



(Header by Sven)

July 2023

Welcome to our new readers. Please feel free to contribute to the newsletter....a letter, an article, your favourite lyrics etc. As long as it is Russ related.

Our big news, of course, is the RB Experience '23. This was the third one I have been privileged to organise....a big job but I am getting into it now and I had lots of help from the rest of Team RGB on the day. This has been my focus in the last few months...what am I going to do now? Start on the next one maybe!!! Read more about it below.

Outlook has been up to its tricks again and it is removing people from the contact list. This has happened before. I can assure you that I never remove anyone unless they ask me to, and it is not something that can be done by me accidentally. As we have several hundred on the mailing lists, it is impossible for me to keep tabs on everybody so, if you get to the end of any month and you haven't received the newsletter, please contact me.

Russ could be coming to a venue near you later in the year. Have a look below.

Sue

THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

Looking back to June,

Does life seem to get faster as we get older? I remember being at school and looking forward to the six week's holiday and those six weeks seemed to last a lifetime. I suppose when you do a lot most days, life does appear to get faster, however, my mum used to say, "Time can't hurry, time can't stay, twenty four hours in a day" she had saying for every occasion...bless her.

My June Diary,

Mon. 5th June,

On a Zoom call I met Adam & Marty, two members of my new publishing company, Primary Wave. We talked music and ideas they had for my songs... They're looking forward to hearing my versions of songs I've written and recorded by others. Songs from the 70's like 'Since You Been Gone', 'So You Win Again', 'God Gave RnR To You' & many more....I like the guys, I just feel a good vibe between us.

Fri. 9th June

Eye test, 9.00am, went ok. Back home to continue working with David and Julie from Space Elevator... We have some great songs, which we've turned in to some amazing recordings, hopefully you'll hear them in 2024.

Tues. 13th June,

In studio after running for twenty minutes. I listened to previous day's work (Space Elevator tunes) and added some over dubs. In the evening, after picking Bob Henrit up, we had a pleasant drive to Highgate for an Indian dinner with our friends, entrepreneur Richard Desmond, Martin Ellice and PR man Alan Edwards. Apart from being an amazing businessman, Richard plays drums and was in the RD Crusaders with me. It's a group set up by Roger Daltrey to raise money for The Teenage Cancer Trust. I wrote to Richard next day, "What can be better than good company, good food and wine while talking about Music..."

Thurs. 15th June

Run....Breakfast....Studio, Lunch, then at 4pm recorded a Podcast with an American DJ musician called, Stefan Adika. He asked me questions on music... How did I begin?

Pianos - Guitars - songwriting....A long talk but humorous and friendly...brill....

Fri. 16th June,

Run...Breakfast - Shower - dentist, back in studio with Space Elevator. Worked on vocals and overdubs...good day.

Fri. 23rd, June,

David & Julie after my trainer, Lilia, had put me through resistance exercises....Worked with D. & J. from 11.00am - 4.30pm... another good one.

Thurs. 30th June,

Flew to Hamburg to attend a surprise party for my dear friend, Michael Bisping.

It was called retirement, however, it seems he is still involved with A.S.S.

Promotion & Management, although no longer going into the office everyday

....when we arrived, there were 120 standing outside a restaurant cheering and applauding - Very moving...I could see Michael had tears in his eyes....

That's June....I left out a few days where I was in the studio just doing what you might call mundane studio work...

Stay safe and lots of love my Friends, until Next month....🎵xxx

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

BRIDLINGTON SUMMER SEASON 1963

After completing some weeks in Variety as members of The Roulettes, backing group to Adam Faith, Pete Thorp, Bob Henrit, Mod Rogan and I met in the Piccadilly offices of 'Starcast', our management, headed by Evie Taylor and her husband Maurice Press, to be told we....that's Adam Faith and The Roulettes, would be spending three months in Bridlington, Yorkshire...I remember thinking, "Three months, that's the whole of the summer". I'd never heard of Bridlington, however after speaking to Pete and Bob about playing in one venue for three months, they put my mind at rest....They had played a similar season in Bournemouth, a Pantomime....although it had been in winter, they said it had been a lot of fun.

