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Thomas M. Kitts

To cite this article: Thomas M. Kitts (2010) Peter Quaife, 1943–2010, , 33:5, 657-661, DOI: [10.1080/03007766.2010.514199](https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2010.514199)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2010.514199>



Published online: 13 Oct 2010.



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“Without Pete there would have been *no* Kinks,” a deeply saddened Dave Davies exclaimed at the passing of his former bandmate and friend. Dave’s words were not mere sentimental commemoration. Indeed, without Pete, it is unlikely the Kinks would have ever entered a recording studio. Yet in a group so dominated by the songwriting and performing brilliance of Ray Davies and the gritty guitar of Dave as well as the strong personalities of both brothers, it is easy to overlook the contributions of Peter Alexander Greenlaw “Crutch” Quaife, who co-founded the Kinks and remained as the bassist until 1969.

Quaife, who began playing guitar as therapy for a badly injured hand which he had impaled on a spike in a garbage dump, first teamed with Ray Davies after a music class at William Grimshaw Secondary Modern, Muswell Hill, London, in 1961. “At the time I had just started playing guitar and I was no good,” said Pete.

[The teacher] said, “bring your guitar next week.” Then Ray put his hand up and said he played guitar and I was surprised because I didn’t know. The following week we brought along our guitars. I think I played a Duane Eddy number. Then Ray picked up a guitar and played this Spanish piece which was REALLY impressive. I remember thinking, “I wish I could play that!” (qtd in Kirby, “Part One” 5)

Mr Wainwright, the instructor, suggested that the pair form a band and play at a school dance. Dave, whom Quaife knew from his raucous reputation but not as Ray’s brother, joined them along with John Start on drums. In a short time, Quaife switched to the bass after, according to him, losing a straw-drawing contest which the Davies brothers had rigged. After art school for Ray and Pete (who didn’t last the first semester), a few drummers, and numerous gigs under different names, the Kinks were christened in January 1964 with Mick Avory on drums.

Quaife soon developed into one of the finest bassists of the British Invasion era. To relatively simple bass patterns, the ever resourceful and playful Quaife added little flourishes, like the *vroom* on “You Really Got Me,” a few bars from Bach’s “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” in the middle of “Wicked Annabella,” or what Steve Alleman calls the “strange yawning sound of the bass” on “Lazy Old Sun” (47). Additionally, Quaife suggested the amusing *scooby-doby-do* vocal lines for “Picture Book,” an appropriation from Frank Sinatra’s “Strangers in the Night,” a #1 UK hit in 1966, and the more hymnal *ooh, la, las* above the verses of “Waterloo Sunset.” Such seemingly small insertions, often unnoticed, go a long way in shaping a record and the listener’s reaction. Dave called him

“an advanced rock musician for his time” (qtd in Sharp 50), a point which did not go unnoticed by Eric Clapton who, early in 1966, invited Pete to form the band which would eventually become Cream. Content as a Kink, Pete declined the guitar god’s offer.

But Pete’s contributions to the band went well beyond his musicianship. The Kinks, on an extended hiatus since 1996, were a tumultuous crew, battling internally and externally. They were working-class toughs with attitude and angst, but Pete, the peacekeeper in the band, was the most rational and even-tempered member. As a result, he found himself in the center of an almost unrelenting vortex, which saw frequent battles, verbal and physical, between Ray and Dave and Dave and Mick. (In one onstage incident in 1965, Dave kicked over Avory’s drums. Avory erupted and clubbed the guitarist with his high-hat, opening Dave’s head and knocking him to the floor. Avory, believing he might have killed his bandmate, fled from the theater to escape the police and went into hiding for several days.) As Ray said, “I couldn’t have done it without Pete. In the early days I was quiet and worried about the way I looked because of my teeth. Mick was a jerk. Dave was an angry wild kid, and Pete was an ambassador” (qtd in Savage 104).

