



Our readers are all over the world from the USA to Japan and from Finland to New Zealand. They are all ages. We realise that a lot of you will know little about our friend, Peter Thorp, who sadly lost his life on Saturday 2nd January. Peter was one of our very own Fab Four, The Roulettes, and one of Russ's closest friends. So, on behalf of those of us who go back as far as The Roulettes, and there are a lot of us, and those who met Pete at the RB Experiences we enjoyed, I make no apology for making this newsletter a Peter Thorp and Roulettes special. Even if you don't know Pete, have a read through the tributes and you will realise what a great and lovely man he was.

Best wishes

Sue

REST IN PEACE

1944 - 2021



FROM RUSS

I would like to wish everyone, not only a Happy New Year, but may it be Safe and Peaceful.

It's good to know the vaccines are being administered and that each day we're closer to the hugs and kisses that I for one took for granted....[I wonder how long that will take? - or will we ever get back to that?] Being a hugger, I was always surprised that not everyone likes physical contact, some limit hugging to family, some to friends and family....me, I hug everybody....it seems to energise me. Oh, well, we'll see!

2021 didn't start well for loved ones and friends of Pete Thorpe. Pete was a member of The Roulettes, as were Bob Henrit, Mod Rogan and myself....The four of us backed Adam Faith from 1963 - 1966. The Covid - 19 virus took our dear friend a week or two ago. Bob and Mod have both offered excellent tributes to Pete in this newsletter, so, I'll just say he was always great to be with, inspiring to play with, oh, and he possessed absolutely no ego....Looking back to the sixties when Pete and I sat centre stage playing instrumentals to a family audience, Pete announced the tune...."We'd like to present two guitars in perfect harmony". After playing 'A Theme From A Summer Place' we'd get back to the dressing

room and I'd say to Pete, "I think your B string was a bit flat, Pete". He'd look at me and say, "I was just thinking your B was just a little sharp".....That was as big as our disagreements ever became.....He was magic.

Please Stay Safe, we've come a long way and your vaccine is in sight. Be with you next month....

*Love,
Russ xxx*

FROM JOHNNY "MOD" ROGAN

Peter Thorp was the original guitarist for The Roulettes in the fabulous sixties. He was a great musician and a great person. Peter joined Adam in 1961, when the band was formed. It was another two years before Pete, Russ, Bob and I came together as a unit.

Peter was the leader of the band who took responsibility for booking hotels etc when we were touring. On one occasion he forgot to book us into somewhere and we ended up sleeping in police cells for the night. He also got us sponsors with companies to advertise their gear. We used Vox amplifiers for example. Bob's description of Pete says more or less everything true of him.

Adam didn't drink alcohol or mess with drugs in any way so we were also under his good influence. There were occasions when we would have a couple of drinks at parties and such like. There were lots of girls at the parties. Pete fancied one girl and immediately fell in love, as he did. He had been to Martial Arts classes with Adam the previous year during the Bridlington season. When Pete came back into the party after a pee break, one of us was snogging his new love. He immediately took the pose of Bruce Lee and said, "Unhand that girl, I have got to warn you I am an exponent of the Martial Arts and I cannot be responsible for my actions". He then struck the door of our bungalow (Peter Sellers style) and his fist went through the door. Everybody p****d themselves laughing except Pete. We still laugh about the party all these years later.

Another funny experience with Pete was..... We were booked to perform at The Golden Rose of Montreux Festival in Switzerland in 1967. We took a plane from

Heathrow and during our flight Peter went to the loo. When he came back, he was wearing a false moustache, which wasn't a very good one (to enhance his image). We all doubled up laughing again (except Pete). He kept taking it off because it itched a lot. The moustache featured quite a lot on the tour. We all had a turn wearing it.

We were only together in The Roulettes for a few years but we often said at our yearly reunion dinners that we were lucky to be together for 57 years, which was much longer than a lot of groups.

THANKS FOR YOUR FRIENDSHIP, PETE.

