

# Music Legends of Eel Pie Island



1. The Rolling Stones

In the early 1960s across the river, Eel Pie Island reeled and rocked to the sounds of rhythm and blues, the south of England's answer to Merseybeat. Here, the Eel Pie Island Hotel played host to artists like The Rolling Stones, The Who, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Rod Stewart, David Bowie (then David Jones), Pink Floyd and many other fledgling performers who would go on to become internationally renowned superstars of the music world.



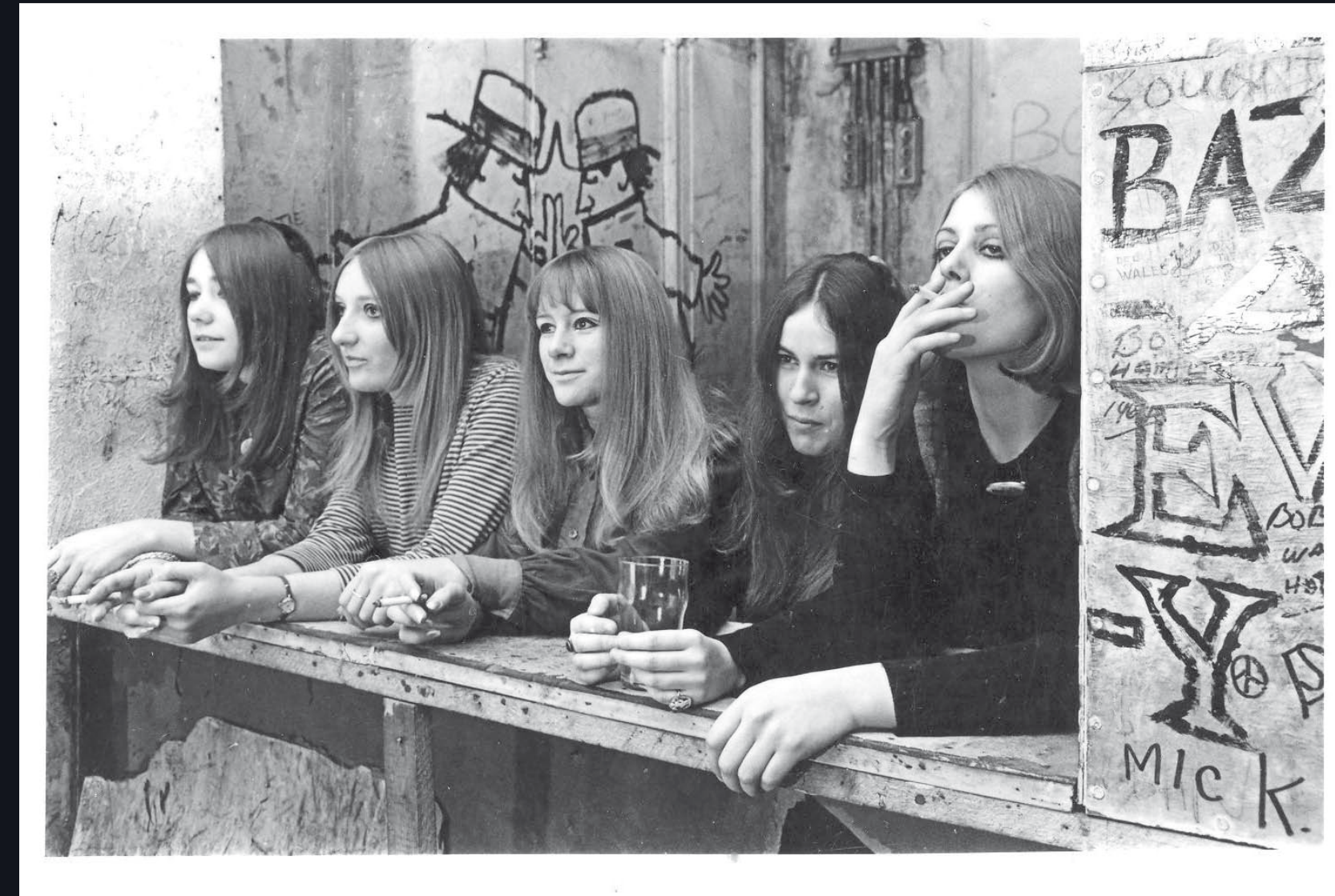
2. The Eel Pie Island Hotel

The Eel Pie Island Hotel had long been used as a dance hall, described by Charles Dickens as "a place to dance to the music of the locomotive band." In the 1920s it was a local tea dance venue.

In 1956 it was adopted as a jazz venue, featuring the popular trad jazz acts of the time, such as Ken Colyer, Acker Bilk, Kenny Ball, George Melly and many more.



