



Header by Sven

A warm welcome to our new readers.

For those of us who have more or less been in lockdown for the last nine months, one month is pretty much like the month before so it is a bit surprising to me that we still have lots of things to report. Again, we have a collection of interesting items for you. Thanks to Markus and Ewan for their contributions. If you come across anything Russ related that we can include in the newsletter, please send it to me. We have the latest Podcast from Sven and Ian as well as Dave's articles....a very special subject this month! Russ continues with stories from his autobiography and I would like to bet that some of you will have very similar memories. I have.

Have a great Christmas, even if your Christmas is different from usual. Here's hoping we will be able to make up for it in 2021.

Best wishes,
Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

How are you managing these days? Well, at last there's a vaccine being administered and more on the way which gets us closer to socializing - live music - eating out with friends, all the other things we've missed.

It's not always easy to feel 'up' - I'm trying to focus on the good stuff. Soon the days will be longer, that will be good. I'm running more than I've ever done and that's good for the endorphin rush. Also, every evening I'm doing weights, mind you I don't appear to have much muscle but it makes me feel better. It's said that the key to life is to be completely engaged in something - I think that's right. I remember painting a picture when I was ten and time didn't seem to exist. From the age of eight I was having piano lessons, then age twelve I put my energy into guitar.....I could spend hours and hours just learning something new... However you're getting through....well done! You're here. Have a great Christmas and Healthy and Peaceful New Year. Lots of love, Russ xxx

STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF RUSS continued

MOTHER.....I do remember her often laughing while singing, I suppose in retrospect, she was trying to make me laugh with her operatics..

Waltham Abbey Munitions was only a couple of miles away and all day we could hear the - Rat - a - Tat - of machine guns that were being made there. It's funny how we accept something like that. Inwardly I knew they were guns but I wasn't fearful. It seems we just adapt.


People say the years after the war were very depressed. Maybe they were and maybe I didn't know any other life - but I loved those years - that old house - that depressed town - those families with little money - but there was a lot of love. Sure, a lot was tough love - however, people on Eleanor Road, or the people I knew, looked after each other. If mum was out when I came home from school, I could just take the key from under the door mat and let myself in to Mrs. Ives next door. I can hear you saying, 'If Mrs. Ives left the key under the mat, how come she wasn't burgled? There was nothing to steal!'

My dad bought the first TV in the road. It was made by Bush - it was a little like a mahogany chest, with a 9" screen. I remember there wasn't much TV in those days - school programmes started about 4pm. and finished at 5. I used to like 'Hopalong Cassidy', the cowboy. Dad bought trestle platforms and placed them in front of the screen then the boys and girls from the street would file in after school, watch for an hour, then file out. Cisco Kid and Whirligig [with Mr. Turnip and Mexican Pete] were my favourites. As technology was improved, we had a magnifying glass screwed on to the TV screen. It did make the image clearer. Strangely, it made the figures longer and fatter.

Mum thought I'd to go to dancing classes. I liked tap dancing. However, the thought of being the only boy in a class full of girls filled me with dread. My favourite game was Doctors and Nurses and, as a doctor, my favourite nurse was Linda Robinson - she lived a few doors away - a very pretty girl- with a pretty Marilyn Monroe face and a shock of blonde curls. Linda was also my favourite patient. I often carried out operations on Linda. I remember it must have been quite serious because I needed the help of a friend. To be honest, it was all very innocent, but suddenly I heard the booming sound of my Dad's voice..."WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" I didn't realise we were doing anything naughty - It seemed quite natural, however, I did feel guilty! it's amazing how instances like this can stay in the psyche.....There'll be more next month.

WHITE CHRISTMAS

Russ has been busy producing a special Christmas treat for us....the Ballard Family Singers. Unfortunately, I can't put it directly into this email as it is too big. However, Carole has added it to Russ's Facebook page so you should be able to find it here. <https://www.facebook.com/RussBallardMusicOfficial/videos/2686993911517326>

	<p>White Christmas -Russ and Elodie</p> <p>Russ and Elodie send you a little bit of festive cheer. Merry Christmas to you all. Love from The Ballard Family</p> <p>&#x1f3b6;&#x1f385;&#x1f384;&#x1f389;&#x1f388;&#x1f381;&#x1f37e;&#x1f942;&#x1f618;&#x1f3b6;</p> <p>www.facebook.com</p>
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As a little teaser, here is a still from the video.