Love Mod xxx

Mod has shared with us, in the link below (with Russ and Bob's approval), some personal photos taken in their hotel when they went to Montreux. If you look carefully, you can see the moustache pop up in a few of them. Now, this looks like a lot of fun!

https://share.photomyne.com/share?u=28F0274A-6CC5-485D-B4B8-A9CAC30D9012&s=3fd288aa-993f-410d-b5c5-c103fa38b92b#?p=Photo632055085174_90-124-679-124-90-957-679-957

FROM BOB HENRIT

Peter Thorp 25th May 1944 - January 2nd 2021 RIP

My first sight of Peter was when I was sitting at my drums on the stage at Bristol Hippodrome in May 1962 where we were getting ready to 'top and tail' a bunch of songs like "What do you want", "Poor me" and "When Johnny comes marching home". This was just prior to me taking part in my very first week in Variety and my first time to share the stage with someone who was about to have a profound effect on us Roulettes - jointly and severally.

We were to be backing Adam Faith who I also met for the very first time. He was surprisingly both a diminutive person yet was also a much larger-than-life character who was to take over the next part of all of our lives.

Thorpy had been in Adam's group called The Roulettes for some time and Peter, soon to be known to us as Thorpy,, was their de facto leader. He had been in the band for a while backing Adam (soon to be known to us as 'Tel'). The original guys in that particular bunch of Roulettes were friends from Sutton High School for Boys. Things changed in a short time and Peter's schoolmates drifted away leaving space for a new bass player and a drummer. Johnny Rogers (my brother in law to be) was the bass player and he rowed me in to join them on drums along with a sax-player named Alan Jones who sometimes over-blew his instrument and consequently rejoiced in the nickname 'honk'

There's a nice little story about Thorpy's surname:

The band, the management and the record company always spelled it with an 'e' at the end like Jeremy Thorpe; but it didn't end in an 'e' at all. Someone made a mistake at the beginning of his time with Adam and Peter was never able to correct it! It wasn't until our 55th anniversary gig that he spilled the beans and told us the whole story.

In a band you simply have to love each other although it took us half a century to admit it - and hug one another and even (gasp!) kiss one another on the cheek. Being in a band, or perhaps we were still called a group in the sixties, was like being in a large sometimes unruly family. We travelled the world together; on trains, boats, planes and vans and during the rest of the time made lots of music together. We even slept together in theatrical 'digs' although to the best of my memory we thankfully didn't share beds! With Thorpy we once put to the test the old theatrical adage that if you can't find a hotel, as a last resort the police will put you up in a cell. Oh no they won't! Comfy cells are for proper criminals, while hard upright kitchen chairs are for musicians who didn't get it together to book a room.

John Rogers was tragically killed in a crash on the A1 and his place was taken by Johnny 'Mod' Rogan whereupon we became to my mind the UK's busiest group. Believe it or not we would frequently do a session in the morning followed by a broadcast on a radio or a TV programme after lunch, followed by a gig in the evening. This went on until 1966 when we were invited by a French chanteur named Richard Anthony who had successfully covered ("Concrete and Clay") in Europe. He wanted us to fly around Europe with him in his plane and do a lot of gigs. How could we resist?

The Roulettes were privileged and with Thorpy we got to see the world. Our very first flight took us down-under to New Zealand for a tour which brought us back

through Hong Kong, where we played in the Town Hall before moving on to Manila through a very scary storm where we literally passed through thunder and lightning. Very, very frightening.

We also flew to Singapore where we shared tiffin with Noel Coward in his bungalow at the Goodwood Park Hotel; literally sitting at the great man's feet. It would have been an altogether more enjoyable experience had we not fallen asleep from jet lag as he regaled us with his stories! I know he never forgave us for this transgression because he mentioned the incident in his biography saying: The Roulettes were "horribly white, hideously skinny and horrendously loud".

We did a summer season in Bridlington and Peter went with Tel to Karate lessons just down the road in Scarborough. These turned out to be something which ultimately saved Thorpy's life. We were playing a gig in Weston-Super-Mare and as usual we Roulettes did 15 minutes or so before "the Turn" came on. The stage was semi-circular with a curtain running around it. Our announcement came "Will you welcome the Roulettes" and the flimsy curtains slid round and we were on. Thorpy and Mod were flanking Russell and both touched the mics and their guitars at the same time. There was a problem with the earthing and they both received a massive shock which lifted them off the ground like rockets. They lay there still until Tel, who'd been waiting in the wings for his entrance, ran on and started kicking the soles of their feet - hard. This was evidently something he and Thorpy had learned in their Karate class. Fortunately, it worked and their lives were saved.

