

An exciting behind the scenes look at
story of Grapefruit – the fabulous Beatles
and wannabe Apple stars

fresh

Grapefruit Segments

JOHN PERRY

An illustration of two halves of a grapefruit, each cut into four segments. A metal spoon rests next to the segments. One segment has a lit cigarette butt stuck into its center.

This booklet is taken from my upcoming autoautobiography and is designed to accompany the EP *Grapefruit Segments* which you can enjoy alongside reading here about my life in the 'fast lane' of the London music scene of the late 1960s. The chapter headings are also the names of tracks from the EP and are loosely connected to the content. I hope you enjoy the adventure! – J.P.



*Tony Rivers & the Castaways with me on the right,
Pete Swettenham behind me & Geoff on the other side*

fresh Grapefruit Segments

Starting with piano lessons at eight years old, by twelve I'd got to the *Can-Can* when Dave Brubeck appeared with *Take Five*, I loved it and wanted to play it. So after four years of lessons, as my classically orientated piano teacher didn't 'do' jazz I was off! I was also playing guitar and singing in a band called the Sugarbeats by this time, made up of school mates, Pete (Rhythm gtr) and Geoff Swettenham (drums), Kenny Gold (Lead singer) and Bob Mannering (Bass). I played lead guitar and sang harmonies. We were definitely a Beatles-based band although we did do other people's stuff too.

Speeding through some years saw me leaving school and getting the only possible proper job available for a 1, O-Level student... in a bank. Pretty bad I know, I probably would've got my Music O-Level if I'd have been interested in what Elgar had for breakfast!! Passed the theory, failed the history... But my Mum was pleased cos I was wearing a suit and commuting up to London every day (we lived in South Hornchurch nr Dagenham), to the Bank in Fenchurch street. I'd also moved on to Dave and the Strollers another local band but with some heavy hitters, such as Steve Scott who had been with Brian Poole and the

tremoloes and had the full Fender rig and a Klemt Echolette (amazing sound) and Colin Hare who went onto play and write with Honeybus, a fantastic 60s band, famous for *I Can't Let Maggie Go* amongst others. In fact I think I took his place...

After about a year working in Fenchurch St. London all day, then going off to gigs at the weekend, (sometimes getting back at 4am Monday morning, then getting up for after 3 hours sleep and going to work) Geoff rang me up saying would I come to an audition for Tony Rivers and the Castaways. Now this was THE big local professional group. Working regularly up and down the country with a London agent and a charismatic lead singer, who loved harmonies. So off I went to audition, more than a little nervous, where at one stage Tony said Ok John just sing along with what we're doing, so I did. Afterwards he asked me how I knew to sing 6th's and 9th's. Truth is I didn't have a clue I just thought they sounded nice. Apparently it was enough and I had the opportunity and went professional in music, goodbye bank!

My life with Tony Rivers and the Castaways, was up and down the M1 which might have been the only motorway at the time and we relied heavily on the Blue Boar (Watford gap) as many did, for sustenance (more on this in the autobiography). During this time I started clubbing in the west end, largely due to

our new member, a second singer named Kenny Roe, and if we weren't working I'd get the phone call. Kenny liked to hang out in clubs and was a sensible gambler, in other words he took a set amount he was willing to lose and after that he stopped, so he told me anyhow. We regularly went to the Cromwellian Club in Kensington, which had gambling and bars and a disco, sort of all in one setup. Kenny also had a mini, in which he'd pick me up – very trendy at the time.

Apart from the Crom we'd probably go on to the Speakeasy, or Revelation Club. Kenny would go off and meet friends and so would I. Luigi was the Chef and I always enjoyed the food down there, strong memory of petit pois and rich gravy. Of course the cliental was a potpourri of 60's superstars – regularly bumping into (literally) many famous people including David Bowie, Jimi Hendrix, Rod Stewart, Long John Baldry etc. etc.