SPOTIFY

You might have seen on social media that artists are showing their 2020 Spotify summaries. Well, here is Russ's. Quite impressive statistics, I'm sure you will agree!



PODCAST

The latest podcast from Sven and Ian features Roulette, Peter Thorp. Many of you will remember Pete from the Roulettes' days and others will have met him at one of our RB Experiences so you will know what a lovely and interesting person he is. You can find the podcast on Russ's website via this link. Russballardmusic.com/podcast.html



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

I've often wondered and wanted to know the answer to this. The liquid on the front of the Ring of Hands sleeve looks rather silvery in colour. Is it Mercury? I'm sure it is because water would not form drops like that.



Russ: *"The liquid passing between the fingers on the 'Ring of Hands' album is Mercury. - the concept was by Hipgnosis. The artists (Storm and Po) also designed 'Dark Side of The Moon' for Pink Floyd, oh, and another Argent album, 'In Deep'. Nobody from Argent attended the photo session so I can't tell you whose hands were used, however, I always thought it would have been good if there had been a black hand in the photograph."*

JOHNNY'S ROCK 'n' ROLL SHOW



I know quite a lot of our UK readers were at this show in Aylesbury in June 2013. I was there and it was a great show featuring The Zombies, Colin Blunstone, Derik's band The Moon Dogs, members of Marillion, Henry Parker and the last ever live performance of Argent. The show was to raise money to support Johnny Beer Timms, son of Russ's friend, Derik Timms. Johnny had a life changing accident on a trampoline two years previously when he was 16. While attempting a backward somersault he broke his neck, which left him paralysed from the chest down. I thought you might like to know what Johnny is up to now. Have a look at this article from Mercedes F1 no less! <https://www.mercedesamgf1.com/en/news/2020/11/mercedes-brings-f1-know-how-support-paralysed-racing-cyclist/?>

Last month Carole posted on Russ's Facebook page, a video of God Gave Rock & Roll To You from that show. Argent hadn't had time to rehearse many songs but

an encore was demanded by the audience so, "without rehearsal", they gave us this. Watch out for the wow guitar solo!

<https://youtu.be/sIgTONaDATk>



[Argent encore live at Aylesbury, Waterside Theatre, 2/6/13](#)

The one and only Argent reformed for perhaps the last time to perform for a very worthy cause. No more rehearsed tracks so this was one they knew from the o...

[youtu.be](#)

LETTERS

Hello Sue,

Last week two songs from Russ were played on the Radio Show „Oldieabend“ on MDR Sachsen-Anhalt (Magdeburg).

Firstly Colin Blunstone's version of „I don't believe in miracles“, because the show reflected on the charts of November 1972, and „On the Rebound“ (a request of mine). Attached you'll find the introductory remarks and a part of the song.

Best wishes

Markus

(Sue: See attachments for this file.)

FRANCIE CONWAY

In March this year, Dave mentioned that the track he featured in his covers article had also been recorded by Irish musician, **Francie Conway**. However, Francie's version wasn't available. A few months later the track was included on Chris White's album, "The Chris White Experience Vol 4" and I was able to put a link in the August newsletter. Francie has now gathered together some of the tracks he has recorded with various other artists. Russ wrote one of the tracks

and features on several of the others. The album is called **Hidden Gems** and you can read about it, and even buy it, here www.hiddengems-francieconway.com



WINNING

Ewan Carmichael found this little clip from the sitcom, My Name Is Earl. It is surprising where Russ's music crops up. Have a listen. It is very short.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-NBHY8JyFM>

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

By Dave Williams

Christmas Carole

Well, all we have heard in recent weeks is that it's going to be a Stay-at-Home Christmas. So, for this month's article I thought why not keep it in the family and have a little 'get to know you' chat with the lady that runs the Russ Ballard Official Facebook page, Carole Williams. Actually, I should have said 'keep it in the 'community', to avoid any confusion over surnames. Carole and I are not related although we both live in the Midlands area of the UK, myself in the east and Carole in the west. Far enough apart to speak quite differently and support different football teams. Carole's introduction to Russ Ballard dates back to the 1960s and I wanted to know more, so we had a discussion and I thought it would be good to share it.