When we were with Tel we did a few gigs for the British forces at military bases around the world one of these was at Hitler's hunting lodge outside of Hamburg and since we had a day off the unfortunate major, whose responsibility we were, made the mistake of asking was there anything we'd like to do? Quick as a flash Thorpy said we'd like to drive a tank! The next thing we knew five teenage guys with long hair were in uniform and driving Churchill tanks. And only one of us had a licence, or even knew how to drive. I vaguely remember one of the tanks had to go immediately to the workshop to be fitted with a new clutch!

Every week for quite some time we went to Hertford Street in Mayfair to record 'The Ever Ready Battery Show' for Radio Luxembourg. This necessitated learning songs for Tel each week and instrumentals for ourselves. We rose to the occasion with tunes like Exodus, Walk Don't Run and one the internet tells me we played called Carioca. (I can't even spell it, so please don't ask me how it goes.)

Just before the pandemic changed our lives forever Russell and myself did an interview with a Polish rock magazine and the guy we spoke to in RGB's conservatory asked how long we two guys had been together? When we told him 62 years he was suitably astonished and suggested we must really love one another? We exchanged glances and admitted we did, although of course we loved Thorpy, Mod, Jim and Rod in the same way, As I said, a successful group is really just like a large family with which you spend all your waking hours. Or in our case, a lifetime.

That said, we love you Peter Thorp and all the harmless fun we had when we were irresponsible teenagers and on our way to becoming all-round entertainers. So rest in peace Man and save us a place in the Celestial Choir. "God willing", as Adam used to say a lot, we won't be needing it for a while.

A LETTER FROM PETE'S SON

following the tributes on social media

Peter's wife Ann and I would really like to let everybody know just how incredibly grateful the whole family are for the tributes to Dad (Pete). It's so heart warming to hear how highly thought of he was in the music world as well as outside of it.

Pete was a talented lead and rhythm guitar rock and roll star in his younger years travelling the UK and the world with his band of Roulette brothers and grew into an amazing husband father and grandfather whilst still relentlessly submersing himself with music, past and present all the way through his life.

Dad (Pete) was a big personality with a huge zest for life and sadly he's left this world far too early, he still had so much more to give, which leaves us as a family and the enormous amount of friends he has so devastated.

We miss him greatly and always will but his music of course will live on forever x
All the best

James

VIDEO

Back in The Roulettes days, of course, there weren't any videos so it is very difficult to find live performances. Although we have no live visuals here (but there are lots of great photos), the performance is definitely live. I can vouch for

that as I (Sue) was there at the recording and so was Carole, who looks after Russ's Facebook page. Also there, were our readers Jan and Sandra. This is from Adam and The Roulettes' album, Faith Alive, which was recorded at Abbey Road. Also on vocals is Chris Andrews, who lots of you saw perform at the RB Experiences.

https://youtu.be/C6lt4xyl_yw



[Adam Faith & The Roulettes - Night Time Is The Right Time \(Live\)](https://youtu.be/C6lt4xyl_yw)

The Roulettes were a British rock and roll group formed in London in 1962. They were shortly recruited to play as the backing group to singer Adam Faith, in ...

youtu.be

PODCAST

Last month, Sven and Ian put out their podcast with Peter. We had it here in the newsletter but, in case you missed it or would like to listen to it again, here is the link. The podcast will stay on Russ's website permanently. Russballardmusic.com/podcast.html

ROULETTES ON FACEBOOK

EDDY BONTE

Have a look at the Roulettes Facebook page, capably looked after by Eddy Bonte. <https://www.facebook.com/theRoulettesUK>

Eddy has a wealth of information about the band.

He has written...

