



Bristol folk

A discographical history of Bristol folk music in the 1960s and 1970s

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In the late 1960s and early '70s, Bristol became nationally renowned for its powerhouse folk & blues scene, and was second only to London for the number and influence of its recorded artists. It's an era still remembered with enormous nostalgia by those who participated, and is nigh legendary to those who came later.

Although focused on Bristol, *Bristol Folk* should be of great interest, not just to Bristolians, but to all fans of late 1960s and early 1970s British folk and blues music, not to mention that strange beast now known as 'psych' or 'acid folk', because many Bristol-based musicians became nationally-known and influential exponents of these various styles. Bristol, because of the national reputation of its folk scene, became a magnet for the brightest and best on the folk scene: established names such as Al Stewart, Stefan Grossman, the Incredible String Band and John Renbourn were enamoured of Bristol's friendly folk scene and were frequent visitors to clubs, such as the Troubadour, where they were often given a run for their money by Bristol's own resident musicians, many of whom went on to become national names themselves.

Bristol Folk, by music historian and discographer, *Mark Jones*, features painstakingly researched profiles of all the artists known to have recorded in and around Bristol's vibrant folk scene in those two decades: from Ian Anderson's country blues to the manic 1920s jug-based jazz of the Pigsty Hill Light Orchestra; from Adge Cutler & the Wurzels' novelty rural folk to the sophisticated images of Shelagh McDonald; from the rustic rock of Stackridge to the finely-crafted 'psych blues' of Al Jones; from the magical ballads of Bob Stewart to ethereal pop hits by Sally Oldfield; from the inspired, original guitar work of Dave Evans to the 'acid folk' of Keith Christmas – and much more. These are discussed in the context of the wider music scene, with mention of the numerous and often vastly-popular groups and artists who either didn't get to release records in their own right or had them issued outside of the years covered, from Canton Trig to the Deep Blues Band and many others.

Amongst those who contributed specially-written pieces – included in addition to their profiles – are Ian Anderson, Andy Leggett, Saydisc's Gef Lucena, Rodney Matthews (yes, the world-famous fantasy artist started out designing LP sleeves and gig posters for Bristol's folk set), Bob Stewart, Steve Tilston, Keith Warmington and Fred Wedlock, all of whose diverse careers either started in Bristol or were shaped by their time on Bristol's folk scene.

The 34 pages of illustrations include photographs – many previously unpublished – promotional materials and memorabilia from the artists' private collections and other archives to which the author had special access, plus over 80 record sleeves. Also included are cuttings from Bristol's early 1970s arts and entertainments magazine, *Preview*, and Plastic Dog's near-legendary *Dogpress* newsletter – one edition of which found itself being waved around at a Parliamentary hearing on obscenity!

The book also looks at the local record companies, Saydisc and Village Thing, both of which released many now highly-collectable folk records, as well as at Bristol's numerous folk clubs – from the Troubadour, which put Bristol firmly on the national folk map between 1966 and 1971, and the Stonehouse, to the less well-known, but equally-missed clubs, such as Bristol Ballads & Blues, White On Black, Folk Blues Bristol & West and many more.

Over 180 records are listed in the discography section, all bar an elusive few with full details and complete track listings. Values are included for almost all of the records included – and these range from 50p to over £1,000. Some very rare and sought-after records were released by Bristol-based musicians...and for those without a record player, there is a supplementary discography of reissues and a list of artists' websites where many of the CDs listed can be bought.

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