DW) Hi Carole. Your association with Russ Ballard dates back to the 1960s when he played with Adam Faith. What was so special about Adam compared to Cliff Richard who was popular around the same time?

CW) Well, I was a Tommy Steele fan aged 10/11, he was really our only one. Then, in 1959, this guy Adam appeared on Drumbeat, and stole my heart. At school you were either team Adam or team Cliff, I just never took to Cliff! Adam had "an edge". Cliff was too tame for me.

DW) You mention on Russ's website that Adam played a 6-night run at a theatre in your hometown of Wolverhampton in 1962.

CW) August 2nd, 1962, Grand Theatre. Oh yes, it was school holidays, and a group of us girls used to meet up at the Stage Door every morning to see Adam and his group arrive. On the first day, I had taken my 3 prized LPs to get signed. Adam asked if he could borrow them! He said he wanted to play some tracks to The Roulettes. He told me I could collect them on Friday...oh wow, could I?

DW) Presumably at this point Russ hadn't yet joined his backing band The Roulettes.

CW) I always thought Pete was there but now know he didn't play that week, so young Bob was the only one of the final line-up who was there. He said "hello" on the way in and "goodbye" on the way out.

DW) Were you lucky enough to see any of the shows?

CW) I had been treated to a ticket for one show, but back then our lovely old theatre had no bar on the upper balcony level. So, to get an interval drink, the audience had to rush down the fire stairs to the bar.... leaving the door open. It was really easy to hide in the toilets till the lights went out, then merge in with the audience at the back of "the Gods". I think I saw at least 4 shows.

DW) And did Adam keep his promise and return your LPs?

CW) On the Friday I collected my LPs which had lovely "Thank you" messages on them. I still have them along with the programme.

DW) It sounds like the guys were very accommodating in meeting and chatting to their fans, something that can't be said for all celebrities.

CW) They were always very friendly, as was their boss! Adam always had time for a little chat. Pete was the serious one, Bob the chatty one, Mod, well the comedian of course, and Russ was the quiet one.

DW) Your mum later took you on holiday to Margate, where Adam and The Roulettes, now including Russ and Mod, were playing a Summer Season. That must have felt like all your Christmases arrived at once. Did you get to see many of the performances?

CW) I only managed to see one show that week, but I met a new friend from Birmingham, Sandra and guess what? We spent a lot of time by the stage door. Again, we got to chat to Adam and The Roulettes when they arrived. They always stopped to chat, and some of my old photos on the website are from Margate Winter Gardens.

DW) And what was your mother thinking about all of this? Was she a fan?

CW) My mom was brainwashed. She had lived through 5 years of Adam!

DW) And what happened to Sandra? Did you keep in touch?

CW) Sandra and I became best friends, and we wrote a thank you letter to the Stage door keeper for putting up with us. The reply contained 2 tickets from Adam, for the last show of the Season.