"Peter Thorp (° 25 May 1944) passed away unexpectedly on Saturday 2 January. Lead and rhythm guitarist Peter Thorp was the only Roulette to be a member from the very first till the very last day – but he was first and foremost a wonderful person who was always ready to help, who trusted me with personal memorabilia after just meeting twice, who went the extra mile to satisfy my obsession with this iconic band. He was the first to stress the relativity of what

The Roulettes had achieved and the last to claim any special role in those seven years on the road and in recording studios, radio and tv shows."

FROM DAVE WILLIAMS

PETER THORP REMEMBERED

Little has been written in the newsletter about the history of **The Roulettes**. It has been on my list of "to dos" since enjoying their reunion performances at Ware. The truth is, I know relatively little about them. Sadly, guitarist **Peter Thorp**, the only original member, died at the beginning of this month, causing great shock and sadness among newsletter readers and devastation to Peter's family and friends, including of course Russ, Mod Rogan and Bob Henrit. It is some comfort that Peter got to share his life with us via Ian and Sven's podcast recently. None of us at the time could ever have imagined that he would soon be taken from us. With the permission of **Eddy Bonte**, surely the world's most knowledgeable person on The Roulettes, I have assembled some words to provide an insight into the history of The Roulettes and the key role that Peter played. Here goes:

Peter Thorp was born in Merton Park, near Wimbledon, on May 25th, 1944. His father was a promising violinist, gaining a position with one of the philharmonic orchestras, only to lose it after admitting he suffered from hearing problems, despite these not affecting his musical ability. Naturally, he was devastated at losing this opportunity, which possibly explains why he was quite supportive towards his son when opportunity came his way. His mother was a little sceptical, as mothers often tend to be. She could play the piano, so there were already strong musical influences within the Thorp household.

Like many pro musicians, Peter started his journey with piano lessons as a child, in his case at 12 years old. Like many true musicians, his teacher spotted that he was playing by ear rather than working to 'the dots', and his parents received the familiar letter from the piano teacher informing them that it was pointless proceeding to invest in lessons. The truth is, as was the case with Russ, Peter had an ear for notes and keys, and had the ability to play without relying on the use of sheet music. By this time, thanks to Bill Haley, Chuck Berry and others, British musicians were becoming influenced by American rock and roll, with electric guitar featuring increasingly. Suddenly teenage boys across the country wanted to be Elvis and, in the process, many switched their attention to guitar rather

than piano. Peter took this path, and began to study the playing of Scotty Moore, Chet Atkins, and James Burton.

Attending Sutton High School for Boys, Peter started playing with other like-minded friends, which led to the formation of his first band **The Strangers**. By this time Peter was 16 years old and about to leave school. The Strangers worked the local youth clubs, fetes and other venues, the other members being Martin Blackwell (bass), Tony Burgess (rhythm guitar) and Ron Cosgrove (drums). Peter took on the role of lead guitarist, playing a Fender Stratocaster copy guitar through a Watkins amp. On leaving school Peter joined the General Electric Company based in Kingsway, London as a trainee salesman. With Kingsway being only a short walk from Covent Garden, Peter spent most of his lunch breaks walking around the music shops based in and around Denmark Street, an area known to this day as Tin Pan Alley. Around this time, the band became friendly with Lesley Perrin, Cliff Richard's PR agent. In May 1961 Leslie came to see The Strangers and offered them an opportunity to record a song called Well I Ask You, which he assured them was a definite hit record. A demo was duly recorded only for Eden Kane to record and release the same song before them, taking away their chance.

Shortly afterwards, Evie Taylor and Colin Berlin approached Leslie when they were trying to find a touring band to back **Adam Faith** as a replacement for the John Barry Seven. **The Strangers** were auditioned on Friday 14th August 1961 at Regent Sound Studios on Denmark Street. They were told not to wander far, as a quick decision would be made. They were only around the corner when they learned that they had passed the audition and next day they found themselves in Shepherds Bush for suit fittings and haircuts. Ron Cosgrove could not commit as he had a promising career ahead of him in electronics. He was replaced by John Roberts. Their last appearance as The Strangers was at Sutton Public Hall on Saturday 16th September 1961. The next day, Sunday 17th September, they became **The Roulettes** and backed Adam Faith at the Royal Albert Hall.

