

= Mona Best =

Mona " Mo " Best ( 3 January 1924 ? 9 October 1988 ) was born in India , and is best known as the mother of Pete Best ( b . 24 November 1941 ) , who was an early member of The Beatles . Mona also had two other sons , Rory ( b . 1944 ) , and Vincent " Roag " Best ( b . 1962 ) . It was later confirmed that Roag 's father was The Beatles ' associate , Neil Aspinall , although he was not registered as the father on Roag 's birth certificate .

After moving to Liverpool from India , the Best family claim that Mona pawned all of her jewellery in 1954 , and used the money to place a 33 ? 1 bet on a horse named " Never Say Die " ; using her winnings to buy a house in 1957 . Mona later opened The Casbah Coffee Club in the cellar of the house as a venue for Rock ' n ' Roll music . It was planned as a members @-@ only club for her sons and their friends . The club was often referred to as The Casbah Club , or The Casbah .

The Quarrymen : John Lennon , Paul McCartney , George Harrison and Ken Brown , frequently played at the Casbah instead of the Cavern Club , which had a jazz @-@ only policy at that time . The Casbah Club cellar ? with its original decoration ? still exists . In 2006 , the property was accorded a Grade II Heritage listing . Mona died in 1988 , after a heart attack following a long illness .

= = India = =

Alice Mona Shaw was born on 3 January 1924 , in Delhi , India , to Thomas ( an Irish major ) and Mary Shaw . She was the youngest of four children : Brian , Patrick and Aileen . Her first son , Randolph Peter Scanland ( later surnamed Best ) , was born on 24 November 1941 . Pete 's biological father was marine engineer Donald Peter Scanland , who subsequently died during World War II . Mona was training with the Red Cross when she met Johnny Best , who came from a family of sports promoters in Liverpool that once owned and ran the Liverpool Stadium . At the time of their meeting , Best was a commissioned officer serving as a Physical Training Instructor in India , and was the British Army 's middleweight boxing champion . After their marriage on 7 March 1944 , at St. Thomas 's Cathedral , Bombay , the Bests had one child : Rory Best ( b . January 1945 ) . In late 1945 , the family sailed for four weeks to Liverpool on the Georgic , which was the last troop ship to leave India , carrying single and married ranks who had previously been a part of General Sir William Slim 's forces in southeast Asia . The ship docked in Liverpool on 25 December 1945 .

= = = Liverpool = = =

Being a part of Best 's family meant Mona was accorded respect on Merseyside , which included meeting well @-@ known sports personalities of the time and receiving preferential treatment when booking a table in a restaurant , or a seat in the theatre . The Bests lived for a short time at the Best family 's large home in West Derby , which was called Ellerslie , but Mona fell out with John Best 's sister , Edna , who resented her brother 's choice of wife . The family then moved to a small flat on Cases Street , Liverpool ( above Ma Edgerton 's public house ) but Mona was always looking for a large house ? as she had been used to in India ? instead of a smaller semi @-@ detached house , which were prevalent in the area . After moving to a three @-@ bedroom house in Princess Drive , Mona persuaded her parents , Thomas and Mary Shaw , to leave India and live with them in Liverpool .

After moving to 17 Queenscourt Road in 1948 ? where the Bests lived for nine years ? Rory saw a large Victorian house for sale at 8 Hayman 's Green in 1954 , and told his mother about it . The Best family claim that Mona then pawned all her jewellery and placed a bet on a horse that was ridden by Lester Piggott in the 1954 Epsom Derby , called " Never Say Die " , which won at 33 ? 1 , and used her winnings to buy the house in 1957 . Note : to place the bet , Mona would have had to travel more than 220 miles from Liverpool to Epsom ( as bets were only allowed at race tracks at the time ) or place the bet with an illegal bookmaker in Liverpool . 8 Hayman 's Green had previously been owned by the West Derby Conservative Club , and was unlike many other family houses in Liverpool

, as the house ( built around 1860 ) was set back from the road , had 15 bedrooms and an acre of land . All the rooms were painted dark green or brown , and the garden was totally overgrown . Mona decorated the living room in an Oriental style , which reflected her own upbringing in India . She had previously tried to interest her husband in other houses , including a Formby lighthouse , a windmill in St. Helens and a circular house in Southport , which John disliked and rejected .

During 1961 ? 1962 , Neil Aspinall became good friends with Pete and subsequently rented a room in the Bests ' home . Aspinall became romantically involved with Mona . During this period , Aspinall fathered a child by Mona : Vincent " Roag " Best . Roag was born on 21 July 1962 , and just three weeks later , on 16 August 1962 , the Beatles dismissed Pete . Roag 's birth certificate was registered on 31 August 1962 , stating his name as " Vincent Rogue [ sic ] Best " and naming John Best as his father . Mona and John Best had separated in the late 1950s or early 1960s .

= = The Casbah Coffee Club = =

Mona came up with the idea of the club after watching a TV report about The 2i 's Coffee Bar in London 's Soho where several singers had been discovered . She decided to open The Casbah Coffee Club ? which was located in her cellar ? on 29 August 1959 , for young people to meet and listen to the popular music of the day . Mona charged half a crown annually for membership ? to " keep out the rough elements " ? and served soft drinks , snacks , cakes , and coffee from an espresso machine , which no other club had at that time . The popular records of the day were played on a small Dansette record player , which amplified them through a speaker of 3 inches ( 76 mm ) .

