

Before they were the Beatles

See Hunter Davies, *The Beatles*, with a new introduction, New York: Norton, 2009.

John (Winston) Lennon (1940-1980)

- father Fred (left when John was 18 months/came back briefly when John was 5)
- mother Julia Stanley
 - Julia's sister, Mimi Smith, raised him from before the age of 5
 - Julia re-enters John's life when he is a teenager
 - encourages John in all things (Mimi discourages music)
 - taught John some chords on the banjo
 - died 1958 hit by a car outside Mimi's house
- musical influences (1955-56): Bill Haley, Lonnie Donegan, Elvis Presley

The Quarrymen (1956-1959)

- skiffle band named for John's High school
- Pete Shotton, washboard ("just to be in band," John's best friend, but had no musical skill)
- Rod Davis, banjo
- Eric Griffiths, guitar
- Len Garry, tea chest
- Colin Hanton, drummer
- John, lead guitar (Played it like a banjo/Paul)

Paul McCartney (1942-)

- father Jim
- mother Mary Patricia Mohin (died when Paul was about 14)
- knew some guitar (self-taught) when he met John at Woolton Parish Church
 - July 6, 1956
 - played "Twenty Flight Rock" Eddie Cochran
- Paul introduced George Harrison to the group

George Harrison (1943- 2001)

- father Harold
- mother Louise French
- long hair and dress (tight pants and winkle pickers)
- guitar at 14 / self-taught, then with Paul
- joined The Quarrymen around 1958
- George met Pete Best

By 1959 Skiffle faded and Elvis took hold.

The group went through several names:

The Rainbows (all in different colored shirts)

The Moondogs or Johnny and the Moondogs (thought up for the Carroll Levis Show in Manchester, couldn't stay for final clip of competition)

Silver Beatles 1959 (John's invention, probably influenced by Buddy Holly and the Crickets) / toured Scotland under this name in 1959
John and Paul wrote hundreds of songs, only "Love Me Do" was used later.

John befriends Stu Sutcliffe at Art College

- Stu buys a bass and joins the band (can't play an instrument)

Casbah Club, founded by Mrs. Best

- August of 1959 The Quarrymen played opening and then occasionally

Pete Best (1941-)

- formed a group that became the regulars at the Casbah

- 1960, Beatles have job in Hamburg and Paul calls Best to join them

- Alan Williams, who arranged Scotland tour, also thought of Beatles for Hamburg

Hamburg: (about 5 months)

- six-week contract (renewed several times over)

- played the Indra

- seven nights a week / long sets – 8 hours

- encouraged to be loud, raucous

- Indra closed (complaints), so they played the Kaiserkeller (12 hour sets)

- took "slimming pills" to stay awake

- Astrid Kirchher and Klaus Voorman, "first intellectual fans"

- Astrid photographed them

- Stu and Astrid get engaged in November 1960

- Ringo Starr playing with another Liverpool group Rory Storme

- sent home work permits rescinded Dec. 1960 (George first)

Then Litherland Town Hall December 27, 1960

Bob Wooller from Cavern Club picks up the band (292 appearances between December 1960 and February 1962) and writes about Litherland in summer 1961

Hamburg again April –July 1961

- Top Ten Club

- Astrid changes the band's style

- Stu leaves band (will pass away in 1962)

- first recording backing Tony Sheridan, "My Bonnie"

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