:** I think that was why it was so successful, because you enjoyed it, that enthusiasm came over and everything happened, so therefore it wasn't- because some pubs would put on music that was half hearted, you know?

[00:36:54] **Randy Baldwin:** It's there, but like A bit like The Oak, to a degree. Yeah, sort of ticking a box. I mean, [00:37:00] the guys, they're lovely guys, but it's

[00:37:02] **Richard Fletcher:** But it was everything, it was the good music, it was the fact that we were living in a town where averagely, we wouldn't have been able to afford to live in, you know, we were living above.

[00:37:13] **Richard Fletcher:** Alright, that was tiring at the time. But I just loved the buzz, I loved the people that came in.

[00:37:18] **Randy Baldwin:** Nice people.

[00:37:19] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, averagely they were nice people. And it was all a big, it's cliched I know, but it was all a big family thing, wasn't it really? I mean, an average Sunday afternoon.

[00:37:28] **Randy Baldwin:** Absolutely, totally, yeah.

[00:37:29] **Richard Fletcher:** Because you knew, you knew most people, most people were friendly. Chatty, you know, you get the odd idiots but um.

[00:37:37] **Richard Fletcher:** Eight

[00:37:37] **Randy Baldwin:** of us still get together.

[00:37:39] **Jarek:** Yeah, really.

[00:37:40] **Randy Baldwin:** Four couples every year we get together.

[00:37:41] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, a couple of times a year

[00:37:42] **Randy Baldwin:** we go away together.

[00:37:43] **Richard Fletcher:** We've just been to Cambridge, eight of us. And that's the Grey Horse Dinner Gang.

[00:37:47] **Randy Baldwin:** We call it the Grey Horse Dinner Gang.

[00:37:48] **Jarek:** Yeah. That's lovely. So these are all people you all met at the Grey, uh, through the Grey Horse.

[00:37:52] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:37:53] **Richard Fletcher:** And now we all just became, stayed friends afterwards and still meet up. That's why he's here now. [00:38:00] Um, but yeah, there's a lot of people. Still nice to bump into.

[00:38:04] **Richard Fletcher:** We've just been through a funeral of a lady that was heavily involved in the live music scene, Fenella. She used to, for the musicians, whatever the band was, she would be the one that would go around taking the jug around. One of the three ladies that used to do it regularly. And she'd take the jug around and collect the money for the band.

[00:38:24] **Richard Fletcher:** And she died last month. Only 60. The turnout at her funeral.

[00:38:31] **Randy Baldwin:** It could have been more.

[00:38:32] **Richard Fletcher:** And there were a lot of musicians there as well.

[00:38:34] **Jarek:** Really?

[00:38:34] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, and there will be more because we're doing a party for her in January. You know the Hampton Hub?

[00:38:40] **Jarek:** I don't.

[00:38:41] **Randy Baldwin:** Oh, check it out.

[00:38:42] **Richard Fletcher:** That's the next music venue.

[00:38:43] **Jarek:** Is it?

[00:38:43] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah.

[00:38:44] **Jarek:** Oh, okay.

[00:38:45] **Richard Fletcher:** 200 capacity. That's doing some good stuff. Hampton. Is, is that part of your remit?

[00:38:50] **Jarek:** Uh, I mean we're not looking, I mean we're

[00:38:53] **Randy Baldwin:** on the boundary,

[00:38:53] **Jarek:** I mean we're yeah, we are sort of focused primarily on the borough.

[00:38:56] **Randy Baldwin:** Sure.

[00:38:56] **Jarek:** But it incorporates neighbouring, neighbouring towns as well, [00:39:00] so, so yeah, certainly of interest.

[00:39:01] **Randy Baldwin:** They've got a network of gigs check it out. Well it's about-

[00:39:03] **Jarek:** I mean also just of interest personally, you know?

[00:39:04] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah. It's a guy called Chris Grace and, uh, three, four years ago actually. No, it wasn't Fenella, it was Maria O'Hearn, who introduced me to Chris, and Chris said, Oh, come round, I want to pick your brains.