Mona had booked the Les Stewart Quartet to play the opening night with Harrison on guitar , but they cancelled the booking after Stewart and Brown had a quarrel . Stewart was angry that Brown had missed a rehearsal , because Brown was helping Mona to decorate the club . As 300 membership cards had already been sold , Harrison said that he had two friends in a band called The Quarrymen who would play instead . Lennon , McCartney , Stuart Sutcliffe and Harrison went to the club to arrange the booking , to which Mona agreed , but said she needed to finish painting the club first . All four took up brushes and helped Mona to finish painting the walls with spiders , dragons , rainbows , stars , and a beetle , which still survive . John Lennon was short @-@ sighted , mistaking gloss for emulsion paint , which took a long time to dry in the dark , damp cellar . Cynthia Powell , later the wife of Lennon , painted a silhouette of John Lennon on the wall , which is also still intact .

The Quarrymen played a series of seven Saturday night concerts in The Casbah for 15 shillings each , starting on 29 August to October 1959 , featuring Brown , Lennon , McCartney and Harrison , but without a drummer , or a PA system . The opening night concert was attended by about 300 local teenagers , but as the cellar had no air @-@ conditioning , and people were dancing , the temperature rose until it became hard to breathe . As there was no amplification , Lennon later persuaded Mona to hire a young amateur guitar player called Harry to play a short set before The Quarrymen , but this was only so they could use his 40 @-@ Watt amplifier . After the success of the first night , Mona gave The Quarrymen a residency , and paid the whole group £ 3 a night . Every Saturday thereafter , queues lengthened onto the street , which was financially good for Mona , as she charged one shilling admission on top of the annual membership fee .

Pete was studying at the Collegiate Grammar School when he decided he wanted to be in a music group , so Mona bought him a drum kit from Blackler 's music store and Best formed his own band ; The Black Jacks . Chas Newby joined the group , as did Ken Brown , but only after he had left The Quarrymen . The reason for Brown 's exit from the group was that he turned up on the seventh Saturday night of The Quarrymen residency at The Casbah with the flu , so Mona ordered him upstairs to the Best 's living room to rest . This caused a massive quarrel with the rest of the group when Mona came to pay them , as they wanted Brown 's money to be shared amongst the three of them , as Brown had not played . Mona refused , so The Quarrymen angrily cancelled their residency and stormed out . Colin Manley from The Remo Four was also given a booking to play in the club , which was the only venue that young amateur bands could play at the time . Other groups

like The Searchers and Gerry & The Pacemakers later played in the club . The Black Jacks became the resident group at The Casbah , although The Quarrymen occasionally played there again and often visited . It was in The Casbah Club that Lennon and McCartney convinced Sutcliffe to buy a Hofner president bass guitar and join The Quarrymen .

Even though the membership list later spiralled to over a thousand , Mona closed the club on 24 June 1962 , with The Beatles as the last group to perform . In 2006 , the Best 's ex @-@ coal cellar was given a " Grade II listed building status " , after being recommended by English Heritage . It has now been opened as a tourist attraction in Liverpool , along with McCartney and Lennon 's previous homes .

= = = The Beatles = = =

When her son became a member of The Beatles , Mona repeatedly tried to get the group a lunchtime residency at The Cavern Club by talking to the owner , Ray McFall , but was turned down , as The Cavern had a jazz @-@ only policy at the time . Brian Epstein later wanted to manage the group , and Mona was asked for her advice , and although she had her own plans for the group , she concluded that Epstein would be good for them over time . After The Beatles signed a management contract with Epstein , Mona did not relinquish her control over them , as they had been using her telephone to call agents , and frequently slept over in her living room between concerts . She constantly harassed Epstein about the quality of their bookings , and his management of them , which led to Epstein never referring to her by name , but always calling her " that woman " . One musician commented that if Mona said it was a Sunday when it was Tuesday , one would be forced to agree with her .

After Best , McCartney and Harrison were deported from Hamburg in November 1960 , Mona made numerous phone calls to Hamburg to recover the group 's equipment , which she eventually managed to do . Mona wrote to Granada Television in 1961 , in an attempt to get the group a television appearance on the programme called " People And Places " , but was sent a letter telling her that they would contact her in the future . After her son had been dismissed from The Beatles on 16 August 1962 , Mona was later quoted by biographer Hunter Davies as saying :

= = Later years = =

In 1967 , when The Beatles had to pose for the photograph for the Sgt. Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band cover , Lennon asked Mona if he could borrow the war medals her father had been given in India to wear for the photo session . Although still upset at the way her son was dismissed from The Beatles , Mona agreed , and the medals were then returned , along with a Cash Box trophy that is in the letter ' L ' of THE BEATLES flower @-@ sign on the cover . Mona never opened another club , or engaged in another business venture , although she did have paying guests at her house , which she shared with her bed @-@ ridden mother and her sons after she and Best parted . Mona died of a heart attack on 9 October 1988 , after a long illness .