

In the Beginning

It occurred to me recently that, with the exception of two Aunts, KB is the next person on this earth whom I have known for the longest time.



The photo was taken in Enniskillen between 1946 & 1947, with Robin, aka RI on the left and Keith, aka KB on the right. We lived next door to each other, played together, went to school together and grew up together. Those were happy days.

During those years, like most kids my age, I graduated from the Beano and Dandy to the Eagle, which, if I remember correctly, featured a character named Dan Dare. I was pleased with my progression to more mature material, but can imagine my dismay when I found out that KB had skipped the Eagle and gone straight to reading 'A Tale of Two Cities'.

This was a pivotal moment in my life.

KB introduced me to his uncle Dave who taught me my first chords on the guitar. After some months of painful practice, KB who also played the guitar, and I were able to plonk our way through some Lonnie Donegan skiffle tunes.

Cliff Richards, Tommy Steele and Elvis soon followed and we both played in several groups around Enniskillen in the late fifties. Shortly after this I was shocked to learn that KB was growing bored with Rock n' Roll and was now listening to Jazz.

This was another pivotal moment in my life.

KB was always more progressive and ahead of me in everything. When KB started to get into Jazz and lost interest in R&R, he sold me, **yes sold me**, my first 78 rpm LP entitled the Chirping Crickets, featuring Buddy Holly.

This was another pivotal moment in my life.



Sadly, I no longer have the actual album

The impact of this record was monumental. Not just the music, but also the visual impact of seeing for the first time, a picture of a **Fender Stratocaster**. I had seen pictures of electric guitars before and Gretsch and Gibson were well known, but in 1958 I had NEVER seen anything like this before. I was smitten.

I was so impressed by the Fender Stratocaster, that I drew up a full size template of the guitar and traced it onto a piece of wood at my father's workshop. I ran the wood, which must have been about 48" long by 24" wide and 2" deep, through a band saw and ended up with a full-size, one-piece replica of a Statocaster. Oh joy.

My joy was short lived when my father found out what I had done. It turned out that I had cut up a very expensive piece of imported mahogany which had been ordered for a customer and was to be a counter top or something. Ouch!

This was another pivotal moment in my life.