[00:39:17] **Richard Fletcher:** So, I looked around this thing thinking, Wow, this should be great, this should be packed. And he's had some good bands in there, lots of good bands in there, that will pack it out. So we're doing our party for Fenella next month. Um, and all the musicians that loved her will be there so...

[00:39:37] **Jarek:** Great. And, uh

[00:39:39] **Richard Fletcher:** Anyway, go back to your question.

[00:39:40] **Jarek:** Yeah, no, no, no, um

[00:39:42] **Richard Fletcher:** I was tired. Basically, I was tired.

[00:39:44] **Jarek:** Oh, yes, yes, we were talking about your, your, yes. So, so, yes, you just, you just, you just felt you didn't have the energy for, for

[00:39:49] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, I think not as long as he-.

[00:39:51] **Jarek:** Was it, were you tired of just running a pub overall, or was it specifically

[00:39:54] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, no, I just wanted, I felt, because I was 65 when I left, and I felt at that age, I [00:40:00] wanted to do something else, not keep going.

[00:40:02] **Randy Baldwin:** I thought that at 62 and

[00:40:03] **Richard Fletcher:** yeah,

[00:40:04] **Randy Baldwin:** I did nothing .

[00:40:04] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah. So I do, I do something else now, which has nothing to do with pubs or music or anything else.

[00:40:09] **Jarek:** Yeah. I, um, well in prep for this, I, I ca I came across a, a local, I think it was Surrey Comet article in which it said, uh, question mark hangs over the future of the Grey Horse.

[00:40:21] **Jarek:** So it was after you decided to move on, but it was, think they were, they weren't sure of what the new owners sort of had in, the new landlords had in mind.

[00:40:28] **Richard Fletcher:** They couldn't find a new owner, that was the original struggle.

[00:40:31] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, I think it was probably written at that time when they were, yeah, so I think there were lots of concerns that it was no longer going to be.

[00:40:37] **Randy Baldwin:** It was closed for a while.

[00:40:37] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah,

[00:40:38] **Jarek:** yeah, yeah.

[00:40:39] **Richard Fletcher:** We gave our notice to leave on my 65th birthday, which is the end of August, and then they said, the brewery said, in July we can't find anybody to take it over as a music venue. Will you stay on a bit longer? So we said New Year, dead end. So they said okay, New Year.

[00:40:56] **Richard Fletcher:** Uh, they still couldn't find anybody so they shut it and renovated [00:41:00] it. They spent a million pounds doing it up. They

spent a million pounds doing it up, putting all that food in the back, the food stuff in the back, turn it into a restaurant, getting rid of the, the um, soundproofing on the roof and all that.

[00:41:15] **Richard Fletcher:** And then um, of course somebody said yeah, all right we'll take it over as a restaurant.

[00:41:19] **Jarek:** Yeah. And um, so yeah, so I gather now they still have music, I think in the Ram Jam.

[00:41:24] **Randy Baldwin:** Ram Jams.

[00:41:24] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:41:25] **Randy Baldwin:** That's all pay gigs, I think.

[00:41:27] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:41:27] **Richard Fletcher:** But yeah. But I think the reason, the reason they're doing that is because so many people said, you're still not doing music.

[00:41:35] **Richard Fletcher:** Why don't you do music? Why don't you do the, why don't you do music? Let's do music. Do. music. . Alright we'll do music.

[00:41:41] **Jarek:** Yeah. Yeah. Why do you think they struggled so much to find someone to run it as a music venue? Is it just because there's the, there's so, so few people are doing that these days.

[00:41:48] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, and it's food.

[00:41:50] **Richard Fletcher:** Food is where the money is so easier to find somebody to do a restaurant than to do live music. But having said that. It's a [00:42:00] nice restaurant, it's good food, it's still like, if you like burgers, you know, I like it in there. I like the owner.

[00:42:07] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, the landlord's a nice guy.

[00:42:09] **Richard Fletcher:** So, uh, can't knock it, what they're doing.

