



(Header by Sven)

## October 2022

A big welcome to all our new readers.

Russ has had four massively successful gigs in the last month. In Estoril, Hull, Edinburgh and Wolverhampton. There is lots of feedback from Estoril but not so much from Hull and Edinburgh, not surprising really as they are very small venues. Thanks to Elizabeth for her email from Edinburgh. There are some videos from Wolverhampton on Russ's Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/RussBallardMusicOfficial>

Russ will be setting off soon for Germany. The next newsletter will be a little later than usual and will be out after his tour.

Sue

### **THIS MONTH FROM RUSS**

*As some of you may know, I have some friends in a group from Liverpool, they're called 'Fugitive' and I've been involved recently, suggesting ideas for songs, after listening to their singer's stories...their singer being Michael Angel. We sat in an Indian restaurant and he made me laugh, talking about his earlier life, starting the band, gigs, girlfriends - [some of these stories made me cry*

*with laughter] I suggested he should turn some of these stories in to songs.....He smiled and said 'Yeah they could be turned in to songs''. Anyway, I'm glad to say, it's happened, they've recorded some and they sound great.*

*On 30th September my friends, [musicians, Roly Jones, PJ. Phillips, Marc Rapson, John Miller] and I played a show at **The Casino in Estoril, Portugal**. I had played there before in 2019, not long before Covid hit and that was an enjoyable experience, and this performance I thought had the edge. The auditorium was packed and the audience seemed to be ready to let go of two years of pent up energy. I've now played Portugal five times for my friend and promoter Emanuel Conclaves. Emanuel is a perfectionist, who, being helped by his lovely family and friends, puts on the best shows with amazing atmosphere, on and off stage. We're all looking forward to the next show....whenever Emanuel asks us....*

### ***Wrecking Ball Arts Centre, Hull***

*Earlier this month the band and myself played some shows in the UK. The first was on 8th October, it took place in Hull, at The Wrecking Ball Arts Centre, an interesting venue. On the ground floor there is a shop. On entering, the shop looked like an old fashioned record store, racks of vinyl albums. Then further along the shop there's racks of books for sale, then further still there's a bar selling coffee, tea and snacks and you can sit on comfortable chairs and sofas. Up on the next floor is the music venue. Probably two hundred chairs in rows before the stage....After a sound check we had an hour to kill before we took the stage for the show. The audience were very warm and their response made it a memorable night....I sat with Gary, the boss after the show and we had a good chat about his ambitions for the Centre. It's a great place, and his enthusiasm makes me feel he'll achieve them.*

### ***The Caves, Edinburgh 9th October***

*After a six hour drive to Edinburgh, we found The Caves, another great venue, with bags of atmosphere. The stage appeared to be below ground level and the dressing rooms one floor above. My friends in the group are great players and once they set up they can't wait to start 'sound checking' [Basically, playing to get a balance for the sound engineer] I stood close to the dressing room and looked down. Marc Rapson, [keyboards] played the solo of "Hold Your Head Up".... it was a similar solo to The Argent recording, although he had his own stamp....I thought it had the same brilliance as Rod's on the original recording. Roly Jones is the other guitar player and he has his own style when it comes to*

*sound checking....he lays in to a few power chords before doing some extremely fast runs, yes, another great player. PJ. Phillips has been in the band for six months and is known in musicians' circles as 'The Bass Players Bassist'. He really is accomplished in all styles. I guess you could call him the glue of the band. After getting the balance of the instruments they sang their backing vocal parts....From where I was looking they sounded amazing. I thought, I have a great band as well as four great friends.*

*It was lovely to see my friends Liam & Natasha and Greg & Ingrid in Edinburgh. They had all travelled some way to be there.*

*The support on the night was a singer, songwriter/musician Marley Davidson.....I stood watching Marley for fifteen minutes and thought, "This guy is amazing". A beautiful voice, [very original] with evocative songs that have all kinds of moods. Then as Marley's set developed and I was changing into stage clothes, people were coming in to the dressing room saying, "This guy's brilliant". If there's a record company out there looking for a star.....Go and see Marley....*

### ***KK's Wolverhampton,***

*I'd heard a lot about KK's and was looking forward to seeing the venue.....Fascinating place! An ex steel mill. One huge space and one smaller. I was telling my friends from the band 'Fugitive' about KK's, they asked if they could support us and I said, if the management said yes, that's fine with me, so, I stood and watched The Fugitive set and they put on a great show. Mike Angel's voice sounded very strong and they received a great ovation from the crowd. I had some guests in Wolverhampton....My dear friend, Carole Williams with her daughter, Jo, Dave Williams along with Michele and Adam.*

*The audience were amazing and sang along with us and it turned out to be very fulfilling. However, I could feel towards the end of the set I had a slight bug coming on....Next morning I woke feeling one degree under, cough, sore throat, head ache etc...and after testing found I was Positive for Covid....*

