



(Header by Sven)

Welcome to our new readers. Please send us your Russ memories.

We have another good read for you this month and a good interview to listen to. It is a newsletter you can settle down with while enjoying a coffee, or a glass of wine if you prefer....or for some of us, a G&T!

Dave has provided us with the Lockdown Quiz answers. You will find them in attachments and all will become clear. Dave's "history" article is about another member of Russ's post Argent team, Robin Mayhew...a very interesting man.

Also, we have Facebook news.

Best wishes

Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

I wish everyone all the best in the lifting of the lockdown. Even though the virus is still around us, it gives me a feeling that we're moving forward somehow. As I wrote in the June newsletter, things for me are very similar to any other year when I go in to the studio every day. It means that six or seven hours are taken care of....as I start early, six or seven in the morning, then have lunch at 1.00pm.

I'm finding new ways of writing and recording and I'm getting a real 'buzz' from the results. For the last forty years, I've sat at the piano (sometimes guitar) and spent two hours, one hour, or, maybe, ten minutes writing a complete song...(the quick ones are often the best). Although I still often sit at the piano or guitar to

find ideas, recently, I've been finding inspiration in ways that I could never have experienced when recording on analogue tape.

Recording digitally, (as I have been doing for fifteen years), allows me to easily edit very small samples of music. I'm finding that a guitar phrase that might only last for a few seconds, can be edited in to even smaller samples, which can be very inspiring to a writer. The same process can be used with piano , electronic keyboard sounds, just about any instrument...although I haven't found drums to work the same way. Ultimately, the aim of a song writer is to find a good idea and it's still about ending up with a tune and words. Finding a good subject to write about is usually my first aim these days . A title can suggest whether the song is up tempo or a ballad, soft or harder. Since the tours were postponed in March, I been working in the studio every day, on my own, writing, then recording, drums, guitar, keyboards and vocals....Looked at how many I've finished in three months - (apart from mixing) - and it's twelve songs....Wow! that's an album....

Our lovely girls Sue and Carole Williams say to me, "Yeah, but are we gonna hear them?" I do intend for them to be turned in to an album....I'm just pleased I'm still able to come up with so many ideas, it's like oxygen for me. I speak to Sue and Carole every week and they're always inspiring and keep me updated on what's going on...I am very lucky. I am also lucky to have Sven - he's been there in many ways, not just posters and pictures, album sleeves but other ways too.

When the U.K. tours were cancelled in March, April, May and June the tour was rearranged for this September. Well, obviously, venues are closed now and will be for the foreseeable future, however, the UK tour is being rescheduled for April and the German tour hopefully will take place in May. So, I hope I'll get to meet the friends that have been in touch this past four months.

*Oh, well, take care, keep washing the hands, keep distanced and look after each other and we'll meet (online) again in August.....Love as Ever,
Russ. xxx*

LOCKDOWN QUIZ

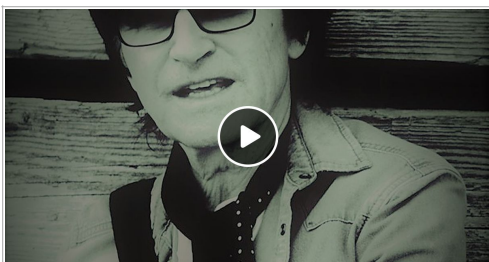
For those of you who had a go at the "Lockdown Quiz", Dave has provided us with the answers and explanations. They are here as an attachment, which is the only way I could get them into the newsletter. Did anyone get them all right? Google is permitted. I still didn't get them all, though! If you didn't get round to

having a go or if you have joined the newsletter in the last month or so, the quiz is there again too. The easiest way to do it is to print it and fill it in the old fashioned way.

INTERVIEW

On Wednesday 8th July, Russ did a live interview with Richard Oliff for his radio show on Forest FM. You can hear the interview here on Mixcloud. It lasts about 40 minutes. It's a good one!

https://www.mixcloud.com/richardoliff1/russ-ballard-argent-interviewed-by-richard-oliff/?fbclid=IwAR1VjD7V_7O2kLoyjwIGv8Kmrmsb2NiHMZybwDmRHDM8ZqV9BqmCgJH2Xmc



[RUSS BALLARD \(ARGENT\)](#) [interviewed by RICHARD OLIFF](#)