It is often stated in musical records and the media that The Roulettes were formed to enable Adam to compete with the new trending beat music, in particular Merseybeat. Peter was adamant that this is untrue. The Roulettes preceded the beat boom, and it would be almost two years later when **The Beatles** had their first chart topping single **From Me to You** in April 1963. Peter said that when The Roulettes began working with Adam, Merseybeat was a local underground phenomenon at best, with most Liverpool bands having to earn a living in Hamburg, Germany, rather than their hometown. The truth is that Adam was still riding high as a successful singer and was immersed in variety theatre

work and summer seasons. He was not even considering a 'new direction'. On the variety show circuit, the band would be required to back other artists, from trumpet players and comedians to penny whistlers and all manner of strange novelty acts.

There were many changes of personnel before the definitive Roulettes line-up came together. Adam was not satisfied with the sound and Jeff Morley, a drummer from South Wales, was brought in to replace Roberts. Adam also decided to reduce the line-up to a trio, Tony Burgess being the casualty. This trio made up of Peter Thorp, Martin Blackwell and Jeff Morley would make regular TV appearances on programmes such as **Crackerjack** and **the Billy Cotton Band Show**. In fact, this line-up played the Gaumont Theatre in Derby, my hometown, on 11th February 1962. I was only 6 years old at the time, so unfortunately, I was not able to witness it, but there was a report in the local newspaper. Shortly afterwards Adam, still unhappy, decided to replace Martin Blackwell. Jet Harris had left The Shadows around the same time, so both bands were looking at the same bass players as replacements, **John Rogers** and **Brian 'Licorice' Locking**. Initially **Locking** was going to join **The Roulettes** with **Rogers** joining **The Shadows**. Locking actually performed one or two gigs with The Roulettes. However, Brian Locking ended up joining Cliff's Shadows with John Rogers joining Adam's Roulettes. John had previously played with Cheshunt band The Hunters, who were an established instrumental band. Not only was he a talented player, but he also had experience as a writer and producer, working with former **Tony Meehan**. The band was augmented with a saxophonist, Alan Jones.

With Jeff Morley returning to South Wales, there was a vacancy for a drummer. New recruit John Rogers recommended **Bob Henrit**. John was engaged to Bob's sister at the time. Bob had been playing with Cheshunt's **Buster Meikle and the Day Breakers**, which also featured brothers **Roy and Russ Ballard** on organ and guitar, respectively. Bob officially joined The Roulettes in early May 1962. In the meantime, Alan Jones, who had little to do, left the band after only a few dates, and Adam brought in Henry 'Norman' Stracey on rhythm guitar and keyboards, restoring them to a four piece. Up to this point The Roulettes were a touring band. In the studio Adam was still utilising John Barry and his Orchestra, but this was to change. The latest line up of Peter Thorp, John Rogers, Bob Henrit and Henry Stracey at last provided the band that Adam was looking for and studio work would soon follow.

A further line-up change took place in March 1963. Henry Stracey left the band. Nobody seems certain about the reason for his departure, which remains subject to speculation. He went on to become a fireman. His replacement was 17-year-old **Russ Ballard**. Adam loved his cool appearance, and he was allegedly

recruited without an audition. The final line-up was enforced when tragedy struck. **John Rogers** died on 5th May 1963 in a road accident whilst travelling to Sunderland in the North East of England for a week of variety. He was a passenger in the van transporting the gear. The other members of the band had travelled by train. With an obligation to fulfil a string of dates, a replacement was required quickly. Auditions were held locally and as a result, 19-year-old **John 'Mod' Rogan**, from Hartlepool band The Hartbeats, joined the band. For the next four years, until the break-up, this line-up of The Roulettes would remain unchanged.