[00:42:12] **Jarek:** Yeah, I've been put in touch with someone called Joy there, is that, uh, do you know Joy? Is that someone who, I don't know what her involvement, is she the owner or?

[00:42:20] **Richard Fletcher:** No.

[00:42:20] **Jarek:** No? Okay.

[00:42:21] **Richard Fletcher:** Uh, I'll give you his name afterwards.

[00:42:23] **Jarek:** Okay, yeah.

[00:42:23] **Richard Fletcher:** Uh, and number. And I'll give you Chris Grace's number at Hampton Hub.

[00:42:27] **Jarek:** Okay.

[00:42:28] **Richard Fletcher:** Cause that, you know, just a quick chat with him to see if it's interest- of interest to you?

[00:42:33] **Jarek:** Mm-Hmm. . Mm-Hmm.

[00:42:34] **Richard Fletcher:** uh, Joy, I think runs the bookings.

[00:42:37] **Jarek:** Right? Yeah. Okay. That makes sense. Yeah. Yeah. 'cause her email's at, at Ram Jam, I think.

[00:42:41] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah. Oh, the Ram Jam booking

[00:42:42] **Randy Baldwin:** yeah.

[00:42:43] **Jarek:** yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's interesting. They still, they still, uh hark to the music history of the b- because they've got all the pictures on the wall of, of, of, I mean, various artists including, you know, just some famous artists like the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix.

[00:42:56] **Randy Baldwin:** Never played there.

[00:42:57] **Jarek:** Yeah. You [00:43:00] see, yeah, they're actually two of the only ones that I can't find a Kingston gig for is the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. Um, we got Rolling Stones played in it a couple of times at the cinemas.

[00:43:10] **Randy Baldwin:** I think the Beatles did a tour. I

[00:43:12] **Richard Fletcher:** thought they played at the cinema or something.

[00:43:14] **Randy Baldwin:** The old Granada was there.

[00:43:16] **Jarek:** Yeah, I've heard people say that and I can't find evidence of it. Um, but Rolling Stones definitely. Rolling Stones I think did two. I think they did ABC cinema and Granada cinema. Um, but um they

[00:43:26] **Randy Baldwin:** were packaged tours.

[00:43:27] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah. Um, I mean that's an interesting, yeah. We were talking about the student circuit and then before that there was the sort of cinema.

[00:43:36] **Richard Fletcher:** I saw the Beach Boys in the cinema.

[00:43:41] **Randy Baldwin:** Was the tide in?

[00:43:43] **Richard Fletcher:** It was tidy, but I couldn't hear a thing. Ahhhh...

[00:43:44] **Jarek:** Right, just, is that girls screaming?

[00:43:48] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah.

[00:43:49] **Randy Baldwin:** I went to see the Rolling Stones at the Albert Hall. I was at the Albert Hall the day the stage got invaded.

[00:43:56] **Richard Fletcher:** Oh, really?

[00:43:56] **Randy Baldwin:** And they had to abandon the gig and they literally, you could get f-f- footage of [00:44:00] that, where literally they lost control and the girls storm the stage.

[00:44:03] **Richard Fletcher:** Wow.

[00:44:03] **Randy Baldwin:** And they're standing there going just not- the band didn't really rush off except for Charlie Watts. He just, he just sat there,

[00:44:09] **Richard Fletcher:** a sober one and

[00:44:10] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah. He's like, what the hell is going on?

[00:44:12] **Richard Fletcher:** Mm-Hmm. .

[00:44:13] **Jarek:** Um, I mean, after Richard moved on, Randy and, uh, you know, the Grey Horse was shut for a while. Did you try and find a, a new Grey Horse?

[00:44:20] **Jarek:** Did you try and find somewhere else?

[00:44:22] **Randy Baldwin:** I have, I did find a new Grey Horse, although it would never be the Grey Horse, but the Cavern.

[00:44:26] **Jarek:** The Cavern, right, yeah.