Russ Ballard interviewed by Richard Oliff.
Wednesday 8 July 2020 (11:05 UK) Russell Glyn Ballard (born 31 October 1945) is an English singer, songwriter and musician. At 14 Russ wrote The Lost City for The Shadows on the album The Sound of The Shadows.. he was initially a guitarist, joining Buster Meikle & The Day Breakers in 1961. After a stint with The Roulettes, backing Adam Faith, he joined Unit 4 + 2 in 1967, before becoming the lead singer and guitarist of Argent along with Bob Henrit, who joined as drummer, with Jim Rodford on bass and Rod Argent - keyboards. He became known by the late 1970s as a songwriter and producer. His compositions "New York Groove", "You Can Do Magic", "Since You Been Gone", "Liar", "Winning", "I Know There's Something Going On", "So You Win Again" and "God Gave Rock and Roll to You" were hits for other artists during the 1970s and 1980s. <http://russballardmusic.com/> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russ_Ballard <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0050663/> www.mixcloud.com

FACEBOOK

Team RGB has expanded its activities with a group, "Voices of Russ Ballard", for discussion about all things Russ. It has been set up by Ian and is linked to the main official Facebook page. It is a "private" group so you need to apply for membership. The idea came about because the "visitor posts" on pages are not easy to find. A group gives more scope for discussion.

Here is a link to the group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/562129657792892> and here is the link to the main page, brilliantly looked after by Carole, in case you are not on there already. <https://www.facebook.com/>

[RussBallardMusicOfficial](#). I think you can view the page, even if you are not on Facebook. As I am on both, I can't test it.

Please note that, on Facebook, **this page and group** are the only **official** places to find Russ. Any other profile, or page, in his name is nothing to do with him even if they look very convincingly like they are.

BOOK NEWS

We have been getting enquiries about the book. Sadly, there doesn't seem to be any news yet. We have contacted Music Glue but they are just the distributors and the delay is with BMG. It looks like we will all have to be patient for a while longer.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

How did Russ manage to create the Pizzicato sound on his Gibson guitar when charged with replacing John Barry string sounds?

I know this was way back but I am curious as it must have been some challenge for a young guitar player or indeed any guitar player, did he use any effects on his Vox AC30 in some way to do that or just dampen the strings?

A four-piece band like the Roulettes could not replicate a John Barry 7 but must have done a great job prior to the BEAT GROUP ERA when they were able to blast out The First Time and Chris Andrews songs instead of strings.

Russ: *"Yes, it is a long time ago, anyway, For the pizzicato sound, I just dampened the strings with the palm of my hand. It always amazed me how authentic a muted guitar could replicate strings, but it worked well....having a quick delay on my Binson helped the sound too".*

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

By Dave Williams

Desk Job – Robin Mayhew

In recent months two members of the band that Russ put together in 1976, guitarist **Bill Roberts** and bass guitarist **Tony Lester**, generously agreed to share a few words on what it was like working with Russ in those early days after he left **Argent**. Coming soon will be another feature covering a third member of that band, **Alan “Sticky” Wicket**. In the meantime, there is another important part of the team that has agreed to share his thoughts on touring with Russ, and this is

Robin Mayhew. Robin accompanied Russ on his European and American tour dates and looked after the stage sound. The guys operating the mixing desks do an incredibly important job but rarely get acknowledged for their work. But **Robin Mayhew** is not your average sound engineer. He has quite a story to tell.

Robin first became interested in music at school. He played trumpet in a traditional jazz band called **The Delta City Jazzmen** formed by saxophonist **Dick Morrissey** and pianist **Roger Coulham**. Roger would later go on to join **Blue Mink**. Like so many other budding musicians of his age, Robin was inspired by **Lonnie Donegan**, took up guitar and started a skiffle group called **The Grass Hoppers** with **Eric Archer** on tea chest bass and **Ken Headley**. Ken was slightly more advanced. He also had an amplifier, which prompted Robin to buy an electric guitar. In 1958, Ken and Robin were invited to form a rock band called **The Presidents**. Their first gig was at a Working Men's Club in Bermondsey, and was attended by **Glyn Johns**, an old school friend. Glyn would later go on to become a world-famous studio engineer and producer, working with legendary musicians such as **The Beatles**, **Bob Dylan**, **The Who**, **Led Zeppelin** and **The Eagles**. **The Presidents** would be his first project.

DW) Thanks for agreeing to share your story with our newsletter readers Robin. We will talk about your work with Russ shortly, but let's begin with The Presidents.

RM) Around 1962, Glyn took us into a studio, and we recorded a cover version of Candy Man. This resulted in us signing to Decca Records and Candy Man was to be our first single. At the last minute, it was given to Brian Poole and The Tremeloes, who took the song to No.8 in the UK charts.

DW) Not a good start to life at Decca Records then. As a band, how did you react?