So, in late April we found ourselves in Hampstead, North London, in what was a village hall, rehearsing for a summer show, to be called 'It's A Grand Night', two shows a night and a concert every Sunday at another seaside resort. Summer seasons were and still are a family show and very similar to the Variety shows we'd played months before. So here we were along with twelve girl dancers, a choreographer named David Harding, a pianist called Barbara Moore [Cousin of Dudley] and the Director named Bunny BaronWe entered the hall to a hive of activity, the feeling was one of excitement, the pianist played, the girls danced as the Choreographer called out directions. There were voices coming from an adjoining room. When I looked in, I could see the Director, Bunny Baron, a small heavy man in his forties, with an east London accent...he was going through a comedy routine with one of the comics in the show, his name was Bobby Dennis...

he was a few years younger but of a similar size and talked with a broad Yorkshire accent. However, for us, our interest was mostly in the dancers, there were twelve, all female, all between the ages of 16 and 23 and ranging from pretty to stunning. From my words you can tell we weren't very interested in the intellectual quality of girls in 1963...They had everything that a young guy desired....Oh! yes, they were also good dancers. Some girls smiled as we sat down, some looked the other way, others looked without any particular interest. We watched David Harding, the Choreographer, taking the girls through their routines...He counted in the pianist, 'And'.... suddenly he was tap dancing and singing, do do do da da "I'm singing in the rain" and the girls were following behind. It was impressive. He showed them a step, another and another until they'd mastered each routine. As we watched, I wondered why there were no male dancers, when suddenly David walked toward a tall slim brunette...."Tina", he said, as he took her arm and positioned her in the middle of the floor...."After your routine I want you to exit stage left like this". He gave a twirl then guided her over to the piano. Tina tried it once, then again. "Good", he said. "Now". He looked toward us, "Oh no", I thought, please don't say we're going to have to dance. He looked at each of us in turn. "Mmm". Then he took Bob by the arm, "Oh No", he said loudly as David pulled him close to Tina. "I want you", he looked Bob in the eyes, "to take Tina's hand and lead her off stage left". David leant back, stretched out both arms and led her to the piano""Why me?", Bob grimaced - 'You can do it', said David....You're the right size" - I looked at the dancers, some were smiling, some were whispering to each other and laughing, as if they'd heard a great joke. It dawned on me, obviously we were going to be used as the male dancers...I know their thinking, "They're the right age...and height, it doesn't matter that three are guitar players and one's a drummer and they can't dance.... THEY'RE CHEAP, actually, they're free...Saying they can't dance wasn't strictly true, Mod could dance....his years of dance tuition would come in handy.

I'll tell you about that 1963 Summer Season next Month.....Lot's of Love, Russ
xxx

RB EXPERIENCE '23 - RUSS

It was a great time had by everybody last weekend at The Maltings in Ware. I want to thank everyone who participated. Derik Timms, who arranged so much as well as playing with his group Three Bar Fire....thanks also to bass player and drummer of Three Bar Fire, Eddie Master and Howard Tibble.

Thanks my friends, Space Elevator, Julie and David for a great set and just to let you know I've really enjoyed writing and recording with you.

Thank you Roy for reminding us of our young days with Adam Faith and The Roulettes, and sitting in for Adam with a brilliant rendition of 'The First Time'.....

Ian Street and Karen always inspire me with their energy and passion for music, and played no lesser part this time at the Maltings. Thanks Ian for your great Introductions and indeed The Podcast with Sven....who sadly couldn't be there.