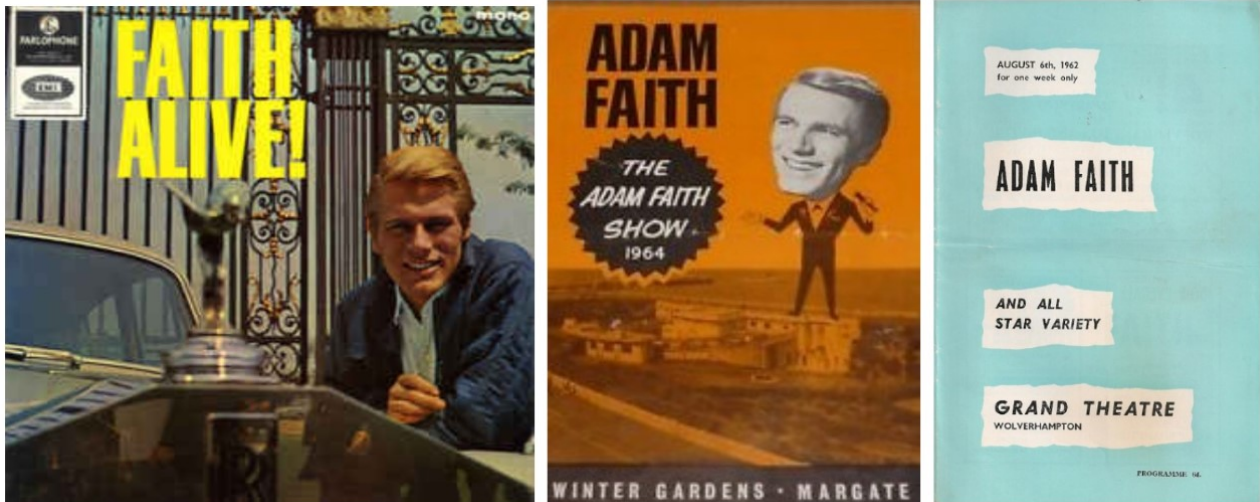
DW) Wow. So that meant another trip back to Margate.

CW) We managed to save our train fare. We got to Margate, saw the boys and met Adam in the dressing room. He asked if we had somewhere to stay. We said yes, but we spent the night in the shelter next to the theatre!

DW) That's dedication. I remember preparing myself for a similar sleep experience at St Albans railway station in May 1976. Luckily, I caught the 'milk train' that used to run in the early hours.

CW) Sandra and I were in Adam's fan club. We used to write to Angela Miall who ran it. We got an invite to go to Abbey Road, or the EMI studio as it was known back then, to attend the recording of Faith Alive. That was on 25th April 1965, 3 days after my birthday. What a present! It was brilliant. they just put on a live show for us. Halfway through they had a break, and the audience had a buffet

tea. There are some colour photos on the website of The Roulettes outside after it finished. We didn't manage to get any of Adam that day. Sandra is still a friend. She came to Robin 2 when Russ and Bob were there in 2016. She will be reading this. Like me, she still loves Adam and The Roulettes. Unlike me, she likes that Cliff bloke too!



Shows attended by Carole; left to right; EMI Studio, Margate Winter Gardens August 1964, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre 2nd Aug 1962.

DW) Lol. When you were 18 you went to work for an entertainment's agency called Astra. Was this the same Astra that represented Argent many years later with Maurice Jones, the music mogul who later founded Midland Concert Productions (MCP), the company behind the Live Aid concert at Wembley?

CW) Yes it was, although Maurice was just an employee when I worked there. It was a few years before he became a partner.

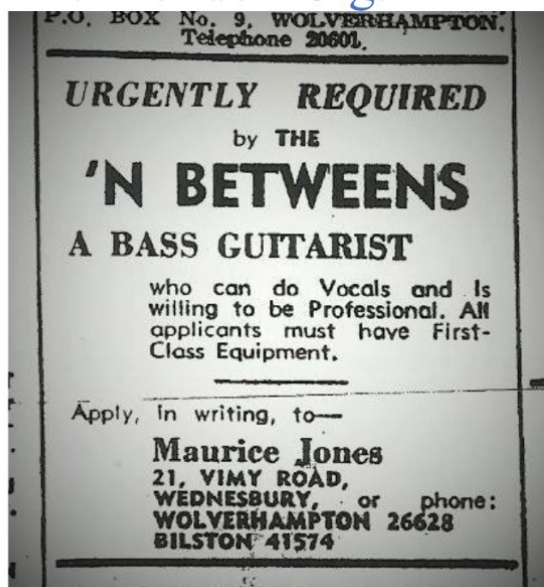
DW) There was a lot of talent in the West Midland in the 1960s, particularly in Birmingham.

