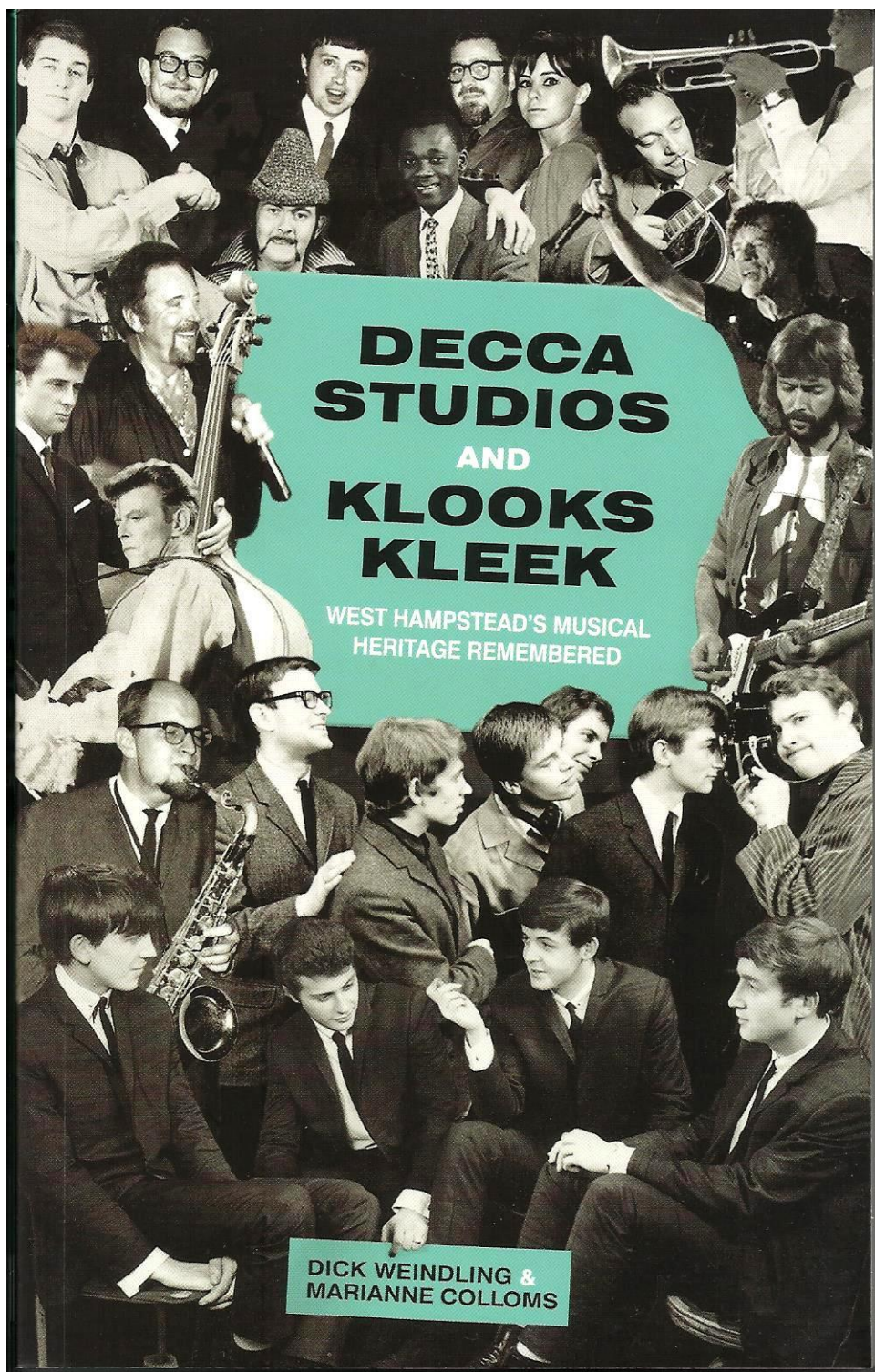


Book Review by Paul Soper: (reprinted with permission Nov 2013)



Decca Studios and Klooks Kleek,

by Dick Weindling and Marianne Colloms

November 2013, The History Press ISBN 978 0 7509 5287 3
(print and eBook) www.thehistorypress.co.uk

I knew that this book was in preparation sometime ago and offered the authors, who I had never met, three photographs to add to their collection, but this book is a lot more than just a trip down memory lane for those who remember one of the greatest jazz and blues clubs of the 1960's. This is a thoroughly researched history of two adjacent buildings in West Hampstead, London. Two buildings linked, sometimes in more ways than one, both by their history and the accident of being next to each other. The story of the buildings is also a social history of the rapid expansion of London suburbs in the late Victorian period. The Town Hall was not a town hall, but a large meetings and event venue, right next to the Station Hotel, a Victorian pub of the finest kind with three floors of facilities, and a roaring fire downstairs - this had a 1st floor ball-room destined to become Klooks Kleek. The Town Hall went on to become Decca Records recording studio - this book is also a history of British popular music from the 1920's as many of the artistes recorded there - and was, of course, the scene of the most famous audition in the early 1960's when the Beatles were turned down - find out why! The early 1960's saw the birth of Klooks Kleek, the jazz (at first) and later R&B club which charted the development of the London Music scene during the 1960's, featuring a host of bands who were important in London - from Georgie Fame through Graham Bond and my personal favourite - John Mayall. Because the Decca Studios were next door this was one of the few venues in London where making a live recording was as easy as passing the cables out of a skylight in the Decca Building and into the First Floor Music Room via the roof-top and an open window. By 1970 the London music scene fragmented, and the landlords of the pub decided to turn it into a disco. Decca closed their recording studio and the Town Hall is now the headquarters of the ENO. This is also the personal tale of the Victorian developers and business men who created the buildings, the visionary stockbroker Sir Edward Lewis who turned the Town Hall into recording studios and the two young men - Dick Jordan and Geoff Williams who created Klooks and many happy memories for the many thousands of members who crammed into the venue to hear not only the finest bands London could offer but also international stars from T-Bone Walker to Howling Wolf, from Annie Ross to Sonny Rollins and - if that wasn't enough, there is a listing of every band and artist that appeared over that period built up from Geoff's booking lists. They say that if you can remember the 60's you weren't there -

This book fills in some gaps for me and now I know where I was for at least part of that fantastic decade!

Paul Soper, November 2013

Back Cover: **Decca Studios and Klooks Kleek**



**'Klooks Kleek was the
best R&B club in London'**
Georgie Fame

This is the first history of Decca Studios and Klooks Kleek, the famous R&B club. Containing more than fifty photographs, many of which have never before appeared in print, it will delight music lovers everywhere.

The book explores the history of Decca Studios, where thousands of records were made between 1937 and 1980. Klooks Kleek was run next door from 1961 to 1970 in the Railway Hotel by Dick Jordan and Geoff Williams, who share their memories here. With artists including David Bowie, The Rolling Stones, Tom Jones and The Moody Blues at Decca, and Ronnie Scott, Cream, Fleetwood Mac, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Elton John, Rod Stewart and Stevie Wonder at Klooks, this book records a unique musical heritage.