Dear Chris Andrews and Alex came from Germany and produced great music, as always....We go back a long way and The Roulettes were some of the first people to hear songs he'd written for Adam, Sandy Shaw and his own songs....'Yesterday man' and 'To Whom It Concerns. Thanks my friends....

Thank You, Marc Rapson, John Miller, PJ Phillips and Roland Jones, for playing so brilliantly....it's always a kick to hear hear you play my songs and always a buzz being with you.....Great being on the stage with you again, Bob H. Thanks again all...

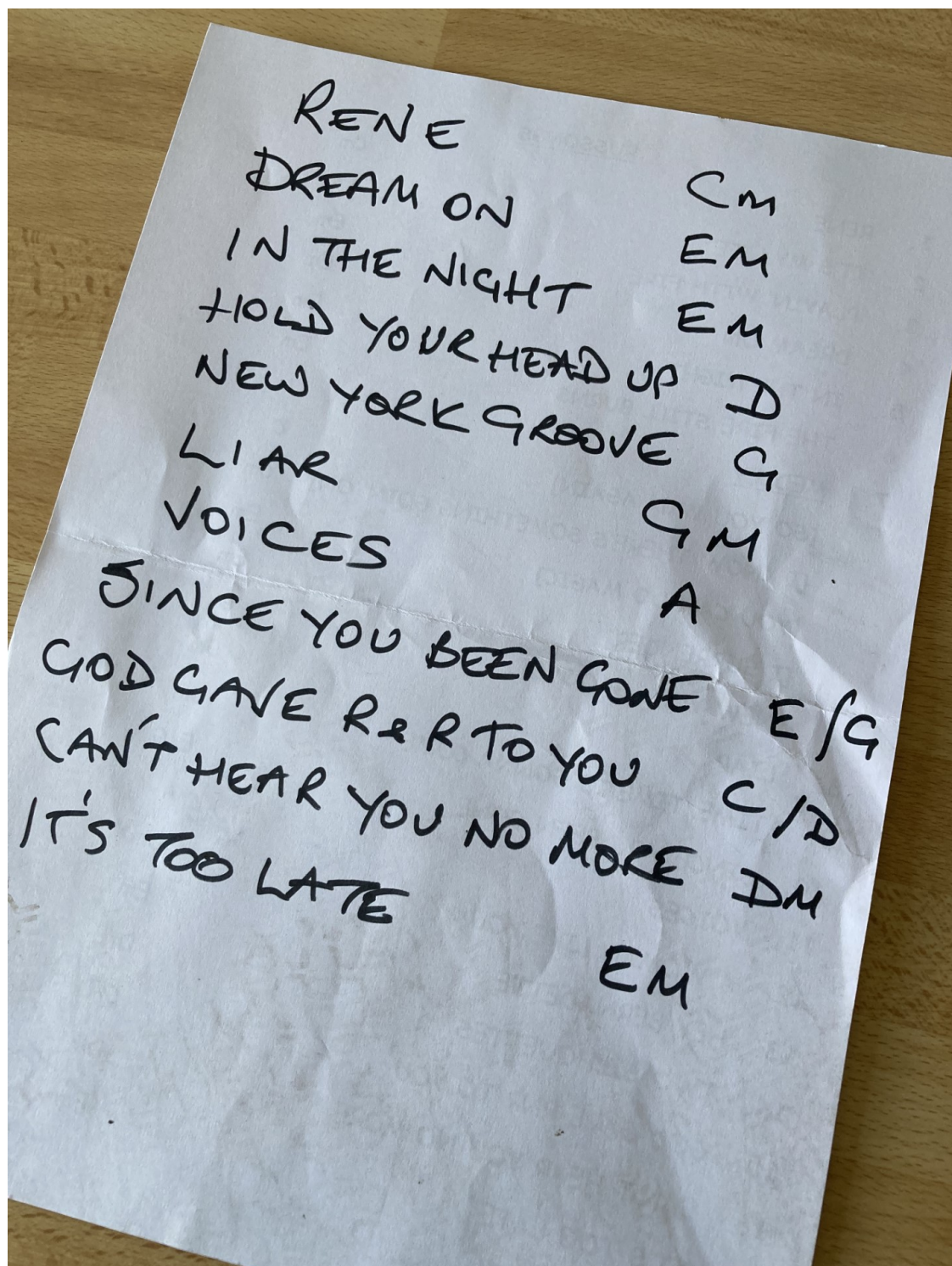
It was amazing to see everyone who came to support the Newsletter and The RB Experience, So many people that have been with me for years....also those that came from abroad, Switzerland, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Ireland and Ukraine.