CW) We did book some bands from Birmingham, but Wolverhampton had lots of talent of its own. I do remember that the Spencer Davies Group were regulars from Birmingham. Steve Winwood was 15 and still at school.

DW) The 'N Betweens, The Montanas and Finders Keepers spring to mind. Actually, I have a namesake Dave Williams who was the drummer in Finders Keepers. He moved from the West Midlands to the East Midlands. I have met him a few times and we have mutual friends, which causes confusion every now and then, especially when I get phone calls asking me to provide drum lessons, but I digress.

CW) On my first Friday at Astra Dave Hill and Don Powell came to get the band's money. This was the original 'N Betweens before Noddy Holder and Jim Lea

joined and became Slade. We all hit it off and I became part of "the gang". When they were auditioning for a new bass player, I was there, with Maurice taking down contact details of almost every bass player in the Black Country. They had actually decided on one guy, but then this schoolboy turned up and blew them away. That was Jim. A few weeks later Nod came along. I looked after their fan club. We were all good mates. I took a coach load of fans to their first London Gig.



Left: Carole Williams Right: Press advert from 'N Between's seeking a new bass guitarist.

DW) I presume you also knew Robert Plant as there is reference to an incident mentioned in Bob Henrit's book Banging On. Would you care to elaborate?

CW) Lol. Ok. Well, this was when The Roulettes had left Adam. They had a gig in Shrewsbury, not exactly a million miles away, but no way to get there and back. Robert was a mate. He offered to take me. For some reason Fred Wilkinson, (Road Manager) and the boys were wary of him. I will say no more, except they had a few words, and Fred offered to go back via Wolverhampton to take me home. I said no, it's ok. When we got back Robert informed me, he hadn't passed his driving test so he wasn't insured for the car he had borrowed. I didn't care, I was just happy to see The Roulettes.

Years later, Bob asked me if I had any stories for his book. I asked if he remembered the night in Shrewsbury, and then told him that the 19-year-old lad I was with was Robert Plant!



Carole is mentioned in three biographies; left to right Banging On! (Bob Henrit), Look Wot I Dun (Don Powell), A Life (Robert Plant)

DW) Going back to Adam, I wasn't that familiar with his music, but I used to enjoy watching him acting the role of Budgie in the TV series of the same name. Though it was well known that Adam had heart problems, it must have been devastating to hear of his fatal heart attack in 2003 aged just 62.

CW) My cousin phoned me to break the news. I was looking after my baby grandson at the time. He wanted to know why nanny was crying.

DW) You mentioned the 'N Betweens earlier. Your friendship with drummer Don Powell dating back to your days at Astra has endured. He even mentions you in his biography Look Wot I Dun, as does Bob Henrit in Banging On! and Robert Plant in his biography Robert Plant – A Life.