GRAPEFRUIT **Trk 3. The Best and Worst of Times**

So, one night in the Speakeasy, sitting up at the bar, I got chatting to a rather eccentric Liverpudlian called Terry Doran. He said he was the director of Apple publishing which I'd never heard of and which sounded like a fruit stall!! It'd just started and he was looking for songs. We had an hilarious night together as I was as insane as he was, and at the end he gave me a card and said

to call.

I got on with my life with the Castaways and in truth I'd forgotten about the incident. But after some time he came back to mind and I dug out the card and made an appointment, just to see if I could get some songs published and placed. Wending my way from Elm Park up to Baker St. in London and finding the Apple building I entered his office to discover it was blinding white, completely white, I mean everything, The desk, the carpet, the lampshades and curtains, all *white*.

So we sat in his totally (did I say white) office, got chatting and I eventually played him my tunes. Sadly the tunes died a death, but we got talking and I found myself telling him about what I perceived as a gap in the market now the Beatles had 'gone Heavy'. I strongly felt that a new group of young clean shaven, enthusiastic lads doing new music but with a distinct Beatles style could pick up what the Beatles had dropped. I was still a fan of the four mop-tops and their music of that time, (still am) and like many I loved their harmonies, their melodies, their heart and their fun, and strongly believed others did too.

In retrospect it was indeed a great idea, proven out by The Monkees who with shrewd business management and fantastic songs, were able to achieve huge success later on, but we were first.

Terry liked my idea but not my songs, so he then played me some of the songs written by one of his already signed writers called George' Alexander,(also known as Alexander Young, elder brother of George Young founder of the EasyBeats as well as Malcolm and Angus Young, founding members of the Australian hard rock band AC/DC). George was then a songwriter Terry Doran already had on his books, who the story goes was snapped up by John Lennon because of a song called *Lullaby for a Lazy Day* – a very Beatlesque tune – and to be honest I could see that these songs were crafted pieces and very good. Terry asked if I had any musician mates who might be interested, so of course I suggested that I could ask my old friends Geoff and Pete from TR and C's if they'd be interested. They were cautious at first, it probably all sounded a bit far fetched to be honest, but they agreed to a meeting.

Before this happened George and I had a meeting. George apart from being a writer was an ex Saxophone player with *Bobby Patrick's Big Six*, playing, in Hamburg when the Beatles were there. I thought he looked very old, (through the eyes of youth) but he wrote the songs and could play bass and Terry wanted him in. The Idea for the band was becoming a reality.

We all met up at the Apple building in Baker St.in the now famous white office and after some



Taken at the Hanover Grand launch party. Me having banter with Paul!

discussion and question fielding, everyone confirmed they were in. We obviously had to call the band something, and in fact the name came later on. Terry was previously involved with Brian Epstein running a car company, (the man from the motor trade?) "Bridor Cars" and turns out to be big buddy's with John Lennon and in conversation asked him for a name for the band so John in usual pragmatic style said "Grapefruit" not least because his wife Yoko was releasing a book by the same name!

Before we knew it, we were in the studio. Early sessions down at IBC studios, Portland place, were at once fantastic and terrifying. Our producer was the American Terry Melcher (Doris Day's Son) and producer of the Byrds and others. On our first session John and Paul were there with various luminaries all puffing various jazz woodbines and hanging out while we were setup in the middle of the studio floor, with little rehearsal still getting to know George Alexander and his songs and how best to work together!

On the IBC website:
<http://www.ibcstudio.co.uk/historyindex.html> it's noted that, *John and Paul later turned up at the studios on 24th November 1967 when they sat in on the Grapefruit session on their first hit*, Dear Delilah.

I think it was at this studio session, I first met big Mal Evans (the Beatles Road manager) and discovered

what a nice, gentle chap he was, this became unintentionally advantageous later on.

It's worth saying that George, and Geoff, Pete and I had come from different musical backgrounds. Whereas George was an accomplished musician, used to the 'what key's it in?... after 4...' approach, we although good, worked best by working out between us what we were gonna do before hand. So for me there was always going to be a problem...

