

# Biography

By Michael Armstrong



My obsession with music started when I was a child, when I first picked up a guitar, and when I fell in love with the music of The Beatles. Although the band had long split-up, my parents owned the red & blue greatest hits albums on cassette and this was all I ever listened to in the car, singing along and harmonising with my brother. We would watch 'Top of the Pops' on a Thursday night, and listen to the chart run down on a Sunday evening, waiting to find out who held that prestigious No.1 slot. It was all I cared about. I lived and breathed music.

After becoming quite a proficient drummer by the age of 12, I decided I wanted to write my own songs and emulate my heroes and idols. Maybe this would be my chance of meeting and joining them on TV and at shows. I took guitar lessons and as soon as I could play three chords I had my first attempt at song writing. Thankfully I improved over time. Not happy with just playing the guitar and drums, I taught myself to play the piano by listening to Billy Joel and Elton John songs during rugby practice at school, which the teachers allowed as I was clearly no sportsman!

As soon as I could drive, the first place I headed for was Liverpool, the birthplace of The Beatles. I dragged my poor girlfriend around all the sites: - their homes, Penny Lane, Strawberry Fields, on the Magical Mystery Tour bus, the museum and of course The Cavern.

Whilst paying my dues and performing my newly penned songs along with my band, across some of the country's dirtiest and frightening venues, real life began to take its toll. Marriage, children and a mortgage meant that my part-time job in the family construction business was becoming a necessity and not just a fall-back for my life as a wandering musician. John Lennon once sang "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans".

Not one to give up, I continued to write, record and perform my songs at every opportunity, always on the look out for someone who could make that dream come true.....and then it happened.

A chance meeting with a music business impresario who loved my songs; wanted to manage me; wanted to make a record.

I found myself with a recording deal and the chance to make my debut EP in, of all places, Liverpool?! It couldn't have been more perfect and we bedded down at Elevator Studios to make a recording that would ultimately change my life. The vibe of the city, the people and it's rich musical heritage inspired all of us.

Next I found myself mingling with some of the biggest stars in the business. Singing and working with Sir Cliff Richard, Mark Knopfler, Chris de Burgh, and then the man, the very reason I ever picked up a guitar or sat down at a piano, with the thinking that one day I might be able to write songs that would lead me to meet my idol, Sir Paul McCartney. This childhood dream was impossible, yet it came true in the Summer of 2012 at The Queen's Jubilee concert at Buckingham Palace. McCartney was of course headlining and I got the chance to hang out with him back stage after the sound-check when he caught me looking longingly at him and introduced himself with "Hi, I'm Paul"! You're told that you shouldn't meet your idols, but he could not have been nicer and more down to earth. I was able to give him a copy of the CD we

had recorded in Liverpool, where-after he nick-named me 'Rock Star'! Unbeknownst to him, perhaps until now, I cheekily managed to sneak onto the stage that night and join him and the entire ensemble in the sing-a-long finale 'Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da' .....by posing as one of 'The Military Wives'!!

The EP led to me being able to record my full debut album and this in turn unbelievably led me back to Liverpool for something I will never forget. On the 14th June 2015, my band and I were invited to launch the album at The Cavern Club. The place was buzzing and the event was attended by some prestigious fans. Amongst them were Nigel & Debbie Greenberg. Debbie's father owned and ran The Cavern in its heyday when she was just a young girl. There are still photos on the walls there of her with the Fab Four! Nigel owned the recording studio above it and their stories of those heady days are just fabulous. Another attendee was Freda Kelly, the woman who was The Beatles secretary and trusted friend throughout their reign, and is now in charge of The Beatles fan club. We were also blessed with the company of Colin Hall who is the live-in custodian of Mendips, John Lennon's childhood home in Liverpool, which is now part of music and cultural history.