[00:44:26] **Randy Baldwin:** I live in Worcester Park, so it's dead handy for me. And, um, it's got a great PA in there.

[00:44:33] **Jarek:** I must go, I must go, yeah.

[00:44:36] **Randy Baldwin:** Fantastic PA in there, the sound is tremendous, I'll give him that.

[00:44:38] **Randy Baldwin:** I mean, he's spent a fortune on that. And totally into the music. I mean, you won't find many pubs where the music is first. No food. You can bring your own food in if you want.

[00:44:47] **Jarek:** Oh, lovely.

[00:44:48] **Randy Baldwin:** No food,

[00:44:48] **Richard Fletcher:** really.

[00:44:49] **Jarek:** Liz sometimes lets me do that in the Lamb.

[00:44:52] **Randy Baldwin:** Crisps is the limit they sell there. Crisps and nuts, that's your limit.

[00:44:55] **Randy Baldwin:** Otherwise, it's the music is first. Everything else is periphery.

[00:44:58] **Jarek:** That's great.

[00:44:59] **Randy Baldwin:** [00:45:00] Pour them out the back, but that's it. That's it. That's it.

[00:45:03] **Jarek:** It's great, but it's such a rarity now, eh?

[00:45:05] **Randy Baldwin:** Oh, I- the guy's actually insane, but uh, he, he, he, he, he just loves his music and, and, he, yeah, he, it's, it, and, and yeah, they have an open mic night on a Tuesday night, started jam night on a Tuesday night, which has only started fairly recently, and there's offshoots from bands that have come down there that are going on to do gigs, and Sunday afternoons, uh, half past four till seven o'clock is a very popular slot, again, a bit like what the Grey Horse used to do, because Sunday afternoons is quite good, the evenings are okay, but for, you know, Sunday afternoon, if you've got free time, it's not like getting home, late or something, Sunday afternoon, then whatever.

[00:45:39] **Randy Baldwin:** And Sunday afternoons are quite often pretty packed down there. Bad Influences, say Papa George playing down there regularly on a Sunday afternoon. So the continuity goes on, but yes.

[00:45:52] **Jarek:** Do you miss it, Richard?

[00:45:54] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah. I miss- I don't miss running the business. That's the [00:46:00] trouble. Because everything comes down to the bottom line, profits, VAT, you know, bureaucracy, and all that crap.

[00:46:10] **Richard Fletcher:** But, yeah, take all that away from me, and I'd love it.

[00:46:14] **Jarek:** How many staff would you have employed there at any one time?

[00:46:18] **Richard Fletcher:** Overall, probably 20, but not all at the same time. And 90%, 95 percent of them were Kingston Uni students. Because they were reliable, they wanted the money, they loved the scene, the music scene. Um, and yeah,

[00:46:38] **Randy Baldwin:** They liked being there as well

[00:46:39] **Richard Fletcher:** and it was a good turnover, because every time somebody left, they'd say, Oh, a friend of mine wants a job, could you You know.

[00:46:46] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah. They're a decent, they had a decent boss.

[00:46:49] **Richard Fletcher:** They, yeah. I mean, we looked after 'em. We paid them proper money. Uh, that's me by the way.

[00:46:55] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah. What, your pacemaker[00:47:00]

[00:47:00] **Richard Fletcher:** So yeah. Kingston student, Kingston Uni students. Um. It's good, it'd be great to have a party of bringing them all back together because we keep in touch with some of them.

[00:47:10] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:47:11] **Richard Fletcher:** But a number of times

[00:47:12] **Randy Baldwin:** Bar staff reunion.

[00:47:13] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, a number of times we've been at like a service station. I remember on our way to Bristol I think we were, we pulled into a service station and somebody said, Richard, what are you doing here?

[00:47:24] **Richard Fletcher:** You're like-

[00:47:25] **Randy Baldwin:** Extraordinary.

[00:47:25] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah, ex bar staff.

[00:47:27] **Jarek:** It's definitely, it's uh, the student thing is very similar with the Lamb, I know most of their staff is - yeah. Yeah, it makes sense.

