



Bob Stanley (left) and Brian Ward, pictured in Newcastle City Library looking through archive material about the band The Shadows.

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Into The Shadows – new book will explore band’s Geordie roots

The lives of two members of rock group The Shadows are being explored as research for a new book by musician and author Bob Stanley.

Guitarists Hank Marvin and Bruce Welch both grew up in Newcastle and met while studying at Rutherford Grammar School.

They formed The Shadows in 1958 and became world famous as Cliff

Richard's backing band, as well as gaining an international following in their own right.

Now the band's Geordie connection is being explored for a new book by Saint Etienne founder Bob Stanley.

During a recent trip to Newcastle, he visited the site of Rutherford Grammar School, as well as Stanhope Street and Elswick Road where Marvin and Welch lived as youngsters.

He was accompanied by [Professor Brian Ward](#), of Northumbria University – an expert in British and American popular music – who has spent time uncovering press clippings and photographs of The Shadows from Newcastle City Library's archives.

Bob and Brian have worked together on several projects in the past, having met through their shared interest in the history of popular music.

Bob was a Fellow at the British Library's Eccles Centre, which promotes the library's Americas collections and supports the study of the Americas in schools and universities. It was there he met Brian Ward, a former Chair of the British Association for American Studies and author of several award-winning books on US music.

Brian was able to share his academic expertise during the writing of Bob's acclaimed 2022 book *Let's Do It – The Birth of Pop*, winner of the Penderyn Music Book Prize, an example of how academic research can inform popular literature and publishing.

During his visit to the North East, Bob took part in a [Q&A event with Professor Ward at Newcastle City Library](#), based on his latest book, *Bee Gees – Children of the World*, described as the definitive biography of the Australian group. This is the third such event the pair have carried out together at the library.

Speaking about his visit to the North East, and what he hoped to learn, Bob Stanley said: "I thought it was important for me to get a feel for the place where Hank, back when he was Brian, and Bruce grew up.

“I’m hoping to tap into local expertise and make contact, if possible, with people who have first-hand memories of the group, both when Hank and Bruce lived there and when they came back to play shows. Any information will be very welcome!”

Professor Ward is no stranger to highlighting Newcastle’s historic residents and visitors. His [research into Martin Luther King's visit to the city in 1967](#) resulted in his book *Martin Luther King in Newcastle upon Tyne: The African American Freedom Struggle and Race Relations in the North East of England*, and served as the foundation for Freedom City 2017, a regional commemoration of MLK’s link to the city.

He also carried out research into Newcastle’s association with the 19th Century’s most famous African American leader, abolitionist and social reformer, Frederick Douglass, and was part of a campaign to [install a commemorative plaque at the house in Summerhill Grove, where Douglass stayed](#).

Speaking about how academic research can contribute to projects such as Bob Stanley’s next book, Professor Ward said: “Bob is a wonderful writer with an extraordinary grasp of pop culture history. What I think he values about our interactions is that it pushes him to think about that history in fresh ways and to put the music into a wider social and historical context.”

[Find out more about Northumbria University’s American Studies Research Group.](#)

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