



(Header by Sven)

September 2022

Welcome to our new readers.

It is a time of great sadness for us here in the UK. Russ and Dave acknowledge the death of our Queen in this newsletter.

Did you go to Liege? We don't have a Phillippe in the newsletter list but we do have some Swedish readers. Was it you? 😊 Read on!

There are more gigs coming up.... in Portugal and the UK first. Germany later. Read what Russ has written about Liege and get your tickets....it will be fun!

Best wishes
Sue

THIS MONTH FROM RUSS

Hello my friends old and new....First of all I want to say how sorry I was to hear of the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth....What an amazing job she performed for so long....never putting a foot wrong. Looking forward to seeing King Charles taking her place....he'll do a great job, I'm sure.

August Diary.....Golden Age of Rock - Liege Belgium.

At the beginning of summer I had mail from a Belgian promoter called Bernard....He asked if I would be interested in taking part in a music festival in Liege, called 'THE GOLDEN AGE OF ROCK', it sounded like my kind of thing, so, I got in touch with my musician friends, Marc Rapson, Jos Henrit, Roly Jones and PJ Phillips to see if they were available on the 20th August. - Great, they were all free and said they were looking forward to it. I asked Bernard for more details, how long we would need to play. Would we need to bring equipment? - What other groups were booked? etc.....We would need to play for an hour....The festival would supply the drums, guitars and keyboards....We would need to fly to Brussels the night before and the promoter would supply the hotel and flight tickets, so, we were all systems go.

We flew "Lufthansa" the evening of Friday, 19th August. It was a short flight [about an hour]. When we arrived at Brussels Airport, it took two hours to get through Border Control. I don't know why, it seemed as though there might have been a 'Go Slow' situation as much of the time there was only one person checking passports. Anyhow, once we were through a lovely young woman employed by the festival introduced herself....She said, "I drive you to Festival" - "How long is the drive?" - "an hour", she replied...."Oh well", we said, that means we should get to the hotel about 10.15pm. We wondered if the restaurant would still be open at that time....Someone said, "As long as the bar's open". The journey took about an hour and indeed we could see there were plenty of people in the bar but first of all we had to sign in at reception - Paul, our tour manager, handed our passports to the woman at the desk. While we waited, a guy looked at me and said, "Russ Ballard". "Yes" I said....again he said, "Russ Ballard" and this went on for ten minutes....I asked his name, "Phillipe", he said he had followed me for years and appeared to know all my songs. Then after taking our cases to our rooms we decided to investigate the Sky Bar. It was on the tenth floor and only meant for the artists playing at the Festival, however, when we sat down to order drinks, Phillipe came over with four Swedish rock fans. One said, will you play "A Woman Like You?" "We haven't rehearsed that song", I said, "but I'll do it on my own if you would like to sing the chorus"....'Yeah!!' "Are you sure?" I said "Yeah" You Bet!! So, next evening, after 'The Heavy Metal Kids', then, 'Stray' PJ, Marc, Jos, Roly and I took to the stage and played an hour set to an enthusiastic crowd of rockers....and sure enough, I could see my Swedish friends in the middle of the auditorium...."Are You Ready To Sing With Us", I shouted. "Yeah" they replied - "Are You Ready To Sing?" "YEEAAHH". So, off we went in to no man's land, me not knowing if they knew the words....or if they even knew what I meant by Chorus....Anyway, music should be fun, so here goes.....I sang the first verse, then the pre chorus, "It won't take a minute to

talk it out, I'll make you believe me somehow" — "THERE AIN'T A WOMAN LIKE YOU - IN THE WORLD BABY CAN DO WHAT YOU DO, THRILL ME LIKE YOU DO - THERE AIN'T A WOMAN IN THE WORLD CAN START SUCH A FIRE THE WAY THAT YOU DO.....THERE AIN'T A WOMAN LIKE YOU" My Swedish friends and Phillipe were there right the way through.....Oh! great fun. You know, I think that's why musicians like us want to keep playing gigs after so many years.....in meeting people and talking with them you realise what music means in their lives.....My Swedish Friends and Phillipe, you made my weekend, Thanks!!

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

I ended last month's story with me taking over from Billy Kuy on guitar with The Outlaws at a venue and playing lead on 'Swinging Low' a beat version of 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot' and the band telling me I'd played it really well...I even played the wrong notes that were on the record.

September.....

Mike Berry and The Outlaws had a manager called Peter Yacwananda, he lived in Finsbury Park not far from Joe Meek's studio. He called one day and asked if I could do a session for The Outlaws. "Of course", I said....He told me it would be at Joe Meek's and he would pick me up from my mum and dad's house. We arrived at the studio and after climbing the stairs we walked into the studio to be met by Joe, who said I wouldn't need my amp., only the guitar. The strange thing was, the three of us were the only people there....the other members of the Outlaws were nowhere to be seen. Joe plugged my guitar directly in to his system....He asked me to play something. "What do you want me to play?", I said. "Anything", he replied. I played 'Trambone', which I'd perfected and when I finished, Joe came in to the studio from the control kitchen and said to Yac, "He'll do fine". Yac looked at me and said, "You've got the job in The Outlaws". I was there auditioning to be lead guitar player, to take Bill's place. I said, "I don't want it". They couldn't believe what I'd just said. Meek looked at Yac and said angrily, "What are you wasting my time for, Yac?" "WW... Well, I thought he'd want the job", Yac said.