[00:47:33] **Richard Fletcher:** Well, it's, yeah, it's so easy.

[00:47:36] **Jarek:** I mean, that actually ties quite nicely into, um, what I was going to ask next, which is just about the character of Kingston overall.

[00:47:42] **Jarek:** I mean, how would you describe Kingston as a town?

[00:47:46] **Randy Baldwin:** Changed.

[00:47:46] **Richard Fletcher:** From my early days to later, to when I left. Not really. I mean, that nightclub scene in the middle seemed to spoil it for a lot of [00:48:00] older people, I would say, because nobody wanted to go near the nightclub later on at night or early hours in the morning.

[00:48:07] **Richard Fletcher:** And our clientele, certainly on a weekend or certainly on a Sunday, were basically older people. I'm talking about over fifties. And you used to hear the same a lot. Oh, we don't go into the Kingston Town Centre at night, you know, we avoid it. And because I was working in the pub, I never really saw it. But, um, I could hear about it all the time, any time somebody came in.

[00:48:33] **Richard Fletcher:** They'd be telling me about something that happened yesterday, tonight, last night, last week. So there's that change, but, um, no, not really. Buildings going up all over the place, all the time. And I suppose that one way system, just before I got there. I kid you not, it took us, me and my missus, we drove around that one way system three times before we worked out how to get to the Grey Horse just there.

[00:48:57] **Randy Baldwin:** Little offshoot?

[00:48:58] **Richard Fletcher:** Just there!

[00:48:59] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:48:59] **Richard Fletcher:** [00:49:00] How do we get there? Go around again.

[00:49:01] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:49:01] **Richard Fletcher:** It's just there!

[00:49:02] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:49:03] **Randy Baldwin:** Don't ask me mine because I've been in this area for 70 years. I mean, the one way system's reversed. Horses and carts almost in Kingston 70 years ago.

[00:49:14] **Jarek:** Parked at the Grey Horse.

[00:49:15] **Randy Baldwin:** It's unrecognisable really.

[00:49:17] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, I was going to say, yeah, you must have seen it change. Um, I mean I've seen it change, I mean I came here in 2006 and for me it feels very different. Um, so you must have, yeah.

[00:49:26] **Randy Baldwin:** It has changed a lot, yeah. It's rapidly, and it's just like you say, it's like

[00:49:29] **Richard Fletcher:** What are the worst bits then? The buildings.

[00:49:31] **Randy Baldwin:** The worst bits.

[00:49:35] **Richard Fletcher:** I mean, as we were coming here from the car park around the corner every time like to come where we going, where The Works used to be. Well, where was that was, you know?

[00:49:43] **Jarek:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:49:44] **Randy Baldwin:** Lost

[00:49:44] **Richard Fletcher:** there's a great carpark there now or something.

[00:49:45] **Jarek:** Yeah. Well it's, yeah, it's now going up as a big block of block of flats and slash offices, I think.

[00:49:50] **Jarek:** Um, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, the developers just seem to have taken over everything.

[00:49:53] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah.

[00:49:54] **Jarek:** Um, yeah.

[00:49:56] **Richard Fletcher:** And a lot of, um, student uni, uni student.
[00:50:00] accommodation?

[00:50:00] **Jarek:** Yeah.

[00:50:01] **Randy Baldwin:** How many more can you pack in?

[00:50:02] **Jarek:** But interestingly the nightclub thing has gone down as well because when I was at uni there was maybe seven or eight nightclubs knocking around and now it's down to two again which is Bacchus the tiny one and PRYZYM the massive one and all the ones in the middle of kind of

[00:50:16] **Randy Baldwin:** PRYZYM was where one of the cinemas was wasn't it?

[00:50:19] **Jarek:** Uh, yeah, that's right, that's right, yeah.

[00:50:21] **Randy Baldwin:** That's where I used to go in the 60s to see the two, the bands, that was the cinema I remember.

[00:50:26] **Jarek:** Yeah, Granada I think, yeah.