*Thanks one and all for coming to see us.....I hope you enjoyed it as much as us.....  
NOW FOR GERMANY! Starting in Munich - November 1st - I look forward to seeing my German friends again.*

*Lots of Love,*

*Russ x*

## **RUSS - LIFE STORIES**

*Hello My Friends. Here's more of my autobiography .....Summer 1961,*

*The Imperial Hall - [where my dad ran dances all those years ago] still had groups playing there regularly, although in 1961 the music was now very different. Local rock groups played sometimes with the best known artists in the world - Artists like Little Richard, who I loved. Also there was the cream of UK talent, like Joe Brown, who impressed me with great show, singing and playing guitar. In fact, he played 'Hava Nagila' with the guitar behind his head, this was four years before Jimi Hendrix became famous doing the same thing. Screaming Lord Sutch played there many times. He had a great show and a good band, The Savages, who preceded The Alice Cooper Show by nine years. Then regularly Neil Christian and The Crusaders, with a young guitar player called Jimmy Page, who, apart from playing well, looked great on stage. It was on one of those nights I saw a beautiful looking girl, she was small with short hair....on that night she was walked home by a boy I knew. I thought I'd like to get to know her and only a week or so later, as I sat next to Roy in the Commer van, I spotted her and gave her my best, moody, yet shy James Dean smile and would you believe it, she smiled back. We stopped and she came over and we talked, I don't remember much about the conversation but I do remember she said her name was Margaret. We started seeing each other two and three days a week. Looking back, I think she was my first real Love.*

*In 1961, the great drummer, Tony Meehan left The Shadows. I remember Roy saying how disappointed he felt. Tony was a bit of a hero of mine and we often recalled how, when we played with Cliff and The Shadows at The Regal Edmonton, Tony, who was a star, approached me and said "I really like your group and I can get you a deal at Decca because recently I became a consultant for them" [Basically, a talent scout]....it never happened but we became good friends some years later.*

*Then a year after Tony walked away from The Shadows, Jet Harris left. He and Tony joined forces and they had a few big hit instrumentals. A strange sequence of events occurred - Licorice Locking, who was playing bass for Adam Faith, left to replace Jet in the Shadows - My friend, John Rogers, left The Hunters to join Adam Faith's group....We all felt good for John. Then one day we received a phone call from Bob Henrit who said he was leaving The Daybreakers because he'd been offered the job as drummer in Adam Faith's backing group. Johnny didn't think the drummer in Adam's group was strong enough and suggested Bob. It wasn't very surprising as John had been engaged*

*to Bob's sister, Pat, for five years. Anyhow, Bob was good enough to play with anybody.*

*Johnny leaving The Hunters was a blow for them and they decided to disband. When John suggested to Adam that Brian Parker - [lead guitarist from the Hunters] - would be a good lead guitarist for Adam, he played for two shows but Adam preferred his guitarist, Pete Thorpe.....Brian decided to get a real job at a finance company. The Hunters' drummer, Norman Sheffield, joined The Daybreakers. The changes upset our group... Buster seemed to lose interest, he left and was replaced by Jimmy Hayford, who was quite different from Buster. He seemed a little too old for me.... Roy was nineteen, Bernie was seventeen, I was fifteen and Jimmy was twenty two but his voice was so good we had to go with him. He sounded just like Little Richard which was good for me...he was also a good looking guy, however we thought we can't have a singer called 'Hayford'...we changed his name to James East... it came from the association with the James Dean film 'East of Eden'. So, from then the group were James East and The Daybreaker. The changes didn't seem to affect the popularity of the group. Our set became a little rockier but everybody seemed to like the changes.....[Just a side note - Our new drummer, Norman Sheffield, became the first manager of QUEEN in 1972, I think]*

*I'll write some more next month....Have a great October.*

## **ESTORIL, PORTUGAL**

The gigs in Portugal are very expertly put on by Russ's friend and our newsletter friend, Emanuel. Even with an audience of 2000+, the tickets sell out very quickly. We had lots of messages from people who had missed out this time as they sold out two or three weeks before the gig. For the next Portugal show (I don't know when that will be), if you want to go, get your tickets as early as you can. It is no good messaging Russ and asking for tickets, he doesn't have access to them.

## VIDEOS FROM ESTORIL

Ian was at the Estoril gig on 30<sup>th</sup> September and took a few videos. He is releasing them one at a time for Russ's Facebook page, The Voices group and the newsletter. Here are the ones he has released so far so you can be at the gig too. The audience of 2000+ was fabulous.

