



BILLY GAFF
NATIVE OF CURRAGH CAMP, WHO MANAGED ROD STEWART,
AND JUST MISSED OUT ON MANAGING U2

Billy Gaff, was born and reared in the Curragh Camp . He became a very prominent Impresario in the Music industry in the 1960's,70's and 80's, particularly in that he either Managed, Represented or Published Recording Artists such as Rod Stewart, Cream, The Bee Gees, Peter Frampton, Status Quo, The Clash , Long John Baldry and Limahal among others , and just missed out on Signing-up and Managing U2.

His Father served in the British Army , and afterwards He was employed as a Civilian Chef in Plunkett Officer's Mess . The Family lived in No.21 O'Higgin's Rd from June 1945, to Oct 1948 , and in No.22 O'Higgin's Rd from Oct 1948, to Aug 1952.. . (The McGrath Family lived there for a number of years afterwards, until Mar 1967) . The Houses were in the front of the Gymnasium just at the bottom of the hill. . They were demolished a few years ago. There was a Sgt. W. Gaff, who lived at No.39, McDonagh Terrace from Apr 1929 to Aug 1929, who was stationed in the R&T Depot . But I am not sure if it is Billy's Father or not. We actually lived in that same House from Apr 1957 to Nov 1959. (I was able to get that information from Tom Sweeney's excellent article on the occupants of the Curragh Married Quarters down-through-the-years) .

Billy's Mother came to live in the Curragh from Aldershot in England with her own Mother who had relations living in the Curragh at the time in the 1930's . She worked in Eason's Newsagent's on the Curragh, and Billy's Father got to know her from working there . They started going out together , and they eventually got married . They had 3 Children - 2 Boy's and a Girl . They went to the Curragh National School for a few years, which was just beside where they lived.

I remember Billy being asked in a Radio Interview, what was it like living on the Curragh . And he replied- "It was nice to be able to look out on the Curragh plains every morning", and he also mentioned that both himself and some of his friends would occasionally set-fire to the Furze bushes, something that we would have all confessed to have done in the past . The Family moved to Bagnelstown, Co.Carlow when Billy was around 10, and his Father continued working in the Curragh . They went to the National School in Bagnelstown. Billy was then enrolled at the Dominican College in Newbridge. The Family moved to England when Billy was 12. However, the Family enrolled him as a Boarder in Newbridge College to finish his education .

Afterwards, he went to Woolwich Polytechnic College to study Economics, and while he was there, he got interested in Drama, and he Directed productions of "Under Milk Wood", and "The Hostage" at the College. . He also developed an interest in Pop Music, and as he was involved with the Theatre group in the College, he would have got a lot of Free-Passes to Pop Concerts . Along the way, he struck up a friendship with a Man named Robert Stigwood, (Who went on to manage the Bee Gees, and also produced "Saturday Night Fever" and Grease afterwards). In the mid-60's, he was asked by Robert would he look after a Group that he was managing , for a few Months as he was going to the States . The name of the Group was "Cream", which featured possibly the greatest Guitar Player of them all - Eric Clapton. They achieved world-wide fame afterwards, but sadly they split-up in 1969 due to in-fighting, to pursue solo careers . He was in effect the Road Manager for the few Months, and he said that he really enjoyed the experience , and that it served to give him a great interest in the Music-business generally.

However, he then decided to join the Merchant Navy for a while, and he travelled the world . He left shortly afterwards, and returned to the Music-business . He Managed a Pop Group called "The Faces", which featured Rod Stewart and Ronnie Wood . He formed his own Record Label called "Riva Records in 1975 . Their first No.1 was a Song called "Maggie May", which was actually the 'B' Side of the Record .The A side was a Song called "Reason to Believe". Rod achieved world-wide success, but he parted company with Billy in 1981. Billy's Record Label "Riva Records" however was doing very well .

He came over to Dublin in the late 70's with a view to signing-up a new Group . He swears that the following is true;- There were 2 Groups in Dublin which were doing very well on the Dublin circuit - "The Look Alikes", and "U 2". He had received Demo Tapes from each of them . He went to see "The Look Alikes" in Concert first, and he was very impressed with them . So he signed them up . And didn't bother trying to sign U2. However, "The Look Alikes" did not achieve the fame that he thought they would .I heard him saying in an Interview that he done with Eamon Dunphy a few years ago, that the above is absolutely true . He said that both himself and Paul McGuinness - the Manager of U2, still joke about this whenever they meet up . Billy also owned the Publishing Rights to the Music of the Punk Rock Group - "The Clash" .

He managed another Singer named "Limahl", who had a huge world-wide hit in 1984 with a Song called "Never Ending Story" . He was also an Investor in the Film "My Left Foot", which was being produced by Noel Pearson . The Film was a great success and it won a lot of Awards including Best Actor for Daniel Day Lewis and Best Actress for Brenda Fricker . He has a number of homes throughout the World, including one in Ireland. He retired from the Music scene a few years ago . He is rated as one of the top Managers of all time in the Music Industry. And surely one of the most famous people ever to come from the Curragh Camp , a place for which he confesses to hold a very fond affection .



Riva Records