But it wasn’t the endless internal squabbling that most troubled Pete. Instead, it was the ongoing and escalating domination of Ray Davies. In 1966, Pete took a six-month leave from the Kinks after suffering serious injuries in a car crash as he and a roadie returned to London from a gig in northwest England. Upon his return, Pete began to feel increasingly marginalized. The management team and their record label, he believed, were pandering to Ray at the expense of the group. “I don’t really blame Ray; I blame the managers for putting thoughts into his head, telling him he could do this and he could do that, without giving any regard to other members of the group,” said Quaife (qtd in Miller 29). Ray’s ego expanded and his tyranny was excused because of his “genius” and his reputation, as Quaife put it, as “Great Britain’s God of musical composition—something he totally believed” (qtd in Kitts, *Ray Davies* 126). In the studio, Pete began to feel more and more like a session player, and in business decisions he found himself out of the loop. At one point, Quaife said that no one would respond to his questions about the group’s finances and that the accountants were prohibited from talking to him. “I had nothing to say and I was simply a person playing bass” (qtd in Kirby, “Part Two” 11).

Nevertheless, one of Pete’s most fulfilling moments with the Kinks came during the 1968 recording sessions for *The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society*, which most consider the band’s highest artistic achievement, although it failed commercially. Pete felt himself a significant contributor. “Ray lightened up a bit. He listened to all of our ideas—at least during the recordings and rehearsals.” The harmony was only short-lived, however. “After the album was done, he went back to being Ray” (qtd in Kitts, *Ray Davies* 113).

Pete officially left in April 1969 before the start of the sessions for *Arthur (or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire)*. Although he was replaced by the very capable John Dalton, the Kinks would never be the same without Quaife: “When one of the founder members leaves the band is dead,” commented Ray. “Once you lose the thing—the four originals getting together, going through it together, forming

the band together—once that goes, the group is a different group. That picture signs it off” (qtd in Savage 106). I asked Pete several times through the years if he had any regrets about leaving the band. His response was always firm: “Never. I would have ended up in a madhouse had I stayed!” (qtd in Kitts, *Ray Davies* 129).

Quaife went on to form Maple Oak with some Canadian musicians. After about a year and a failed bubblegumish single, “Son of a Gun,” the band broke up. “Those silly sods wanted to be just like The Band,” recalled Quaife. Not long after the break-up, Quaife worked as a graphic artist and moved to Copenhagen, where he recorded “quite a lot of numbers with Michael Julin.” After his second marriage in 1980, Quaife settled in Belleville, Canada, a few hours outside Toronto, where he continued to work as a commercial and fine artist and took on other odd jobs, which included teaching classical guitar, airbrushing, and astronomy at the Loyalist College in Belleville, with occasional playing in amateur bands and some recording sessions at, of all places, Kink Studios—“the guy that owned it was Norwegian and his name was really Kink!” He reunited with the Kinks during their encore of Chuck Berry’s “Little Queenie” at the Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto on September 25, 1981, and, again at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in 1990, where, as John Entwistle of the Who picked up a bass, the former Kink joked, “Why don’t you give that to a real bass player?” (qtd in Kitts, *Ray Davies* 129) Someone handed Quaife a Telecaster and they both played. In 2003, he moved back to Copenhagen, where, until his death, he resided with his partner Elisabeth Bilbo.

Through my own work on the Kinks, I was fortunate to become friends with Pete, whom I always referred to as Pete or Peter, never Crutch—which is how I heard Ray and Dave greet him. When Michael Kraus and I co-edited a collection of essays, *Crossing Aesthetic Borders with the Kinks*, we coerced Pete into doing the illustrations. His seventeen Hogarthian drawings exhibit his wit and incisiveness, offering, at times, commentary on stardom and the rock-and-roll life. A similar humor informs his series of cartoons collected in *The Lighter Side of Dialysis*—Pete was diagnosed with end stage renal failure in 1998. Pete had demonstrated his propensity for wry humor in his early days as a Kink. In 1964, as part of a group response to a question about the musicians’ hair length, Pete told deejay Brian Matthew that the group next planned to grow their eyebrows long. It’s a hilarious moment captured on *Kinks: BBC Sessions*. Later, on a refueling stop in a Moscow airport, he found himself escorted back onboard at gunpoint when he asked a Soviet guard about recently ousted leader Nikita Khrushchev: “Is baldy still running the country?” Pete didn’t think the guard spoke English.