RM) We were very disillusioned, and our vocalist Rick Tyrrell and rhythm guitarist Tony Finch left. I took over singing and an old friend Martin Cowtan, joined on lead guitar allowing me to switch to rhythm.



L to R; The Presidents in 1965 and reunited for a video recording of She Said Yeah in 2018 (Courtesy of Robin Mayhew)

DW) *After further line-up changes, you returned to the studio and recorded a version of **She Said Yeah**, previously recorded by Larry Williams. [Newsletter fans will recognise the title. Russ included his own version on the **Barnet Dogs** album. I think I'm right in saying it's the only song he's released on his solo albums that he didn't have a hand in writing]. I understand that once again, Decca never released your recording and shortly afterwards the song appeared on a **Rolling Stones** album, also on Decca. This caused the break-up of the band.*

RM) *That's right. Glyn had us back into **IBC Studios** to make a follow-up to **Candy Man**. We recorded **She Said Yeah** and somehow the acetate, the original cutting, was lost. It was later found in Los Angeles in 2018 in legendary producer **Shel Talmy**'s collection. Talmy had been working at Decca in London in the mid-1960s. Our version was eventually released in June 2018 by **Ace Records**. As guitarist **Martin Cowtan** was over here on holiday from Australia, I managed to get all the original line up back together and make a video. This can be viewed using this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjckGcM0Rtc>*

DW) *After the band broke up you emigrated to South Africa. What prompted this move? Had you decided to leave the music industry at this point?*

RM) *My mother had relations in Cape Town and my father decided to buy the trucking business from my mother's uncle as he was ready to retire. By this time, I was engaged and later came back to the UK and got married. We lived in Cape Town with me working with the trucking business and my wife Mardy, working in the property business. We returned to the UK because of the apartheid set up.*

DW) *On your return to the UK, you worked with **Tucky Buzzard**, a band I'm familiar with as I bought a couple of their albums back in 1972/73. I recall that **Rolling Stones**' bass player **Bill Wyman** was heavily involved with them.*

RM) *Initially I worked as a sales rep. We were living in Surrey and had just had our first child Ben. We'd always dreamed of living on a Mediterranean island and decided to let our house and bought the lease on a bar in Ibiza. It wasn't what we envisaged. After one season we threw in the towel and came home. I had no job and went to look up my old mate Glyn who was living in Epsom. He wasn't at home, but a guy called **Nicky Graham** was there and told me all about his band, **Tucky Buzzard**. They were working on an album with **Bill Wyman** and were about to collect a brand-new PA system from Mike Turner of **Turner Electronics**.*

He asked me if I would like to join them as roadie and look after their sound to which I agreed.

DW) I recall that Tucky Buzzard supported some major artists.

RM) Initially we toured Spain and Germany. We had a good following in Spain, and we were the 'headline' act at all the gigs. We then went to France to record the album Warm Slash. A tour of the US followed, where we supported **Grand Funk Railroad**. We came home and were signed by **Tony Defries**. Tony's company **MainMan**, had just signed **David Bowie**.

To put things in perspective, being signed by **Tony Defries** was significant.

MainMan had a culture that considered all artists equals, and with **Bowie**, **Mott the Hoople**, **Lou Reed** and **Dana Gillespie** under their wing, **Tucky Buzzard** were in good company. However, it seemed that some were more equal than others, and in recognising **David Bowie's** superstar potential, **MainMan** put a huge amount of effort into breaking him both here and in the US.

RM) *Tony had organised a meeting with record executives to showcase some of David's new material and suggested that **Tucky Buzzard** do a little support set to start things off. I set up the PA. By now I had mastered the **Turner PA system**, and all sounded good. We couldn't move our equipment out, so we had to sit and wait whilst David did his showcase with **Mick Ronson** and **Rick Wakeman**. The sound was dreadful with feedback and no balance at all. When they finished, we started to move our stuff out and I got a tap on the shoulder. It was **Angie Bowie** asking me to have a word with David. David couldn't believe that he'd been able to hear everything so clearly during our short set and asked me if I would come and do a rehearsal with the band he was putting together. He was wearing loose flairs and had long blond hair. When I got to Beckenham Rugby Club for the rehearsal he looked completely different with a mullet of red hair. The rehearsal went as if God was looking after things. David could not believe what he was hearing, and the future was made right there.*

DW) *So this band he was putting together was the **Spiders from Mars** featuring **Mick Ronson**. So you witnessed **Starman**, **Ziggy Stardust**, **Hunky Dory** etc and toured with the band as **Front of House Engineer** on the famous **Ziggy Stardust Tour**, which ran from January 1972 to July 1973. I think that totalled around 191 gigs. That must have been exhausting.*

RM) *Touring was intense, but we could tell that something magical was happening with the combination of the music and the theatrical nature of the show. The chemistry between the band and myself enabled me to produce a great sound. We were all on this roller coaster and we never seemed to get tired but more excited about the next show and so it went on.*



L to R: Bowie's sound crew 1972, Robin is third from the left; A memento presented to Robin by Russ following the 1976 tour.