Peter Thorp second from left

Given the number of personnel changes throughout the life of the band, the fact that Peter was the only member that was there at the beginning and remained to the very end, demonstrates Adam Faith's belief in Peter's ability. Together with Mod, Peter had co-written two songs that feature on The Roulettes **Stakes and Chips** LP, **Find Out the Truth** and **I Can't Think of Anyone Else**. After the band broke up in 1967, Peter resumed his interest in songwriting, signing a contract with Southern Music. Two of his songs were recorded by **Simon De Lacey**. **Baby Come Back to Me** backed with **Goodbye Love** was released in the UK by Spark Records on 23rd February 1968. Simon De-Lacey was in fact a group as opposed to a person, assembled for this release. Peter featured on lead guitar with Chris Jennings on lead vocals. Chas De Lacy added acoustic guitar and the rhythm section consisted of **John Ford** on bass and **Richard Hudson** on drums. Ford and Hudson would continue to perform together, achieving huge success with **The Strawbs**, **Hudson Ford** and **The Monks**. The two recordings also featured keyboard player Barry Kingston on Mellotron, which was a new instrument at the time. In addition to a UK release, the single was also released in Germany, Italy, Belgium and The Netherlands, and has since been re-released on various CD compilations.



<https://youtu.be/EMzt8A2rpMI>

<https://youtu.be/iSTaLsfqNqs>

Whilst Peter would not go on to achieve the same songwriting notoriety as fellow Roulette **Russ Ballard**, he was a key figure in the band. Adam Faith wanted

only the best, and as stated, the fact that Peter was ever present in the line-up from beginning to end, is testament to his qualities.



Adam Faith alongside his faithful ever-present guitarist Peter Thorp

Those Russ Ballard fans who were present at the **Russ Ballard Experience RBE1** and RBE2 shows in Ware, were fortunate to see the definitive line-up on stage. Both Peter and Mod clearly loved being back on stage, and Russ and Bob were clearly enjoying playing alongside them once again. Hopes were high that we might get to see this fab four in the future but following the sad news that broke at the start of 2021, we have been robbed of this opportunity. Even more sad is the fact that there will be an empty seat when the guys have their traditional annual get together for a restaurant meal. Rest in peace Peter and condolences to your family and friends.

Many thanks to **Eddy Bonte** for allowing us to source information from his website. Please support Eddy by visiting his Roulettes pages. <https://www.eddybonte.be/just-good-music/pop/the-roulettes/>

ROULETTES RADIO

Eddy Bonte has his own radio station in Belgium. On Monday 4th Jan he devoted the whole day and evening, 11am until 3am, to Adam Faith and Roulettes tracks from The Roulettes' album, Stakes and Chips and the Adam Faith albums which featured The Roulettes, On The Move and Faith Alive. The two hour programme was on repeat during those times. It was repeated on Wednesday 6th Jan, 11am until 11pm. Eddy uploaded the programme to Mixcloud so it could be heard again. Unfortunately, Mixcloud would accept only half of it so here, for those who didn't hear it or would like to hear it again, is the link to the second hour. Lots of brilliant tracks.

[https://l.facebook.com/l.php?
u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mixcloud.com%2FRadio_68%2Fthe-roulettes-3-
albums-part-2](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mixcloud.com%2FRadio_68%2Fthe-roulettes-3-albums-part-2)

Eddy also sent me this link to a previous programme. There is a lot of good 60s music here but, especially, at around 13 minutes in, Eddy plays Pete's pre-Roulettes band, The Strangers. They recorded a demo of "Well I Ask You" with an instrumental, co-written by Pete. on the other side. Well I Ask You was released by Eden Kane.

[https://l.facebook.com/l.php?
u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mixcloud.com%2FRadio_68%2Fthe-roulettes-tree-
roulettes-adam-faith-chris-andrews](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mixcloud.com%2FRadio_68%2Fthe-roulettes-tree-roulettes-adam-faith-chris-andrews)

FESTIVE QUIZ ANSWERS

From Dave

Festive Quiz Level 2 Answers - Correction

I wish I could say it was a deliberate mistake, but sadly it was a case of a momentary lapse of concentration. When Sue recently posted out the two sets of answers, I wrongly credited Gogmagog with recording Riding with the Angels. It was actually the British rock band Samson that I was thinking of. Must be an age thing. Anyway, I might have got away with it but for our good friend and RB expert Roland Herzog. He correctly pointed out my error, adding that Bruce Dickinson also recorded Riding with the Angels. Quite so. To make amends, I bring you yet another version by Los Angeles power rockers Heretic. [https://
www.youtube.com/watch?v=AC5ec2UDZJY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AC5ec2UDZJY)