In the spring of 1998, Pete, along with Mike Kraus and his wife Linda, visited me in Brooklyn for an appropriately timed long weekend during which we saw Dave perform at the Bottom Line and Ray in both Atlantic City and the Hamptons. Interestingly, Ray, who was on his *Storyteller* tour at the time, eliminated a story about Pete from those performances, a story concerning the 1968 recording of “Days” (“the first time I ever really

fell out with Pete,” according to Ray (qtd. in Savage 104)). Pete was impressed with his former schoolboy rival.

As we entered the Bottom Line, Pete saw an old friend from England, Billy J. Kramer (“Little Children”). “I thought you were dead,” shouted Pete. To which Kramer replied, “No, I thought *you* were dead.” The highlight of the weekend for Pete occurred that night when calls from the audience forced a reluctant Dave to invite Quaiife to the stage to play bass on “You Really Got Me.” Pete appreciated the recognition. Afterwards, I asked him about Dave’s performance: “He got a lot better,” he laughed.

In 2002, Mike and I convinced Pete to speak at the joint meeting of the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association in Toronto. Pete enjoyed his time before the standing-room-only audience who were regaled by the pop star’s reminiscences and insights into the swinging ’60s. He remained ever the performer.

I last saw Pete in Copenhagen during the summer 2008, where he and Elisabeth hosted my partner Lisa Rosenberg and me for a wonderful week. Among our memories, Lisa and I recall being awoken by the always mischievous Pete tickling our feet and serenading us with “Morning Has Broken.” A few days later, Pete and Elisabeth prepared a lavish, traditional Danish smorgasbord which we feasted on well into the night with shots of Schnapps and with Danish folksongs sung by our hosts with Pete on guitar and his Rock and Roll Hall of Fame statue a few feet away. (At one Hall of Fame dinner Pete told how he sat in awe next to a woman named Maria Elena, the widow of Buddy Holly, one of Pete’s heroes.)

Sadly, however, Lisa and I both noticed that Pete was slowing down. He had to undergo dialysis treatment three days a week and, at times, he was too weary to join us on one of our outings. Still, he retained his warmth, selflessness, and good humor. Revealingly, he mentioned to me that a fan had offered to move him to the top of the list for a kidney transplant. He declined the offer: “I could be taking the place of a young child. I had my life, but that child hasn’t,” he reasoned.

One of my professional pleasures has been editing Pete’s novel, *Veritas*, a story about a protagonist who grows up in post-World War II England and forms a rock-and-roll band. To be clear, my editing has been minimal. Pete is not only a gifted musician and illustrator, but also a talented writer adept at storytelling and characterization. I am hoping to find a publisher soon for *Veritas*, so that others can experience Quaiife the author.

Over his last dozen years, there were repeated rumors and discussions of a Kinks reunion. In the late 1990s, Mick Avory, at Ray’s direction, contacted Pete with tentative plans. But nothing came from those or subsequent discussions. Complications in schedules, personalities, illnesses (Dave suffered a stroke in 2004), and contractual details kept the promise of a reunion unfulfilled. Eventually, Pete grew frustrated by reunion talk and announced that he would not participate in any Kinks reunion. I didn’t believe him—although his health would have limited his participation.

We may not have the much anticipated music from a Kinks reunion, but Pete survives in his work: over 100 recorded songs with the Kinks, many interviews and filmed performances, his illustrations, his fine arts work and, in the hopefully near future, his

novel. Pete has enriched the lives of those of us who came of age in the rock era, and he will continue to do so for many more years.

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