



December 2021

A big welcome to our new readers.

All too quickly we have reached the last newsletter of the year. This year has flown by all too quickly and some of us haven't actually done much! A big thank you to all those of you who have contributed to the newsletter. We always love to hear from you. A special thank you to Dave Williams, without whom this newsletter would be completely different. Thank you, Dave, for all your hard work.

Dave has summed up the year for us and hinted at his festive puzzle. Not a quiz this year but a wordsearch. Watch out for it coming in a separate email.

Let's all keep our fingers crossed that 2022 will be more normal, less scary and much healthier and that gigs and tours can get going again. Have a very Happy Christmas!

Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

Hi, All, I hope you're feeling well and not letting the Covid/Omicron news bulletins get to you....Actually, it's hard not to let the Covid/Omicron get to you. One week we get good figures on infections, etc...the next, it's another variant and it infects twice then three times faster than Delta. I try to be grateful for the good stuff that that I've heard - [That's less publicised] - Like, the pill that Pfizer have developed that is, apparently, 90% effective, also, on the 'Today' BBC Radio program I heard a scientist say soon we will have more effective vaccines, which really made me feel better. We will get through and life will be buzzing again....One good thing about being a songwriter is...I find the 'Up' and the 'Down' aspects of life good for themes in a song. Problem with me, is, I tend to lean toward the 'Down' aspects - I don't know why? I have written happy-ish tunes, however, they're certainly outnumbered by the 'Downs' - I think a sad lyric with an up tempo feel works just as well as a slow groove. Maybe when we're completely through the dreaded Covid...I might become all happy and write lots of dance tunes...Ha Ha!!!

However, you're spending Christmas, I wish you the best one ever, and also a Brilliant, healthy and happy 2022 ,

*Lots of Love,
Russ xxx*

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

I ended last November memories having played a talent contest. It was nerve wracking and we didn't win but it left me wanting to do more gigs.....

Eventually, a couple of the guys left the group when they started dating girls - Rick was one, now we needed a singer and my friend Norman Jago said he would sing. He'd never sung 'live' before but he was good. Norman also had a friend, Bill Brown, and he became our bass player, the only problem was Bill had never played a bass, although he could play guitar. . We called in the group banker, my Dear Mum. She forked out another thirty three guineas to buy a small Framus bass. Bill was a smashing fella, always laughing and somewhat self-effacing, he soon became a really good player. The group was now Norman Eddy and The Imperials. Looking back, I don't know why we changed Norman Jago to Norman Eddy.....probably because we didn't think 'Jago' was rock and roll enough and Eddy was the name of two of our favourite artists of the day, 'Eddy Cochran' and 'Duane Eddy.

We started playing youth clubs and socials, usually for no money but all we wanted to do was play. One of the problems was we weren't old enough to drive so, dear old dad was recruited as roadie until Billy Wood came on the scene. Bill was eighteen, had a full licence - [or so he said] - Anyway, he had a van, a Thames seven hundredweight, he also liked us and our music.

About this time, 'The Parker Royal Five' were playing many gigs locally and I tried to see them when I could, although sometimes I was turned away at the door for being too young to be allowed in. After seeing the 'Parker Royal Five', I realised how good my group would have to be to reach their standard. After analysing our group, Norman and Bill thought maybe Roy G wasn't up to the standard of the great semi-pro drummers we were watching and I reluctantly agreed. I say reluctantly because he was a great bloke and a good friend. So, we thought - 'Who do we get in?' - Everybody agreed we should try to persuade Bob Henrit, who had developed into the best young drummer in the area, after giving up washboard with 'The Roulettes'. They played a local youth club Fridays where we also played. It seemed Bob liked our group and said he would join us. My brother Roy came to a gig with us, there happened to be an

upright piano and Roy played along with us, he sounded good...so, he was in.

NEW TRACKS

If you would like to hear the new track tasters as soon as Russ puts them out, you will have to keep an eye on his Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/RussBallardMusicOfficial> I will keep putting them on here, though. Here are two more, **Sleepwalking** and **Last Man Standing**.

<https://youtu.be/ZpXmFcjTG5w>

<https://youtu.be/CB-Ag445lw8>



[Russ Ballard - Last Man Standing](#)

A taste of a new album © 2021 Russell Ballard Ltd. Pictures © Sven Kramer

youtu.be

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Just been listening to Adam Faith's "Faith Alive" with The Roulettes & Chris Andrews. Could you ask Russ if he remembers the recording of it and who played and sang what - Harmonica, keyboards and the backing vocals particularly the one on Night Time Is The Right Time.