PROMOTION

Trk 1. The Cover of the Daily News

So Grapefruit started to tour and do radio interviews, record together and did various mad, looney videos, some in Germany, some in Italy, which you can probably find on youtube. and we traveled the world gigging at various places.

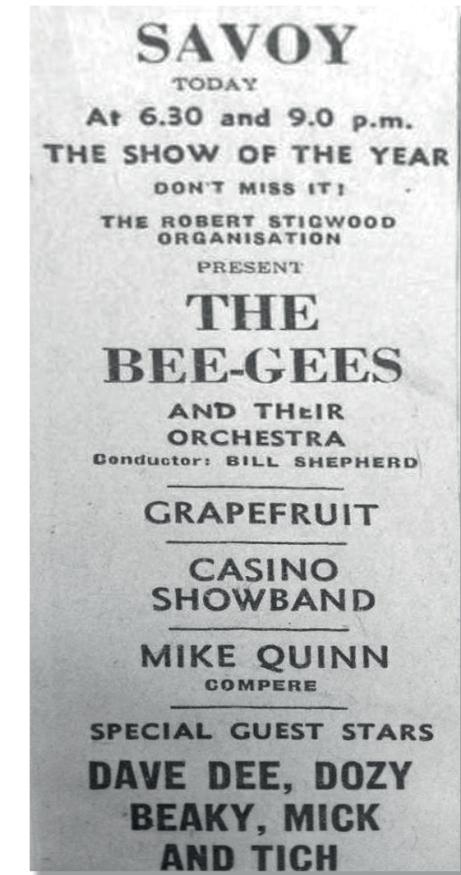
We had a massive launch party at the Hanover Grand Hotel (off Regent Street) where all the Beatles except George turned up, plus Brian Jones, Donovan & Cilla Black. It was rumoured Jimmy Hendrix was there. I have an abiding memory of my Mum shaking hands with John Lennon, him saying "hello Mrs Perry how are you?" and she frozen to the spot! I remember TV work in Brazil and time spent on Copacabana beach where my bag was stolen, and getting drunk in a German bierkeller where George swore he was seeing Nazis all over the place... I got so

drunk the room was spinning out of control and it was so hot, trying to sleep that night!!! ... Nightmare ...

We did several BBC Radio recording sessions, up at Delaware road, London. These were made famous because all the bands used to do them and the recordings were pretty good, we did some with the Castaways. I've heard Geoff say he thinks these Grapefruit recordings are better than the records we did as they didn't have all the "Nuts" squeezed out of them (technical Term). The archives for these sessions were found and turned into an album called *Grapefruit, Yesterday Sunshine* and released by RPM RECORDS, (www.rpmrecords.co.uk). And I gotta say, they do sound great!

We had a major tour with the BeeGees, compered by my now friend Mike Quinn, which went well (they tell me) and I remember their being a lot of rivalry in the BeeGee's camp, over who's songs would last into posterity theirs or the Beatles. Seems they both did.

Speaking of *Cover of the Daily News* type scandal. On one of my Speakeasy nights I found myself sitting at a table with a beautiful young singer surrounded by her all American entourage by the name of Cher... I tried talking to her and possibly run a couple of cheesy chatup lines past her, but all she did was flash her knickers at me and then totally ignore me. Imagine the



headlines if we'd have left the club together!

I was invited by Dee Meehan (our Fan Club secretary) for a meal at her flat – and I was quite surprised on arrival to meet David Bowie dressed normally at that time sitting on the couch and we had as I recall an unusually normal evening together.

I think it was around this time where my lack of control and self abuse caught up with me. It was possibly with the upcoming Bee Gees Tour I

suddenly realised I was shot. I mean totally exhausted and running on fumes. So I told Terry about this and he recommended me to go and see "the Doctor". He (the Doctor) looked me over and said he was going to give me something to get through the next weekend tour start, and it would last a few days. An injection was administered. Now I don't know what it was but my Lord I felt fantastic and felt I could cope with anything. After asking I was told it was vitamin B12. Not like any B12 I've tried since... I can't remember the guys name but I wouldn't be surprised if it wasn't Dr Roberts!