DW) *On the final gig of the tour at Hammersmith Odeon on July 3rd, 1973, Bowie famously stunned his audience by announcing that this would be "the last show that we'll ever do". Did you have any inkling that this was going to happen? What was the reaction within the camp?*

RM) *My intercom light flashed just after the second half of the show started and Peter Hunsley, the stage and band equipment manager, said he had a feeling that this might be the last ever show. Maybe he had heard something in the dressing room with David and Angie. For me I thought 'what a great idea' as it could not keep on like this. David had achieved his ambition and could now do anything he liked.*

DW) *After the 'Spiders' broke up you set up your own sound equipment rental company aptly called Ground Control. This resulted in you taking care of sound on tours by other artists including Lou Reed, Mott the Hoople, Blondie, The Stranglers and David Essex. Am I right in thinking that you first encountered Russ Ballard when he supported David Essex at New York City's Bottom Line?*



RM) *Ground Control* supplied sound and engineering for many 70's acts. In 1975/76 we worked with **David Essex** with me doing the sound. We toured Europe and **Russ Ballard** and his new band was the support act. As the tour was ending, Russ's manager at the time, **John Stanley**, asked if I would come with Russ to the United States to do a short tour. I had really enjoyed Russ's set, so I agreed. As far as I remember David Essex's tour and Russ's tour were totally different trips. Certainly, **David Essex** played **The Bottom Line**, but it wasn't on the same tour as Russ. I remember **Rod Stewart** and **Britt Ekland** coming to see Russ and I'm sure Rod wouldn't have come to see David Essex!! Ha ha!

DW) *Can you remember much about Russ's new band? I saw them at St Albans, and I thought they played well with Russ leading from the front and looking every inch a rock star.*

RM) We all got on really well and had a lot of fun and I was very happy with the performance of the band. They were very tight and as you say Russ really drove the energy of the set. There is a recording of **Come and Get Your Love** available to listen to on my You Tube channel. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jVD0qRcrLg>



[Russ Ballard at The Bottom Line
New York. Come and Get Your
Love - YouTube](#)

<http://www.robinmayhew.co.uk> -Don't forget to SUBSCRIBE more videos coming soon. Glad a guy named Mike (percypage74) prompted me to post this. Russ Ballard h...
www.youtube.com

DW) You were credited with producing *The Vibrators' Pure Mania* album. What prompted you to turn your hand to studio work? Was it a role you enjoyed?

RM) *Dave Wernham* approached me to produce ***The Vibrators*** album. Dave was the tour manager on the *Bowie* and *Essex* tours, and he knew founder *Vibrators* member **Ian 'Knox' Carnochan**. They wanted to achieve a live sound on their album. It was a wonderful experience and we went on to do a support tour with **Iggy Pop** who had an 'incognito' **David Bowie** playing keyboards. I remember David sitting with me at one of the sound checks talking about old times.

DW) In 1980 you left the music business.

RM) I was tired of touring and had hardly seen my two sons growing up over the previous 10 years. The decision to quit came when my crew was out on tour in Italy with **The Passions** who had just released their single, ***I'm in Love with A German Film Star***. The theatre caught fire and a huge part of my equipment was lost. **The Passions** had not taken out insurance. I sold the rest of the equipment and moved into retail.

DW) In 2012, when Britain was preparing to host the Summer Olympics, I recall that you set up a project called 'Refuse to Lose', encouraging youngsters to set goals and aim to achieve them.

RM) *Refuse to Lose*, I think, was a great idea. I felt that there was a lot of despair among young people and a lack of ambition. As BBC DJ **Greg James** said, it should have been Team GB's anthem and that everybody had missed it. He played it several times in the opening week of the Olympics and even made a spoof video of himself dancing on the original video.



www.robinmayhew.co.uk, hagen.co.uk, mthousandpartworth.co.uk

Thousands of voices for Robin's Olympic anthem

Berkeley-based songwriter Robin Mayhew is up and running with his plan to get thousands of schoolchildren the length and breadth of the country singing a special song he has written for the Olympics.