[00:50:28] **Richard Fletcher:** What's the name of the guy who runs Bacchus?

[00:50:31] **Jarek:** Um, Julian. Julian Slawinski who we've interviewed for this.

[00:50:36] **Richard Fletcher:** I used to like him.

[00:50:36] **Jarek:** He's a really nice bloke.

[00:50:37] **Jarek:** He's a really nice bloke. Um, and, um, yeah, we spoke, I, I also, Bacchus was like the very first interview I did for this project. Um, you know, which was the first, around the time I met you. Uh, was about these nights that launched in Bacchus called Dodgy nights and the band Dodgy sort of launched themselves off the back of that, who became a kind of Britpop, two hit wonder kind of band.

[00:50:59] **Jarek:** Um, [00:51:00] so yeah, I mean, Bacchus was where we used to frequent as students, so it's always got a place in my heart, you know, as the kind of alternative club.

[00:51:05] **Richard Fletcher:** No, I like Julian.

[00:51:06] **Jarek:** Um, um, yeah, Julian's still, still, still running Bacchus. I mean, I'm quite impressed that place is still going, um, considering the size of it, and considering all the other nightclubs have disappeared, and, um, yeah, yeah, um, but, uh, wait, what did I, oh, yeah, that's sort of, just to sort of round off, um, Just, you know, we've spoken a little bit about venues closing, we've

spoken a bit about how the Grey Horse struggled to find someone to run it as a music venue.

[00:51:36] **Jarek:** I mean, how do you sort of see the future of live music in the immediate future or medium term future? I mean, do you think we're going to continue losing venues? Do you think it's going to become such a rarity?

[00:51:48] **Richard Fletcher:** I do, only because, uh now 70 plus year olds here who aren't into what's coming up, obviously.

[00:51:59] **Richard Fletcher:** Uh, but [00:52:00] having said that, I mean there's people like Frankie Connolly and Jess Hayes that are coming up and they are youngsters, uh, so they will bring their own crowd. But, I mean it speaks for itself, the venues are closing all the time, aren't they? I mean, everybody says it, it's in the papers, we know it's happening.

[00:52:15] **Richard Fletcher:** But in this area, you just said it, there's hardly anything left. But was there much in the first place? Apart from the Grey Horse, Fighting Cocks.

[00:52:25] **Jarek:** I mean, certainly it was in the, in the 70s, but in the era, in the early 2000s, perhaps not.

[00:52:30] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah. I can't,

[00:52:31] **Randy Baldwin:** yeah.

[00:52:32] **Jarek:** It's like, it's like it takes really dedicated people to keep it going.

[00:52:36] **Randy Baldwin:** That's it, isn't it? I mean, you know, I mean, yeah, it is. And it's, it's obviously since COVID and everything else, it's bloody tough out there, you know. If you're not willing to, who's going to want to put themselves out there and do that, really? Unless you just have a passion about doing it.

[00:52:51] **Richard Fletcher:** I used to pay, um, I don't tell people this, I used to pay top rate of 150 [00:53:00] quid, right?

[00:53:00] **Richard Fletcher:** That's what I paid a band, and for that band

[00:53:03] **Randy Baldwin:** Irrespective of the size of the band.

[00:53:05] **Richard Fletcher:** Doesn't matter who it was. It could be Papa George on his own, he'd get 150 quid. Or 120 quid actually if he was on his own.

[00:53:12] **Randy Baldwin:** Right.

[00:53:13] **Richard Fletcher:** So in those days, we're talking -10 years ago let's say. So, to get 50 people through the door, To make it worthwhile.

[00:53:21] **Richard Fletcher:** Spending a tenner each, that's 500 quid. You take off the VAT, that's 400 quid. Simple numbers, that's 400 quid you're left with. You take off what it's cost you to buy the beer. So you, that's half of it. So you're left with 200 quid. You pay the staff, you've just got enough to pay that bloke for standing there.