THE BEATLES IN THE STUDIO

Trk 4 Better Daze

Moving on, It was in the studio where we got our first taste of interaction with the Beatles. After our initial session at IBC we knuckled down to making our first album, and for the most part it would be just us. Memories of standing around the piano probably at Trident studios with the Grapefruit guys and Terry Melcher playing *Round Going Round*. Unfortunately he had taken one of his little tablets which made everything half tempo and although he was "feelin' it", it turned a bright happy song into a dirge! Fortunately it had worn off by the time we got to recording. So we kicked off recording where occasionally out of the blue, one or a couple of the Beatles would just turn up and hang out there. Memories of Paul playing *Hey Jude* to John,

(possibly the first time he'd heard it) on a piano behind a curtain; a memory of Lennon, screaming at me trying to get me to play a certain way on a Grapefruit track: "I want it to sound like a f**king airplane coming into land" Bearing in mind we didn't even use overdrive guitar in the Castaways this was pretty terrifying. Also George came in a few times and played around with the drum sounds and stuff.

Interaction with "the boys" was always fascinating and frightening at the same time. You gotta remember I was a huge fan before I met them, and I have to this day got a collection of Beatles magazines, a monthly mag about the fab four that I devoured in younger days from cover to cover. Now I was hanging out with them and expected to be 'normal' in their presence, it was pretty weird. The thing is they were very normal together, the problem was they were *THE BEATLES!!!*

Here's an example. We met up for a drink in a pub in Wigmore St. and were sitting round with the lads. I'm sitting between Paul and George and they start to talk to each other with me in the middle. The thing was that because at that time their every word if heard could make the front page, they put their heads very close together so their conversation couldn't be overheard. Can you imagine when your idol's face is about 6 inches from yours asking "what do you think" – pretty scary!

HEY JUDE

Best and Worst of Times

One notable evening, 30th July 1968 was spent in the studio in one of their sessions for a change. To begin at the beginning, we had some free time and I was out carousing (as you do) in Wardour St. visiting the Ship pub, and later Jack Barry's bar, which everybody did in those days. I hadn't got to Jack's Bar yet and I was sitting in the pub nursing a beer feeling pretty flat, with nothing going on, when suddenly I remembered that somebody had mentioned that 'the Boys' were going to be recording at Trident Studios in St Anne's Court, just around the corner from the pub.

This seemed infinitely more interesting than what I was doing, so I went along and knocked on the door. It was opened by BIG Mal Evans The lovely Beatles roadie I'd met at IBC studios, who obviously knew me and said, "Hi John, the Boys are in here tonight d' you wanna come in?" I was through that door before he could even blink.

It was here I watched the boys in action. It seemed that the piano and drums had been previously recorded as had the lead vocal, I'm pretty sure including the screaming ad libs on the end. So I witnessed John and George tracking on those lead guitar bits in the control room, watched Paul add his bass line, in the large downstairs room, which was phenomenal. I had always been a great admirer of Paul's bass

lines, they were almost songs in themselves having a melody and a groove that really fit whatever song he was working on. After this the Boys came around the Neumann mic setup in the middle of the floor of the big downstairs room and started adding the 3 part (drifters type) harmonies. All's great and I'm very happy watching all this,'til they came to the part of the song that goes, '*better, better, better, AAAAH*'. I was by this time sitting on the floor just watching this film-like event unfold before me with the 4 Beatles around the mike singing various bits when the track got to the middle of the verse prior to the Better, better, bit. Paul, suddenly looks over in my direction and ushers me over to join them.

I look around to see who he's talking to, and seeing only a wall concluded quite brightly that he must be talking to me. I get up and start to walk towards the mic (which J, P, G and R are standing around) – the track is still recording. Paul once again gestures at some headphones lying on the floor. I reach down and put them on, they are SO LOUD that I shout out 'f**king hell' (to my eternal shame or glory depending on your standpoint!). I then (nervously) sang along with the Beatles, the first layer of *na-na-na*'s (after the *better better* part) going right to the end of the song. You know I can hardly believe I was there myself but I guess the proof that I was, unless Paul or Ringo can confirm, is that my expletive



Early promo shot, Happy Daze

(undeleted) can still be heard on the record at about 2.59 where the line 'Remember to let her under your skin, Then you begin, to make it better, better better, AAAH!' under the word 'BEGIN'. It's clearly not a Liverpudlian accent – and as I was the only cockney in there...