3. Ken Colyer



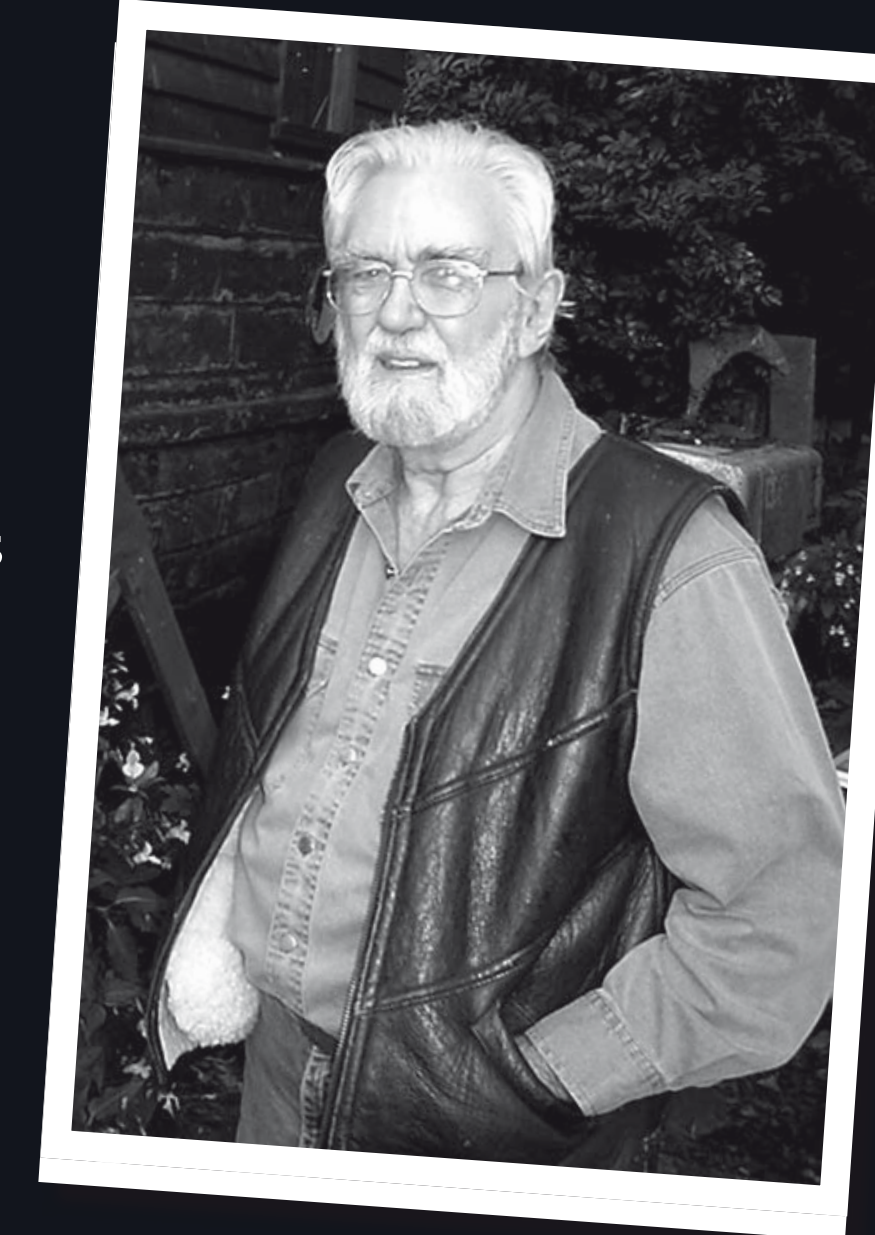
4. Girls at The Eel Pie Island Hotel ca 1964

In the early sixties, with the emergence of the British rhythm and blues movement, club owner Arthur Chisnall, a man who believed strongly in giving young people a voice, began to feature this 'new' music in his club on Eel Pie Island. Arthur's bold initiative gave Cyril Davies, Alexis Korner, Long John Baldry and other pioneers of blues in Britain, a platform on which they could highlight the sounds of Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf, Elmore James and other American blues stars, whose music was hitherto unknown to the world at large.



5. Cyril Davies

On April 24th 1963 The Rolling Stones played on Eel Pie Island for the first time. Already hugely popular down the road in Richmond's Crawdaddy Club, The Stones began a residency at Arthur Chisnall's 'Eelpiland' which would help to launch their rise to fame as front-runners of the R&B sound which would rival The Beatles and take the music business by storm.



6. Arthur Chisnall



7. Passports to Eelpiland

Following the success of The Stones, the Eel Pie Island Hotel featured dozens of new acts, some of whom would become world famous and others who could look back and revel in having been part of the phenomenon which proved to have such a lasting influence on music and fashion both in Britain and internationally.

The Eel Pie Island Hotel rapidly became 'the' place to hear rhythm and blues bands in the west side of London. One peculiarity of the club which is fondly remembered by regulars was the sprung dance floor, which acted like a trampoline, causing the audience to bounce up and down in front of the somewhat dilapidated stage, all adding to the excitement.



8. Steampacket (Long John Baldry, Rod Stewart, Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll)

Although Arthur Chisnall's 'Eelpiland' closed in 1967, the venue was to enjoy a brief reincarnation in 1969 when it reopened as 'Colonel Barefoot's Rock Garden'. This featured, among others, Black Sabbath, The Edgar Broughton Band and Hawkwind. Sadly the Hotel was gradually falling into disrepair and its end came in March 1971 when a fire accelerated the demolition process, giving way to the housing development 'Aquarius' which exists today.



9. Ronnie and Art Wood at the new Eel Pie Club ca 2002

The musical legacy of Arthur Chisnall's 'Eelpiland' has come full circle with the formation in 2000 of The Eel Pie Club. Based in Twickenham's town centre at the Cabbage Patch pub, the club's aim is to preserve the great heritage of British rhythm and blues in the area where it all began so many years ago.

## Image Credits

1. Photographer Mike Peters. Image supplied by Michele Whitby
- 2, 4. Photographer unknown. Images supplied by The Eel Pie Club
3. Photographer Jochen Schwarmann. Image supplied by Michele Whitby
5. Photographer unknown. Image supplied by Michele Whitby
6. Photographer Michele Whitby
7. Cards supplied by The Eel Pie Club
8. Image supplied by Michele Whitby, courtesy of Brian Auger
9. Photographer John Baker. Image supplied by The Eel Pie Club

The Music Legends of Eel Pie Island site was established by the Mayor of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames 2008-2009, Cllr Helen Lee-Parsons and the Council Urban Design team, with Tom Nolan, Warren Walters and Gina Way of The Eel Pie Club. The site was unveiled on the 24th April 2009.

Sponsored by:



**Jon and  
Judy Astley**



**THE EEL PIE CLUB**