Arriving at the venue and the first song - Rene Didn't Do It

<https://youtu.be/pDk2FITfjdI>

Liar

<https://youtu.be/rm7HfqtUVrM>

The Fire Still Burns

[https://youtu.be/p\\_jri38tSR0](https://youtu.be/p_jri38tSR0)

## PHOTOS FROM ESTORIL

Our newsletter friend Les Linyard was also in Estoril. Les takes the most brilliant photos. The link will take you to Les's Estoril photos on his Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=les.linyard&set=a.10160229777074321>

## EDINBURGH

**From Elizabeth Palmieri**

Dear Sue, just had to share this with you! .....WOW! Another spectacular show from Russ and the boys, this time at a rather interesting venue in Edinburgh called the Caves.(well worth checking out photos on website) A couple of hours non stop amazing music and the playlist was fab! "Miracles "was just the best! Russ had everyone in the audience singing along too. Great atmosphere! Super merchandise table as well. (wore the tee shirt to tennis today to show it off 😊) I was lucky to have a really nice chat with Russ and his lovely band and all in all had a truly magical evening! So thank you lots Russ and please come back to Scotland soon! You rock even more !!! Loving the

newsletter, it's such fun to read thanks Sue. You do a great job. Best wishes from Elizabeth xx

## EDINBURGH REVIEW

Just before I sent this newsletter out I came across this review of the Edinburgh gig from a Scottish publication called Rockfiend.

<https://www.rockfiendpublicationsscotland.co.uk/russ-ballard-marley-davidson-the-caves-edinburgh-9th-october-2022>

## NEXT GIGS - GERMANY

Germany is coming up at the beginning of November. If you would like to see Russ there and you haven't got your tickets yet, it would be a good idea to get them now, as soon as possible. Shows this year so far have been sell outs. There will be merchandise on sale but it will be cash only so take plenty of euros with you.



a.s.s. concerts  
A PROMOTION

**RUSS BALLARD** GERMANY 2022

**It's good to be here tour**

NOVEMBER	01	MÜNCHEN - MUFFATWERK
NOVEMBER	02	NÜRNBERG - HIRSCH
NOVEMBER	03	BENSHEIM - MUSIKTHEATER REX
NOVEMBER	05	ASCHAFFENBURG - COLOS SAAL
NOVEMBER	07	AUGSBURG - SPECTRUM
NOVEMBER	10	DORTMUND - PIANO
NOVEMBER	11	BONN - HARMONIE

TICKETS ON SALE

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## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

From Ronnie

Could you ask Russ if he ever did a demo of I SURRENDER I have never seen or heard his version...for me it is just one terrific rock song and, in my view, better than the song SINCE YOU BEEN GONE which, of course, is great too! When I played at the Cephis Club in Edinburgh this song was being played at what seemed like 100watts!

**Russ:** *I did record a demo of 'I Surrender' , however, it's the only demo I made that I didn't sing. I asked John Verity to sing it - I sat in the control room & listened. John was working at Livingston Studios then, as an engineer. Bob H. played drums , Dave Wintour played bass. I have a feeling I played piano on the middle section.*

## DAVE'S REVIEW

### **Russ Ballard – KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton 12th October 2022**

This evening has been a long time coming, for both the band and the audience, having been re-scheduled twice (or maybe thrice?) due to the pandemic. But no problems this time around, despite the number of virus infections on the increase again.

KK's is run by former Judas Priest guitarist **K K Downing**, in a converted Grade II listed building that once belonged to the Star Motor Company. Accompanied by a friend who asked if he could come along, we booked into the Premier Inn next to the railway station, a place I know well, having worked in the city between 2003 and 2007. Of course, places change over time and parts I thought I knew like the palm of my hand, had now changed beyond recognition. Premier Inns are usually easy to find, but not this one. We lost valuable time before finding it. We checked in, deposited our belongings, and headed to the nearby Great Western pub for a pre-gig pint. Being in a conservation area, this is one area that has not changed, and with its cobbled street and railway arches, it could easily pass as a set from Coronation Street.

Thirsts quenched, we decided it was time to set off for the venue, a 0.9-mile walk taking 18 minutes according to Bing. That is if you follow their directions. If you do not, things quickly go wrong, as tends to happen when me and this particular friend travel together. We famously went on a mini cruise to Bilbao, went ashore, got lost near Bilbao railway station (a pattern is developing!) and arrived back at the ship just as the gangway had been raised. We also overlooked the one-hour time difference. Fortunately, we were admitted through a 'crew-only' entrance just as the vessel was about to depart. So now, we realised we were walking in the wrong direction towards Birmingham. We turned around, headed back to the station, and opted to take a taxi. KK's has stood on Frederick Street since 1903. So, why the first two taxi drivers we encountered had never heard of Frederick Street was puzzling. Just at that moment I received a call from Carole Williams, asking where I was, and informing me that Russ was soon starting his set. Unbelievable, not only had we missed Fugitive, but we were now in danger of missing Russ himself. A third taxi driver knew the venue and provided the first one with directions. He nodded and told us to jump in. We were there in the blink of an eye.