The bop don't stop folks and it appears I managed to talk my way

into taking home a stereo master tape of the session. Lord knows how, you could get shot for letting that go out of the studio. So later, I found myself hanging out with some friends from the group Yes around at Montague Mews North (our flat) telling them what I'd got. They jumped at the chance to hear it and soon we had a party underway, with *Hey Jude* blaring out of the speakers

being replayed again as soon as it finished. Added to this I had found a blue tab in our managers case, which I thought might be the famous acid The Beatles used. So we decided to try it. The three of us took it, but we weren't sure what it was. One of the guys suggested we go to the offie (remember them?) to buy some lemonade and baccy and sweets etc. because the bubbles in the lemonade apparently can bring you down if it gets too crazy. As we were walking towards the offie the pavement started to get spongy and I think we all agreed we were off! A long night ensued where I remember trying to talk to my Yes friends German girlfriends and not understanding why I couldn't understand a word they were saying (it *was* German!).

I remember going to my room and phoning John Lennon because I'd obviously forgotten the lemonade and the trip was getting crazy and asking him what to do. He said 'Meditate man, meditate' possibly not the most helpful advice! Also I remember lying on my bed staring at the skylight trying to concentrate on it to get control. Occasionally I did but then I relaxed and it started all over again. Went on for hours... The thing is you can't control it and the upside was that I "saw" vivid colour rectangles and shapes getting smaller and bigger a bit like these Apple computer visualization scene's in iTunes.

Pretty crazy! I remember going into the Apple Saville row offices just

afterwards and sitting in a room on my own seemingly in a cloud. Some kind person came in and gave me a well meaning Dutch uncle talk about being careful with drugs ... Lennon had a reputation for being ferocious and maybe sometimes he was but he had a kind side too. For instance at the *Memories of Fashion* show on the Kings Road with the Beatles, and talking about how I'd like to write more and better songs. John's encouragement was to 'keep writing John'... he coulda just said 'give up'!!!

I was at this time living with Paula Boyd (the youngest of the Boyd sisters) The other two were Patti and Jenny, Patti being George Harrison's then wife. We had a flat in Sheen Park, near Richmond. One day Paula said, 'I want to see my sister, lets go down to Esher' so off we go. We went by train and got out at Esher station into an idyllic Christmas postcard. It'd been snowing and it was a veritable winter wonder land. We walked through the snow to George and Pattie's house in Clarenden Estate a tucked away, high walled bungalow down a small track. Of course it had occurred to me that George might be there and indeed he was. That was the first of many visits, and I have memories of lovely summer days round the pool in the back garden. Patti laying next to me reading poetry together, trying to give me some song inspiration I guess.

George took the time one day to

come down to his practice room and pick up a guitar to jam with me. We messed around a bit but nothing much came of it, my bad I guess. The Beatles at the time were going through the breakup and George was commuting up to the studio daily.

AMERICA

Trk 5 Back to LA

Meanwhile Grapefruit got to the place where we decided we wanted to expand musically and so we reached out to a guy named Mick Fowler to come in on keyboards. He was a good all round musician having a great voice, great keyboard technique, and a capable guitarist to boot. But we still felt we needed more so we invited Bob Ware to come in as (proper) lead guitarist and singer.

They were both great additions to the band and although we went back to the West Coast and cut another album entitled *Deep Water* which has a video on YouTube, This was sadly the death knell for Grapefruit as we knew it. We had lost sight of the original vision and tried to grow up musically. It's interesting that our biggest selling album to this day is the first one, *Around Grapefruit*.

