

# GUITAR WORLD

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## The Yardbirds Announce New Lineup — Including Pre-Eric Clapton Guitarist Top Topham — and 2015 Tour Dates



They've had Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page in their ranks—and let's not forget the late Gypie Mayo and Hellecasters guitarist Jerry Donahue.

Now the Yardbirds are back in action, with a set of tour dates and a new lineup that features the group's pre-Clapton lead guitarist, Top Topham. He joins founding member and drummer Jim McCarty, keeper of the band's flame.

In addition to Topham and McCarty, the group's lineup now includes bassist Kenny Aaronson, Myke Scavone on blues harp, vocals and percussion and lead guitarist/singer John Idan, who performed on the Yardbirds' 2003 album, *Birdland*.

Of course, it is the Yardbirds' Sixties output for which the group remains famous. McCarty cofounded the band in London in 1963 with singer Keith Relf, rhythm guitarist Chris Dreja, bassist Paul Samwell-Smith and Topham. The band went through a series of names—the Metropolitan Blues Quartet and then the Blue-Sounds—before settling on the Yardbirds as a tribute to jazz saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker and the freight-train vagabonds who hung around the London train yards.

Topham was just a lad when the Yardbirds formed. When his parents disapproved of his music career, he left the band and continued his studies, watching from the sidelines while the Yardbirds found fame during the British Invasion.

His spot was filled by a young electric blues protege—Clapton. Soon after, the band began to turn away from blues and toward the more lucrative opportunities presented by pop music. Unhappy with the band's new direction, Clapton departed and was replaced by Beck. Jimmy Page joined the lineup as a bass player, but when Beck went off to start his own group, Page assumed lead guitar duties. Eventually, he found himself leading the group, which then morphed into the New Yardbirds before becoming Led Zeppelin.

McCarty, Dreja and Samwell-Smith regrouped for a 25th anniversary show in 1985 and went on to form the band Box of Frogs, which occasionally included Beck and Page. The Yardbirds were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992 and reformed later in the Nineties.

The group's tour itinerary is below. More dates will be announced shortly.

### **2015 Yardbirds Tour Dates**

April 03 - Norfolk, CT - Infinity Hall

April 04 - Uncasville, CT - Mohegan Sun

April 06 - New York, NY - BB King Blues Club & Grill

April 09 - Bethlehem, PA - Musikfest Cafe

April 10 - Beverley, MA - Larcom Theatre  
April 11 - Plymouth, NH – The Flying Monkey  
April 12 - Newton, NJ – The Newton Theatre