If you've never been to KK's it's an interesting venue. It's huge inside when you go into the main hall. This was not in use tonight. The toilets are just as they would have been in the mill's working days. Rows of pipework and old-fashioned cold-water taps, but I'm digressing. Russ was playing in a sectioned-off area capable of accommodating 250 people. Tonight, it was comfortable rather than full.

Russ took to the stage at 9pm with the band he has been using for the last year or two. **Marc Rapson** on keys, **Roland Jones** on guitar and **P J Phillips** on bass. The only change was the replacement of drummer **Jos Henrit** with **John Miller**. John has performed with many artists including Gabrielle, The Blow Monkeys, Then Jerico and Saint Etienne. I was a little disappointed that Jos has dropped out, as he fitted in well, but I understand he was unable to commit. John has not been in the line-up long, but nobody would have guessed, given that he was familiar with the time changes that occur, for example in the first song *Rene Didn't Do It*.

The set-list differed from the last time I saw him at the 100 Club in London. There was a more focus on the material from the two EMI America albums, **Russ Ballard** and **The Fire Still Burns**, including **Your Time is Gonna Come**, **Dream On**, **Voices**, and one of my personal favourites, **Playing with Fire**. Also included were the **Argent** hits **God Gave Rock and Roll to You** and **Hold Your Head Up**. Russ also treated us to **New York Groove** and **Since You Been Gone**, mentioning the

latter was released under his own name on the **Winning** LP before being covered (initially) by **Clout** and **Head East**. No mention of Rainbow's version, but everyone in the venue would already have known that. **It's My Life** and **Time machine** were included from **Book of Love** and **Its Good to be Here** respectively. Omitted this time around were I Know There's Something Going On, So You Win Again, I Surrender, which Roland sang so well last time I saw them, and the rock and roll medley, where Russ usually takes over on piano. He did play piano of course on **I Don't Believe in Miracles**, one of his classics. Credit to the audience. You could hear a pin drop.

All too soon, the end came, and the band took their bow and disappeared. A great 90 minutes of live music. I was at the front, so I sacrificed sound balance, instead choosing to be closer to the action. I'm told that the sound as a whole was well balanced.

Almost last out, we set off on foot for the hotel, having given up on waiting for the taxi we had booked. We arrived at the Premier Inn in no time. It really isn't that far if you go the right way!

One thing I enjoy when attending a Russ Ballard gig, is there's always a familiar face or two in the audience. Russ has built up an army of loyal fans over the years, and it's always nice to be able to exchange greetings.

All in all, a great night. Next its Germany's turn. Bigger venues and bigger crowds. That will see out 2022, which I'm sure Russ will consider a success. I'm sure I'm not alone in hoping we get to do it again next year.

One last word on Wolverhampton. I have great respect for the city and its people, having always found people from the Black Country to be friendly and helpful. This visit was no exception.

## **LEO SAYER**

### **From Dave**

**Leo Sayer 50th Anniversary tour reaches the UK**

Three days before seeing Russ perform at Wolverhampton, I took a trip to Buxton to catch a performance by Leo Sayer. Fans will know that Russ played on Leo's early songs and was called in by Adam Faith to co-produce his third album

**Another Year** after he parted company with previous co-writer and producer David Courtney. *Another Year* was recorded in 13 days, which put a lot of pressure on Russ. He was recording his **Winning** solo album by day at Basing Street studios, then travelling over to Kingsway Recorders to work on Leo's album into the night. Kingsway was situated within an office block, so they could only record outside of normal working hours.



*Another Year*, yielded one of Leo's biggest hit singles, **Moonlighting**. The song reached No.2 in the UK. Russ played most of the instruments and, interestingly, Leo was not too keen to include the song on the album. On the contrary, Russ was convinced it would be a hit, and so it proved to be. Leo performed the song at Buxton, and it was one of the highlights of the show. Fans will be pleased to hear Leo is in great form and his voice is as strong as ever. A few dates remain. Catch him if you can.

## DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month features a track from the 1980s, a period when Russ was writing a lot of songs for his publishers.

### No.49



### **I'm Losing You by Cherry Laine**

**Cherry Laine**, born Florence Mills, hails from Jamaica. Working with producer Bernt Möhrle in Germany, she scored two hits **A Night in Chicago** (1977) and **Catch the Cat** (1978), both very similar to **Boney M** in style. In 1980 she released a version of Russ Ballard's **I'm Losing You** on CBS. A year later the song was also released by **Hot Chocolate**, titled **Losing You** in the UK, Ireland and Australia, and **I'm Losing You** in Germany, for those who like a bit of trivia. Talking of which, did you spot the error on the record label? The songwriter is credited as (Russ Ballard/Russ Ballard)!

Here is a link to Cherry's version of the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fmrhDuRCCY>