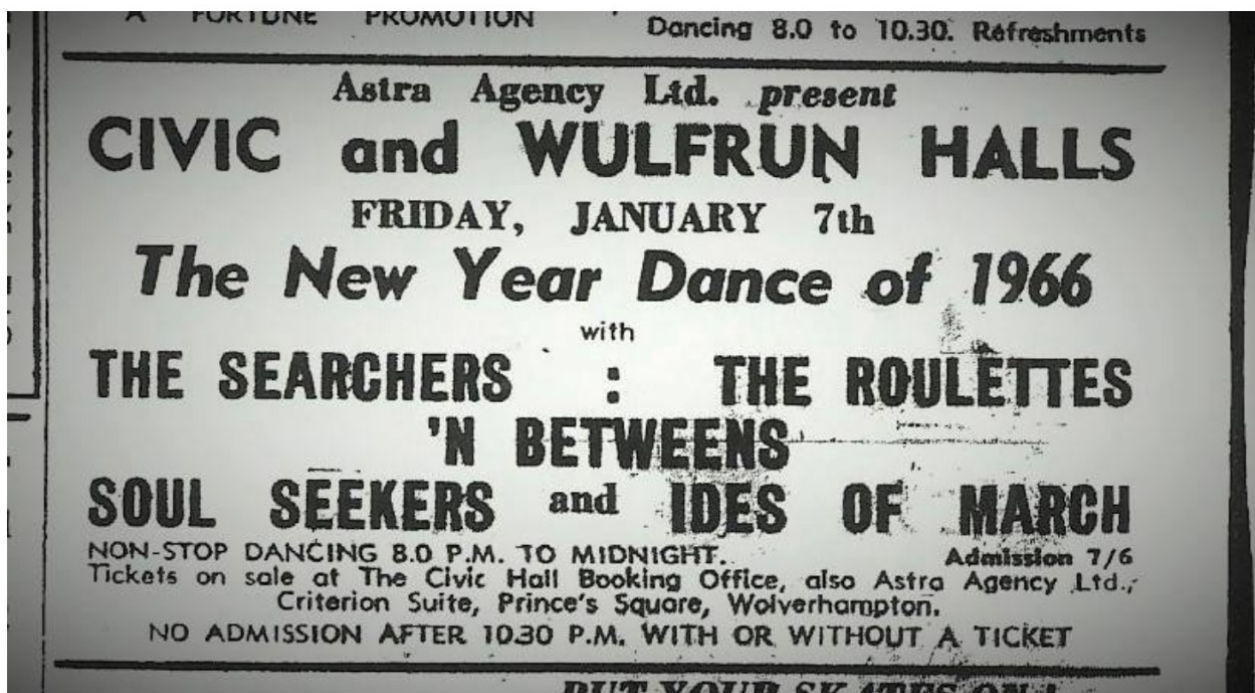
CW) That is true, and all three books came on within months of each other, much to the amusement of my grandchildren.

DW) After you got married and started a family, I presume you lost contact with a lot of people and your opportunities to attend concerts were limited. Did you keep in contact with Russ and Bob after they joined Argent?

CW) Oh yes, I saw Argent in a small venue in Birmingham, then at Wolverhampton Civic Hall, and in Stafford.

DW) Argent were represented by Astra Agency based in Wolverhampton. Were you instrumental in having anything to do with that?

CW) No, that was years later, but I did get The Roulettes a gig at Wolverhampton Civic, January 1966. I pestered Maurice to book them. The Searchers were top of the bill, The Roulettes next, then the 'N Betweens.



This was a few weeks before Jim Lea joined, so it was the old line-up. Peter and Fred travelled back to London, but Russ, Bob and Mod stayed over. Sandra and I met them next day, and we all went to the gig in West Bromwich on the bus.

DW) It was presumably a special party night when Argent played in Wolverhampton. Did you get to meet them on any such gigs?

CW) All of them. At the Civic, Sandra and I left our husbands in the bar and went up to see Russ and Bob in the dressing room. Priorities!

DW) After Russ left Argent, and Bob remained, did you follow their separate careers in the ensuing years? One memorable Wolverhampton gig was the first official outing of spin-off band Phoenix featuring Bob at The Lafayette. That was September 24th, 1976. It was the drought year and after the gig a fierce thunderstorm broke out around midnight bringing the long dry Summer to a final end. It was memorable in that I drove there by car but returned home by train, after my car had an argument with a transit van on the flooded roads and lost!

CW) I was very, very pregnant with my second daughter. However, my then husband went and put Bob on the phone to me.

DW) When family life takes hold its understandable that you drift away from people over time. You met Bob Henrit by chance in 2001 and he remembered you.

CW) I had recently reconnected with Don Powell (my mates went off to be rock stars, we lost contact in the 80s). He asked me to go to see him at Music Exhibition at the NEC where Slade 2 were playing. He then said he had spoken to an old friend of mine on the phone. Bob Henrit. I said if you speak again, say hello, although he probably won't remember me. At the NEC after the gig, I asked Don if he had spoken to Bob again. Don said, "Oh Caz, he's here!" Bob was on the drum stand. I went and stood watching him. He turned round, stared, and said "Oh I know that face!". We had a catch up and he gave me his contact details and said please keep in touch. I DIDN'T, until I emailed him when Adam died. I didn't think he meant it!!

