

Cyril Davies - The Legendary Cyril Davies (1970)

Written by bluesever

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Side 1 1. *Leaving Blues* - 3:14 2. *Roundhouse Stomp* - 2:53 3. *Rotten Break* - 3:47 4. *K.C. Moan* - 2:53 5. *Skip To My Lou* - 1:54 6. *It's The Same Old Thing* - 2:19 Side 1 1. *Alberta* - 2:43 2. *Hesitation Blues* - 2:28 3. *Ella Speed* - 2:57 4. *Good Morning* - 2:35 5. *Boll Weevil* - 3:25 6. *Short Legs Shuffle* - 2:34

Cyril Davies - 12-string guitar (except 3,9,10,11), vocal (except 2,3), harmonica (2,4,6,8,12)
Alexis Korner - guitar (2,3,10,11), vocal (3,5), mandolin (2,5,9) Mike Collins - washboard (2,9,11) Terry Plant - bass (2,5) Jeff Bradford - mandolin, guitar and kazoo (4,6,8,12) Reg Turner - jug (4,6,8,12) Lisa Turner - banjo and vocal (4,6,8,12)

Early in the morning of January 8th, 1964, I received a telephone call from John Martin: "I'm sorry to be the one who has to tell you this, John, but Cyril died last night." Cyril had been taken to hospital at six in the evening and within five hours was dead. I just could not believe it - he had been ill for some months, that I knew, but the suddenness of his death threw me. Some days before, as we were crossing the footbridge from our old stamping ground Eel Pie Island, he had said something that flashed back into my mind at that moment. "You know, John, I think this will be the last time I'll walk on this bridge".

As it happened, that particular evening at the Island was to be his last public appearance.

The first time I ever met Cyril Davies was a few weeks before the earliest tracks on this album were recorded. I was only a young kid just out of school at that time, just playing guitar and singing a little and very much in love with the blues. Although I had been listening to records by Bill Broonzy, and Muddy Waters among others since I was twelve, I had never heard English people playing and singing the blues until the evening I walked into the Roundhouse (the pub in Soho, not Arnold Wesker's ex-railway turntable shed) and heard Cyril and Alexis Korner. I used to go every Thursday evening and they would invite me to join them on the piece of lino

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between the piano and the bar, which served as the bandstand, encouraging me in my desire to be part of the blues scene. Those were great days, because apart from Cyril, Alex and myself performing, there were visits to the club by Big Bill, Muddy, Memphis Slim, Otis Spann, Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Derroll Adams and many more.

Of course, Cyril was better known then as a twelve-string guitarist than as a harmonica player. But later, in the days of the "Blues Incorporated" and the "All Stars", he never played guitar on stage, so naturally became absolutely identified with harmonica. I have always thought it a great pity that his guitar playing was never utilized on his recordings for Decca and Pye. However, this situation can now be rectified as we listen to this collection of memorable recordings thanks to Doug Dobell.

As I listen, I look back and think of the little black Alsatian Uschi (still alive and well and monstrous in Kent) that he gave me from the litter of his scrapyard watchdog Kim. The entire barful of dockers on Teesside for whom he bought drinks all night. The inimitable way he curbed a tribal civil war in the back of a Timpson's coach outside Middlesbrough Infirmary. My sudden arrival back to sobriety one night in Burslem with a well-aimed harmonica hurled at my head from the stage. But there's not enough room on this sleeve to tell it all. Perhaps Doug might let me record an album one day so that I can tell you the WHOLE story of the Legendary Cyril Davies. ---Long John Baldry, cyrildavies.com

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