I must say special thanks to Sue and Carole for their Love and attention... You know I appreciate it [Well, it has been over 55years] xxx

It was a fabulous atmosphere.....Lets do it again....Lots of Love, As Ever, Russ xxx

RB EXPERIENCE '23 - SUE

Well, we partied again four years later. We weren't at all sure whether this would happen again but what a good thing it did. It was a good one. On 15th July around 140 newsletter readers along with Russ's family and friends came along to the Southern Maltings in Ware. From the feedback I am getting it looks like everyone had a good time. I really enjoyed myself but, sadly, my husband and I both brought Covid back from Ware with us. I know there was one more case as well as us. I hope everyone else is ok.



Many thanks to everyone who gave their time to perform for us....Derik Timms and his band Three Bar Fire, David and Julie from Space Elevator, Roy Lewis , who used to play in a band with Peter Thorp, Chris Andrews who came from Germany to be with us, and, of course, Russ and his amazing band, Roly Jones, Marc Rapson, PJ Phillips and John Miller. There was a special guest appearance by everyone's favourite, Bob Henrit. How fabulous to see him behind the drums again. Extra thanks go to Derik Timms, who not only played for us but he sorted all the equipment and technical "stuff".

Big thanks also to Southern Maltings for hosting us in their lovely venue and looking after us on the day.

I found this one quite straightforward to organise. Thank you all for your cooperation with the guest list, PayPal contributions, tickets etc in the run up to the party. You made it easy for me. Now enjoy a little look back at the evening with thanks to Ian for putting this highlights video together. There are lots more photos and videos on Russ's Facebook page and in the Voices Group.

Sue <https://youtu.be/VqUOlxyNbCQ>

RB EXPERIENCE '23 - DAVE

Ware's the party

When the date was announced a few weeks ago for an RBE3 event, I was quite excited that it was scheduled for mid-July. I had visions of blue skies, a nice warm evening and T-shirt weather, thus avoiding the need to carry a coat around. I should have known better of course. The British weather never lets us down, and on Saturday 15th July we were treated to a mixture of sun, rain, hail, thunder and lightning, all accompanied by unseasonal high winds. The type of weather that makes it difficult to decide what clothing to take with you.

After debating whether to travel by car, I opted to let the train take the strain. Fortunately, the date didn't clash with any of the train drivers' strikes, and all the connections worked out perfectly. Five minutes after leaving the train I checked in at the nearby Premier Inn, an hour earlier than expected, and set off to explore some of the delights of Mr Ballard's hometown. As on a previous RBE trip, I ventured to Wrights, an old-fashioned British Fish and Chip shop situated on East Street, for a traditional English takeaway.



Left to right: Wrights Fish and Chips on East Street, Southern Maltings exterior and interior on Kibes Lane.

The food was as good as last time, the only differences being the prices, which have almost doubled due to the rise in wholesale price of fish and potatoes. Right across the UK, fish and chips are becoming a luxury meal rather than a cheap convenient fast food, but I do have a soft spot for the few remaining high street fish and chip shops that haven't expanded into providing pizzas, kebabs and burgers. Had I been an hour or so later, I might have opted instead an invitation to join Sue Robinson and Carole Williams at the Beefeater Restaurant based at the hotel.