[00:53:43] **Richard Fletcher:** You could easily not open the doors and you've just made exactly the same amount of money on an average gig. And that's what people take a year, six months to a year to find out when they think, Oh, I'm going to be a music venue. They, they take that long to go. Why are we doing this? Yeah. Why are we [00:54:00] doing this?

[00:54:00] **Jarek:** Yeah, I mean, I was going to actually ask you what, what, what, what are the biggest challenges of running a music venue? Is it financial?

[00:54:05] **Richard Fletcher:** Yeah. Yeah. A music venue, yeah. Food, I can't talk about because I don't know anything about the food side of stuff.

[00:54:12] **Jarek:** Did you ever have issues with neighbours?

[00:54:15] **Richard Fletcher:** Funny enough, the month before we left, I don't know if you know this, the month before we left, a policeman walked through the door and he said, We've had a complaint, blah blah.

[00:54:24] **Richard Fletcher:** I said, really? We've been here 15 years, and he's decided to complain now. Well, he hasn't been living there very long. I said, well, tell him, and I'm telling you, that we're moving out in January, so just leave us alone for a month. That's all it was. It was just at the beginning of December. And I'll have a word with him, he'll be alright, don't worry about it.

[00:54:47] **Randy Baldwin:** Why'd you move there then?

[00:54:48] **Jarek:** Exactly, well I was just going to say, isn't that a typical attitude? He hasn't been living there very long. Well, we have, you know.

[00:54:54] **Richard Fletcher:** And that's another thing that pubs have to fight, or music pubs have to fight.

[00:54:59] **Randy Baldwin:** [00:55:00] You almost can't find a positive. About saying go and run a music pub.

[00:55:04] **Jarek:** Other than the memories of the

[00:55:06] **Randy Baldwin:** Or unless you've got a passion to do it, just do it. How many people are going to do that?

[00:55:12] **Richard Fletcher:** But we've never had,

[00:55:13] **Jarek:** there's no business incentive to do it.

[00:55:15] **Randy Baldwin:** Not really, no.

[00:55:16] **Richard Fletcher:** But we would be walking along the street, you know, from a night off, me and June. We'd go and have a curry down the road or something.

[00:55:22] **Richard Fletcher:** We'd be walking back thinking, shit, that sounds loud. We could hear the Grey Horse. We could, that sounds a bit loud. Shut those doors! Shut those doors! And you'd be thinking, no wonder there's this tension in the neighbourhood on some pubs. We never had anybody until that last month.

[00:55:42] **Randy Baldwin:** They were scared of you.

[00:55:44] **Richard Fletcher:** No, it's just they were, they knew what, what it was and they knew at 11 o'clock we finished. Averagely, 10 past 11 is the latest.

[00:55:54] **Jarek:** And you generally had respectful customers who wouldn't cause a, cause a scene on the streets afterwards [00:56:00] or anything like that. It's not like- I live on the Market Square now, so I hear when O'Neill's kicks out and that sounds like bedlam.

[00:56:06] **Jarek:** Uh, it's, uh, well, I think on a weekend I think it's midnight and maybe like 11 on a weekday.

[00:56:13] **Richard Fletcher:** So it's probably far worse than an average venue, especially an 11 o'clock finish

[00:56:18] **Jarek:** the screaming rows between couples, you know, and the fights between the lads and all of that sort of stuff.

[00:56:25] **Randy Baldwin:** Yeah, I thought you looked tired.

[00:56:27] **Jarek:** Very good, very good.

[00:56:29] **Jarek:** Um, well, I've sort of asked everything I wanted to ask. Is there anything that you thought we didn't talk about? Um, whether Grey Horse or Kingston music more generally, or just music in general?

[00:56:42] **Richard Fletcher:** No, there's some, probably some famous names that I would have brought up, but famous names, there's famous names, are there?

[00:56:50] **Randy Baldwin:** Infamous.

[00:56:50] **Richard Fletcher:** In-FAMous. No.

[00:56:53] **Jarek:** Good stuff, good stuff. Well, thank you so much, gents.

[00:56:56] **Richard Fletcher:** Okay, how did we get on?