Called *Refuse To Lose*, the song aims to give the whole ethos of the Olympic Games in the year they come to London. Robin's hope is that hundreds of thousands – even millions – of students will all simultaneously sing the song on July 10.

Robin is aiming to get in touch with every school in the land, but for the moment he is focusing on West Sussex, hoping that he will create a momentum that will then spread onwards.

So far, he has got so far that 10,000 children lined up for the simultaneous performance – a figure he hopes will rocket as the word gets out.

Robin's aim is to make it as easy as possible for everyone to take part.

He has set up a website from which the song (and the associated dance moves and everything any participants would need) can be downloaded free of charge. "You don't have to register to download, but even if you do register, you are still under no obligation to take part. Full instructions on www.refuse-to-lose.co.uk.

On the website you can also see a video of four young singers performing the song. The musical country-wide performance will be timed for the end of summer week a week before the Olympic Games get under way. There will be an earlier date for Scottish schools, which break up in June.

"The idea of the song is to try to convey to children how much dedication and tenacity an athlete must have in order to win the coveted gold medal. The idea is to get children to think like that. *Refuse To Lose* is like an instruction."

So far, Robin has got 10 schools confirmed nationwide. Now he shifts the focus to West Sussex: "I have got the addresses for all the primary and secondary and private and special needs schools here in West Sussex, and I am going to do my own mail campaign here."

"I am going to start from here and hope that it spreads."

Robin Mayhew in his studio

PICTURE BY KATE SHAWLITZ © 2008 J

DW) You continue to work on new projects. Clearly you still have the inspiration and hunger to write, produce and perform.

RM) I have been doing a lot of writing and I'm currently creating a rather spiritual video which may give strength to some people. My CD album *Shallow and Deeper* has had some great comments and feedback about the variety of music featured on it. I'd welcome it if your readers would check it out on my website. I've also written a Christmas Carol called *The Age-Old Reason for Joy*. Again, it is on my website. Finally, I have my autobiographical book called *Ambition*, which needless to say mentions *Russ*.

DW) Thanks for your time Robin and good luck with your current projects.

Newsletter readers can check out Robin's work in greater depth at www.robinmayhew.co.uk

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Another dip into the vaults to see what might be suitable for feature this month. Russ seems to be particularly popular with Swedish artists. Here's a bit of rock music from 1982.

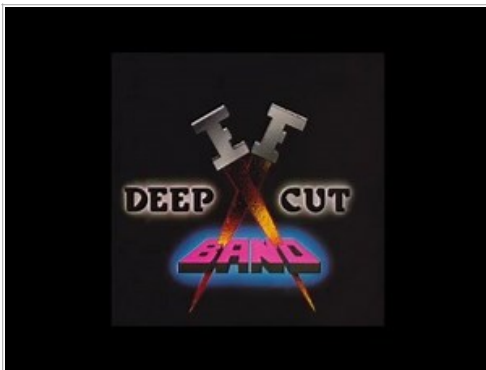
No.23



Is Anybody There? *by* E F Band

E F Band were a heavy metal band from Gothenburg, Sweden. They were formed in 1978. The letters E and F are derived from the surnames of the founding members **Pär Ericsson** (bass and vocals) and **Bengt Fischer** (guitar). Completed by the addition of a drummer, they initially worked as a three piece, later adding a dedicated frontman on lead vocals plus a second lead guitarist. There were a number of line-up changes with only **Ericsson** and **Fischer** remaining constant through the life of the band. They recorded three albums before disbanding in 1986. The second of these albums, **Deep Cut**, featuring lead vocalist **John Ridge** and on drums **Dag Eliasson**, was recorded between April and August 1982 and features two songs written by **Russ Ballard**. The first one is the opening song **Love Is a Game**, released two years earlier by **Girl**. The second of Russ's songs is called **Is Anybody There?** Here is a You Tube link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_4WqCCK-Bw



[E.F. Band \(Swe/UK\) - Is Anybody There](#)

Hard Rock / Heavy Metal from Sweden
(Gothenburg) Song from: Deep Cut, 1982 John
"Boutkam" Ridge - Vocals (Picture, Hot
Property) R.I.P. 2003 Bengt Fischer - Guitars
(Epizootic) R.I.P. 2001 Pär Ericsson - Bass
(Epizootic) Dag Eliasson - Drums

www.youtube.com

Sadly, any hopes of a reunion seem very remote. **Bengt Fischer** died in 2001 followed by **John Ridge** two years later, both as a result of cancer. All three **E F Band** albums plus some additional tracks were re-issued as a 2-disc CD band retrospective compilation album in 2005.