Never the less the new band was invited by Terry Melcher to go over to America to record our second album *Deep Water*. This we began in Jon Philips studio somewhere

in Los Angeles, with lots of drugs going on, especially weed possibly Maui Wowie. Melcher liked to pop a pill the size of a lighter refill, which was a downer. Unlike Terry Doran, Terry Melcher could not cope with my uptempo lunacy so he gave one to me, which did indeed slow me down. I had to play bass that night on a track called *Come Down to the Station* – a very fast song – and I remember being hardly able to keep up with the tempo!

We had Sneaky Pete from the Flying Burrito Brothers playing pedal steel on *Blues in Your Head* which involved Maui and a lot of notes. I wandered off looking for some fresh air and found a small garden with an orange tree in it. Now to be fair I'm from Dagenham where there's not many orange trees and I was stupid stoned so I imagined that someone had stuck these oranges on the tree (might as well have been Welly boots) just to freak me out... Hey what can you do...

We went to Terry Melcher's beach house in Malibu, where we met the fabulous creature that is Candice Bergen and spent a pleasant time chatting and admiring the beach house!!.

There was a time in the UK when almost every American act that came to the UK made some comment about our policemen. Usually something to the effect of 'Gee we think your policemen are wonderful!!!'. So after arriving in

LA for the first time we had some promotional radio interviews to do and as a kind of cheeky payback for this we found ourselves saying it back to them on air. Problem was that one day as we were lounging about in our Los Angeles hotel suite at the Hollywood Hawaiian Hotel, somewhere near Yukka St, and when I say lounging about, the air was like a London pea souper, there was a tap on the door. Totally unannounced two members of LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) have turned up at our hotel room door to thank us in person for saying nice things about them on the radio. They were very smiley and seemingly grateful for the positive plug but, sadly they caught us at a bad time and there was a lot of flushing and straightening out before we opened the door, plus a glazed eyed 'that's ok' from me!!!

On a different note, I do remember seeing a guy on a skate board going down Hollywood Boulevard from my bedroom window, long before they hit England and hit big....

THE END

Trk 6. I Will Run

And so Grapefruit broke up after only 2 years, went the same way as the Beatles aspiring to be respected musicians, (ie get stoned, grow a beard, go heavy) and lost the original vision. The Monkees who came along after us, with shrewd management and great songs – not to mention a TV series – although

probably driven mad, had a continued career for many years after.

So as old habits die hard, It was in the Speakeasy, where I bumped into the 'glammed up' David Bowie, for the second time. If you recall I'd met him before at a small gathering at Dee Meehans (of Apple Corps), place dressed normally. In the club he asked me what was I doing since Grapefruit and I told him I'd got a job as backing singer for Cliff Richard. He said, 'You can do better than that...' but as he didn't offer me anything I took the Cliff Richard job. (More on that in the Autobiography). Finally with the wrapping up of Grapefruit and the fact that Paula and I had also split up meant I had to move out of the flat, and I was pretty depressed and I don't "do" depressed normally. This is the only time I ever thought of suicide, because for the life of me (literally) I couldn't see where I could go from here. We'd been involved with the biggest in the business, so what could top that? Added to this I was listening to Leonard Cohen at the time who was a miserable beggar back then and that for sure didn't help. And although it was pretty heavy it occurred to me that, I could get in the car and drive over to France and in a few hours be on the Cote D'azure and this gave me renewed hope that things could get better – and in fact that's exactly what happened. (More on that in the autoautobiography).



Paula & John ... lovebirds!!

But there was one redemptive feature in this sad tale of woe, and this was that as me and my (lovely) Dad were dragging shelves etc. down the stairs a large Mercedes pulls up and out steps George Harrison. I say to him 'what are you doing here' to which he replies 'I've come to help you move...' You could have knocked me down with a feather! But that's exactly what he

proceeded to do, and we all kinda huffed and puffed together getting my shizzle out and loaded. I don't know why he came but Its possible that my friend Patty, knowing about me and Paula and having a soft spot for me had a word in his ear. I guess we'll never know. Did I mention, there's more in the autobiography? See you there!



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