DW) At the reunion gig in 2010 at Robin 2 in Bilston, Russ spotted and recognised you. That must have been a real thrill after such a long time?

CW) I had kept in touch with Bob and he said that Russ and Mod remembered me. I had also seen Bob a couple of times too. He asked me to take my Adam bag to Robin 2 (that is all my Adam stuff from teenage days) so that they could look through it. As per my history of being cheeky, I walked up to the Green Room, the band were at the far end and Bob had his back to me, but as I walked in, Russ said "She's here Bob. Carole is here!", and he came over and hugged me. It was amazing. We spent ages delving into the Adam bag, Jim Rodford and Rod Argent must have wondered what sort of nutcase I was!



Left: Poster outside the Robin 2, Bilston. Spot the spelling mistake! Right: Russ Ballard chats with fans after the show.

DW) I think you met newsletter editor Sue Robinson at the Bilston gig. Actually, I met both of you, but I doubt you'd remember. We were all in awe of everything that was going on. How did you become involved with the Facebook page?

CW) Bob and Russ brought Sue over to introduce us to each other at the 2012 gig. They said you girls will have so much in common. Well, it turned out we were both at Abbey Road for the Faith Alive recording, and from comparing notes, probably standing next to each other. We have become really good friends and are in contact most days. As for Facebook, it had been dormant for a while, Christian asked me if I would take it on, so I did!

DW) You are clearly as enthusiastic today as you were in those early days of following Adam.

CW) I sometimes think it's all a dream, but no, this is my life!

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month's Russ Ballard Cover Quest offering is brought to us by a rock band that hailed from the North Riding of Yorkshire. All the way from the picturesque seaside town of Scarborough, meet **Little Angels**.

No.29



Young Gods (CD, Album) album cover

Love is a Gun *by* **Little Angels**

Formed in 1985 in Scarborough, England from the remnants of a school band called Zeus, **Little Angels** started life as **Mr Thrud**, wisely changing name two years later. Band members included vocalist **Toby Jepson**, bass guitarist **Mark Plunkett**, **Bruce Dickinson** (no, not THAT one) on guitar, his brother **Jimmy Dickinson** on keyboards. Drummer **Dave Hopper** was replaced early on by **Michael Lee**, the latter passing away in 2008 at just 39 years of age.

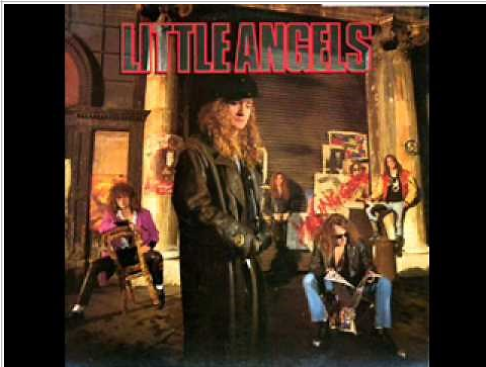
Between 1987 and 1993, **Little Angels** released six albums, the third of which, **Young Gods**, released in March 1991, featured two tracks that were co-written by **Russ Ballard** with **Toby Jepson**. Featured here is **Love is a Gun**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kg8s2v2q-3E>



[Love Is A Gun](#)

Provided to YouTube by Universal Music Group
Love Is A Gun · Little Angels
Young Gods© 1991 Polydor Ltd. (UK)
Released on: 1991-01-01
Producer: James "Jimbo" Bar...
www.youtube.com

I did mention there were two, so now you are curious. The other song is called **Juvenile Offender** and listen to it here. It starts off a little tame, but do not be fooled. Russ doesn't do tame! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEafUarc6Vg>. Two great songs by a great rock band that are sadly no more.



[Little Angels-Juvenile offender](#)

Little Angels-Juvenile offender (1993)
www.youtube.com