Sometimes The Daybreakers backed Mike when The Outlaws couldn't make the gig....I don't know why they couldn't make the gigs, perhaps they were promoting their own singles. One gig was in Cirencester, Gloucestershire. The group that day were brother Roy, Bob Henrit, Chas Hodges, Mike and myself. Bob had started a job at Dunlop's in Waltham Abbey; he asked permission to

leave early that afternoon. With Roy driving his seven hundredweight Commer van, we packed drums, guitars and p.a. system, then Mike sat in the front next to Roy, and Chas sat in the back just behind Mike...Charlie's legs being long, he sat with his knees touching the roof...I sat opposite Chas, then Bob squeezed in and we drove the 130 miles to the Cirencester Town Hall to the show.

I'll let you know the outcome of the gig in October....Have a great month, my friends.

STUDIO VIDEO

Another treat from Russ and this one was a surprise. He is spoiling us. This is "I Know There's Something Going On", which was a big hit for Frida. This link will take you to Russ's Facebook page, where you will find it.

<https://fb.watch/fndugO-wYI/>



THE NEXT GIGS

Russ has a few gigs coming up. The next is in Estoril in Portugal on 30th September. Our newsletter friend, Emanuel, puts on the Portugal shows and they are big favourites and always a huge success. We have quite a few readers

in Portugal and the lucky ones will be able to see a fabulous show. There will be plenty of atmosphere, that's for sure.

Remember Minds
RUSS BALLARD
30 de Setembro
CASINO ESTORIL
SALÃO PRETO E PRATA
BRIAN SPENCE
CASINO ESTORIL CASCAIS TICKETLINE CIP

Then, after a very short break, Russ will be out in the UK for three shows. At the Wolverhampton show Russ will have Fugitive as his support and they will be playing the songs Russ has been working on with them recently. If you haven't

got your tickets yet, maybe get them as soon as possible, especially for Hull and Edinburgh, which have limited space. I know we have a number of our newsletter friends going to Edinburgh and Wolverhampton.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

In his last tour with Argent back in the 70's Russ announced it would be the last with the band. At the Theatre Royal Drury Lane fans held up banners pleading for him not to quit. Did he ever think twice about departing or did he always want to pursue a solo career?

Russ: *No, to be honest, there was so much I wanted to do...(I was writing a musical, which was exciting) also, I was desperate to get a group together - which is what I did...We toured America, playing Washington, Chicago, A week at The Roxy in LA, A concert in San Francisco and a week at The Bottom Line in New York. Then my wife had our first baby (Christian) and I didn't want to leave him - Karis was born and I just wanted to see them develop...lucky that I could write and earn a good living. Rod, Bob, Jim and I stayed good friends.*

Theatre Royal Drury Lane was a very moving night, there were many emotions inside me 😞 😊

Thanks for the question.

ARTICLE IN SONGWRITERS MAGAZINE

Songwriters Magazine put this article online on 22nd August to mark the anniversary of the release of Kiss's version of God Gave Rock And Roll To You. The article first appeared in the magazine in autumn 2020. We all know Russ's stories but they are always worth reading again.

https://www.songwritingmagazine.co.uk/how-i-wrote/god-gave-rock-and-roll-to-you-argent-russ-ballard?fbclid=IwAR0JE9J2qHqaywkr4-4tE5_-oHZk09Zv7kv-MuQx79YrCG9-u4G4oVfS-x8

HOW MANY SONGS?

Our friend, Markus Linten in Germany sent us this "chart". It is a list of the songs Russ has written, which have been recorded as far as this website has found. It is in German but, as I have already translated it, it appears to be coming up in English. If not, it is easy to get the translation. I think you will be amazed!

<https://www.offiziellecharts.de/suche/person-895>

Suche - Offizielle Deutsche Charts

Hier gibt's die Offiziellen Deutschen Charts in ihrer ganzen Vielfalt. Denn: Hier zählt die Musik.

FROM DAVE

End of a golden era

The clock had just turned ten minutes past noon on Thursday 8th September when my mobile phone pinged. I opened WhatsApp to see the following message from my sister. "Apparently there is a rumour going around Westminster that the queen has died. Friend of my mum's daughter works in an investigative journalism organisation. Who knows if it's true, though. Unlikely". It wasn't written by my sister; she was forwarding a message she'd received from a friend. Shocked at seeing this, my first instinct was to mention it to a couple of work colleagues, emphasising that it might not be true. A quick internet search then revealed many reports that the Queen had died several times over the last year or two, all hoaxes, and nothing to suggest the latest rumour had any element of truth. Within the next hour, reports were saying that Her Majesty was indeed unwell and immediate family had been summoned to Balmoral. Later in the evening I was at home watching TV when her death was announced.