Russ: The keyboard (piano) was played by Chris. The harmonica was a Hohner Blues Harp and was played by me. The B.Vs were The Roulettes, (not The Raelettes doing the BVs), with Chris doing the Margie Hendrix part in the middle....We all loved that song, although I think we had too many beers on the night 🍷

Sue: For those who don't know this recording or to remind those who do, here is a link. https://youtu.be/C6lt4xyl_yw

AMATEUR HOUR

by Dave Williams

Well, I never. What do you make of this? https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=_VAIbBfapmM



[Debbie Harry & Miss Guy - New York Groove](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=_VAIbBfapmM) [YouTube](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=_VAIbBfapmM)

Debbie Harry and former Toilet Boys lead singer Miss Guy perform Ace Frehley's 1978 hit single "New York Groove" with a lesbian twist.

[m.youtube.com](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=_VAIbBfapmM)

Here we have Blondie's Debbie Harry and Miss Guy singing to a backing track of New York Groove. Miss Guy was a founder member of the strangely named New York Band The Toilet Boys, formed in 1995 for a one-off performance opening for Debbie and her band at Don Hill's, a rock club in New York City. Lead singer Miss Guy, who was also the house-DJ at the club, formed the band to fulfil a dream of playing a show with Ms Harry, one of his idols, just for one night. He put together a band specifically for the occasion, but when they gained a positive reaction from their audience, they decided to do more gigs.

OK, so Debbie is just letting her bleached hair down, but she is not an amateur I hear you say. True. How about this guy then? He is definitely feeling the New York Groove. Where better to perform to this song than New York's Brooklyn Bridge? <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=LJ58uVZm7KI>

David Fishel describes himself as a filmmaker / video-artist based in New York, and it would appear from his daveydanceblog website, that he has performed in many countries and cities throughout the World, including a stone's throw from me in my neighbouring city of Nottingham, UK. Over a 9-year period, David has filmed and posted around 190 videos, interrupted briefly in 2016 when he spent time recuperating from injuries to his left leg, left arm and neck after being struck by a car whilst cycling in Manhattan. Once again, it's good to see a Russ Ballard song included in his repertoire.

VIDEO OF THE MONTH

From Gordon Dickson

Gordon found this video from OGWT and sent it to the newsletter. I have seen another video of this song but I don't think I had seen this particular one before. Roger has a very familiar looking band here. On piano is friend of the newsletter, Dave Courtney. Enjoy!

<https://youtu.be/5mb8Q1ewk?list=RD5mb8Q1ewk>



Roger Daltrey - "Giving It All Away" The Old Grey Whistle Test (1973)

Roger Daltrey performing "Giving It All Away" on The Old Grey Whistle Test in 1973.

[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/5mb8Q1ewk)

PODCAST

Out on 1st December, the latest podcast from Sven and Ian of Team RGB is Part 2 with Steve Rodford, son of Jim. If you enjoyed Part 1, you will love this one, which is dedicated to the life of his father.

<https://www.russballardmusic.com/podcast.html>

RUSS'S MUSIC HISTORY

By Dave Williams

Well, the clock ticks towards the end of another year. I guess we can look back on 2021 with mixed feelings. We seemed to be making good progress in the battle with Covid, though as I write this, the Omicron variant is now with us and, here in the UK at least, our government is trying to encourage people to boost their immune system in the hope that we can offer some protection to our health service. At this stage we can't be 100% sure how the latest variant will affect our day to day lives, and will we continue to see further mutations of the

virus in future? Sadly, it looks like there might be an impact on those re-arranged Russ Ballard concert dates, but we don't know yet, so I guess we will have to keep our fingers crossed that the tours go ahead as planned.

What, with the corona virus and the recent COP26 climate change conference, it doesn't look as though we have too much to cheer about right now. But that's not true. It's not too late to reverse climate change if countries do what they've signed up to do and set an example for other countries to follow. We will overcome the corona virus given time, just as our ancestors overcame the plague and the Spanish flu. What really concerns me is the quality of leaders we have nowadays in the world. Politics aside, there seems to be a distinct shortage of peacemakers, and a lack of togetherness. With countries pointing weapons at each other, even if not firing them, it does make you wonder how we can ever join together in harmony to save our planet. Let's hope common sense prevails.

December marks the end of the newsletter year. Credit to Sue for keeping it going and cracking the whip when she needs to. Believe me, those print deadlines come around very quickly. Looking back across the twelve issues in 2021, aside from the April Fool prank where the holes from the holey guitar were claimed to be going up for sale on eBay, it was a real pleasure to be able to feature contributions from David Courtney and Leo Sayer, who individually spoke about their experiences of working with Russ in the early 1970s. It was equally satisfying to get to chat with Norman Jago, who was there at the very beginning of Russ's lifetime adventure in music. I cannot thank David, Leo and Norman enough for agreeing to participate. In parallel to this, Ian and Sven presented their own guest interviews in their podcasts, including John Verity, Bob Henrit, Steve Rodford, Mod Rogan and Peter Thorp from The Roulettes.

