

UTRECHT? U BET

This year Record Store Day clashed with the biannual Mega Record & CD fair in Utrecht, Netherlands and I had no hesitation flying over for this rather than queuing outside a London record shop or two. After all, it was the fair's 45th birthday! The best thing about the Utrecht fair is the sheer size of the hall, accommodating over 400 dealers from all over the world, offering everything from the most obscure of Eurovision Song Contest singles to the latest platters from hip labels like Finders Keepers (UK) or Wah Wah (Spain).

The sheer volume of records on sale is mind-boggling; straddling every known genre from prog to hip-hop with prices that range from 10p to four-figure sums. The number of rare and collectable records on offer is legion and this is the only time you can see two adjacent stalls both offering copies of the rare *Tudor Lodge* LP, worth nearly £2,000.

Though I was there in my capacity as *Rare Record Price Guide* Editor, plus *Record Collector* and *Rare Record Club* flogger (we sold out of *The Earth LP Elemental*, as well as many copies of our recent release of the Allen Pound's *Get Rich 7"*), I did manage to get out and about during the weekend. I picked up more than a few records for my own collection, while finding myself very tempted by many others – like a copy of the *Hot And Sweet* LP by The Mighty Sparrow after hearing a killer version of *Souful Strut* blaring from a passing stall!

There were so many established dealers from around the world that it would take over a page to list them all but many did great business. The UK's Omega Auctions was also there to put some vinyl under the hammer

on the Saturday afternoon, fetching £2,200 for a rare copy of *Hovas Vittne* by Abba (1981, Polar, JUB 50) on red vinyl that was specially pressed to celebrate (manager and sometime co-lyricist) Stig Anderson's 50th birthday. He'd signed this copy, bumping the price up even more.

A copy of Room's *Pre-Flight* sold for £1,500 and *The Original Delaney And Bonnie* on Apple (1969, SAPCOR 7) also sold for £1,400. Their choicest cut was a copy of the rare self-titled *Complex* album (1969, CLPM 001) from 1969 (RRPG value £4,000) that did not meet its reserve price, though sold a few weeks later.

A collector from Norway whom I know very well was very happy to find a copy of the Courtyard Music Group's *Just Our Way Of Saying Hello* from 1974 (RRPG Guide price £1,500) but would not say how much he paid for it! All told it was an excellent fair for collectors and dealers and I would like to thank all of those people who came up to our stall, from Stephen Power of Wales who took a 15-hour each-way coach journey in order to have more money to spend on vinyl, to Cas Bosland who pulls it all together and makes sure every dealer is happy!

Finally, I even found a stall on Sunday selling Record Store Day releases ranging from the Lush box set to yet another UK Subs LP. I didn't buy either as I know many RSD releases would still be in the shops today waiting for me to come and take them home for a spin. The next Utrecht record fair is in November and if you have never been before I highly recommend the experience. After all, there won't be a RSD on that day...