My reaction was the same as most people's, shock, disbelief, numbness, and a realisation that Great Britain will never be the same again.

You don't need to hear about what made Queen Elizabeth II a great monarch, loved and admired throughout the World. By the time you read this, the media will have taken care of that, but, although I never actually met the Queen or any of the Royal family, it occurred to me that several times in my early working career, I did have a small connection with the Royal Mews at Buckingham Palace. The company I worked for at the time, manufactured and supplied coach paints. I was employed in Research & Development, and before I joined the company, they had been granted a Royal Warrant, 'a mark of recognition to people or companies who have regularly supplied goods or services to HM The Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh or HRH The Prince of Wales or their Households'. This meant very little to most of us at the company, but every now and then, when there was a royal marriage, a jubilee celebration or even just an annual trooping of the colour, I would be summoned to the boss's office. The Royal Mews would be sprucing up all the horse drawn carriages, and this required a quantity of gold paint. I was that man. Why was I that man? Basically, because it was a messy job that everyone else saw coming and managed to run away. I got lumbered, did it once, and that made me the 'expert'. It was neither research nor development. It was regarded as a chore. The quantities were small, hence it didn't warrant making it in the factory, so it was easier to produce it in the laboratory. It wasn't hard to make, but it required use of a very fine gold bronze powder, which would end up everywhere as you tried to disperse it into the clear lacquer. No matter how you tried to cover up, that gold coloured glittery powder found its way. In my nose, my ears, my hair, everywhere. It was a job I hated, and I hated it even more when one of our technical service guys actually got the prestigious job of delivering it in person to the Royal Mews. A few weeks later, I'd watch the gold carriages parading through London knowing I'd made that paint.

During my time at the company, my work saw me visit many of the most successful British companies including Roll Royce (cars) and JCB, and Her Majesty even visited our production site to cut the ribbon on a new £1m computerised production plant that was revolutionary at the time. I don't think I even got a glimpse. We were kept well out of the way, probably because the Directors feared we might let the side down with one of our legendary practical jokes that we were noted for. Honestly, as if!

There is one other memory though. On one occasion after my paint was delivered to London, our 'tech service' guy returned with a battered old tea tray. He presented it to the Managing Director and said that it belonged to Queen

Elizabeth the Queen Mother. She'd had it for years, treasured it greatly, but it had seen better days. With her birthday imminent, the Royal Mews asked if we could "do anything with it". After checking it wasn't April 1st, my reaction was the same as everyone else's, throw it away and buy a new one from Wilko. I'll never be an antiques expert, but that restoration was definitely a case of "I Don't Believe in Miracles".

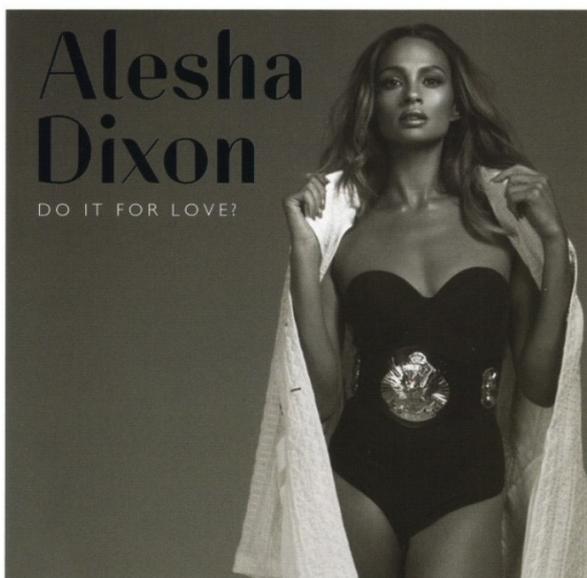
Unfortunately, all good things come to an end. I don't think any of us expected that the Queen's health would deteriorate so quickly after the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Following her passing, we are seeing footage, some of it for the first time, of her growing up. What a beautiful girl she was, even back then never without a smile, even when driving a truck in her army uniform. It's incredible that two days before her death, she summoned the strength to welcome Liz Truss at an audience at Balmoral Castle, inviting the newly-elected leader of the Conservative Party to become prime minister. She must have been in a lot of pain, but she did so with her ever present smile.

It's a very sad time for Britain and the Commonwealth at this moment, and it will likely be felt most when the state funeral takes place on Monday 19th September. Things may never be the same, but I believe we can take heart that her son King Charles III will prove to be a worthy successor to the throne.

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month I've chosen a song that is an original rather than a cover. I guess the title sums up how most of us are feeling right now.

No.48



Broken by Alesha Dixon

Here's a beautiful ballad from the lovely **Alesha Dixon**. It is taken from her 2015 album **Do It For Love**, and was co-written by Russ, his son Christian, Arno Spires and Alesha herself. Whilst the lyrics may not have any connection to the passing of our monarch, I guess most of us, particularly here in Great Britain, are feeling a little 'broken' right now.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5oL5Z3oKFcE>