That brings us to the other side of the coin. We were shocked and saddened to have to report the passing of Peter in the January newsletter. This happened so soon after we'd been introduced to him through the parties at Ware and the podcast interview. We will always remember Peter with great affection.

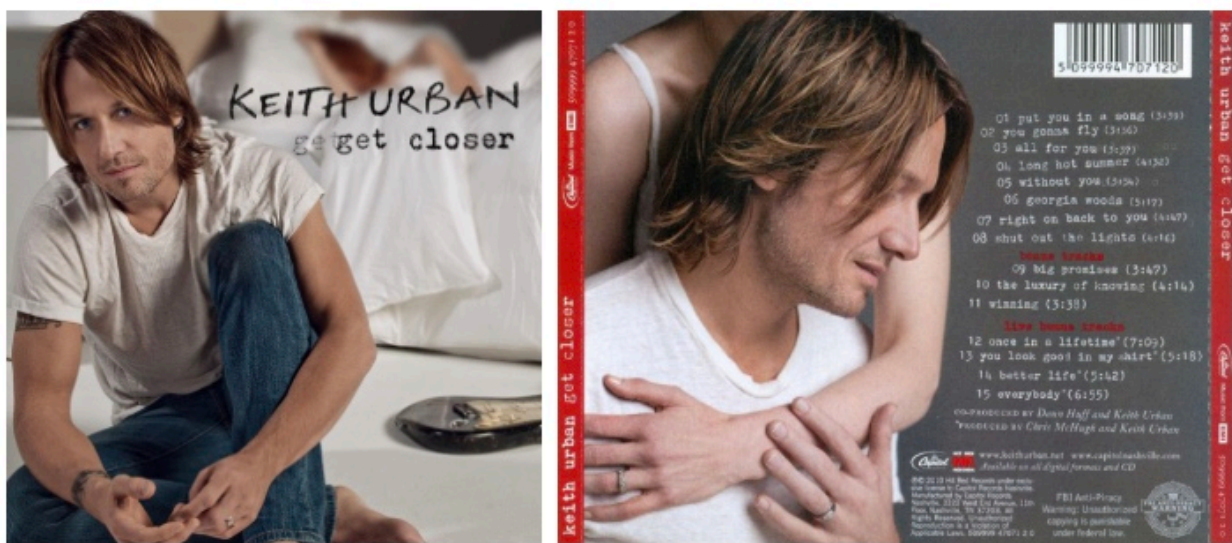
A new year beckons and there's so much more to bring you. I think I can speak for Carole, Sue, Ian and Sven when I say that we will be aiming to continue providing you with news and views and interviews in 2022 via the two Facebook pages as well as the newsletter. We've recently been treated to some terrific new song clips from Russ, so maybe we will get a new album release in 2022? That would be something to look forward to, and hopefully Russ will continue to share his 'life stories', which I don't know about you, but I'm really enjoying.

I hope you all have a great festive break and I've left you a little word puzzle to keep you occupied if it gets too cold to venture outside. There's some names on there that you might not be familiar with, however all but 6 of them have a connection with one or more of Russ's songs. Enjoy!!

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Here's a cover of an old favourite, this time given a country flavour. First released by Russ in 1976 and previously covered by Nona Hendryx of Labelle, in 1977 and Santana in 1981. This artist needs no introduction.

No.39



Winning by Keith Urban

Keith Urban, or Urbahn according to his birth certificate, was born on 26th October 1967. The Australian-American guitarist, singer and songwriter released his first album in 1991, producing a string of hits in Australia. He then moved to the United States a year later and formed a band called The Ranch. This band released only one album, but two singles taken from it made the US Billboard Country Music charts.

Urban released his first solo American album in 1999. It achieved platinum status in the US and set him on a path that would lead to massive success with a large catalogue of hit singles, albums and Grammy awards.

In 2010, Keith recorded his album **Get Closer**, which was released towards the end of that year. It featured four hit singles, the first, **Put You in a Song** reached No.2 in the US Billboard Hot Country Songs chart. The next three singles,

Without You, Long Hot Summer and **You Gonna Fly**, all went one better, reaching No.1 in the same listings.

Russ Ballard's **Winning** was not included on the original album, but it featured as a bonus track on the extended "Deluxe Edition".

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=huK1po3ypOo>



[Keith Urban:: Winning - with lyrics -](#)

Keith Urban's new song "Winning" is a bonus track Closer!" You can buy this when you get the deluxe version of Santana...

[m.youtube.com](#)