Indeed, it was Sue and Carole, along with Sue's husband Bob, that greeted me at the venue, Southern Maltings on Kibes Lane, along with Michele Turner, who I've previously met at the 100 Club in London and the Robin 2 at Bilston.

Introduced by Ian Street, Derek Timms, aka Buddy King, got proceedings underway, with a short but enjoyable set by his latest group Three Bar Fire. Their re-workings of some RnB and Blues classics included Barefootin', and they were warmly received. Space Elevator have been getting a lot of mentions in the RB Newsletter this year, and vocalist Julie, aka The Duchess, and guitarist David Young, provided a sample of a few of their songs performed acoustically. They were magnificent and I can't wait to hear the new songs that they are currently writing and recording with Russ.

Once again Chris Andrews flew over from Germany and treated us to a few of his hit compositions, including his own 1965 hit Yesterday Man. Bob Henrit took to the stage as a special performance of The Roulettes' song The First Time, was performed in memory of late guitarist Peter Thorp with guest vocalist Roy Lewis and Roly Jones on guitar. Sadly, Mod Rogan was unable to attend this year's event, his role filled by a familiar looking guy in shades. Wow, Russ Ballard can't half wallop out a powerful bass line.

In between switchovers, there was an opportunity to chat with other people. I had the pleasure of talking to Russ's keyboard player Marc Rapson and, all the way from Ireland, Liam Wilson, wearing Argent colours in the form of an Altogether Now T-shirt and a jacket with the original Argent logo on the back. It was great catching up with him, and he remembered my favoured RB song is Tragedy, and mentioned that Roly had been playing the guitar riff during the soundcheck. In return, I recalled from our last meeting, that his favourite RB album is Book of Love.

Also spotted on the front row were Greg Zimmermann and his wife, who had once again travelled over from Switzerland. Unfortunately, I didn't get to say hello to them, but I made up for it at breakfast time the next day, wishing them a safe journey back.

Before long, Ian introduced Russ and his band onto the stage, featuring Marc Rapson on keys, Roland Jones on guitar, P J Phillips on bass and John Miller on drums. Kicking off their set with the Barnet Dogs LP track Rene Didn't Do It, they sounded even better than they did last year, John Miller now fully familiar with all the songs and stamping is own feel. The setlist consisted almost exclusively of 'rockers', which meant no place for I Don't Believe in Miracles or So You Win Again. Included were the Argent classics Liar, God Gave Rock and Roll to You and Hold Your Head Up, the latter featuring a great organ solo from Marc, which was applauded by the audience. New York Groove, written for Hello, was sung by Russ, with Roly reminding him that Bob Bradbury, who sang on the hit version, and sang the song at previous RBE events, couldn't be here this year due to health problems.

A selection of songs from 1984/85 albums were played including I Can't Here You No More, In the Night, Dream on, and, of course, Voices. A rousing version of Since You Been Gone was enhanced when Russ invited The Duchess to join in on vocals. All good things come to an end though, and all too soon, the band were taking their final bow. I think it's fair to say that everyone had a great time.



Top: Julie, aka The Duchess, David Young of Space Elevator; Below: Hit songwriter and artist Chris Andrews

Afterwards, I had a long overdue catch up with Brian Barry and his wife Jacqui, before bumping into Roland Herzog aka The Duke, another traveller from Switzerland. What Roland doesn't know about Russ Ballard, could be written on the back of a postage stamp, and the same goes for Eddy Bonte with his knowledge of The Roulettes. I'd not previously had the pleasure of meeting Eddy, who had travelled over on Eurostar from Belgium.

It's testament to Russ Ballard that so many people are prepared to travel by planes, trains and automobiles from far and wide to catch him performing his music. On the other side of the coin, how many artists do we know that have put on private invitation-only events for fans? Answers on a postage stamp. Maybe this is why everybody is still buzzing days after the event, fans and musicians alike. Let's hope it's not the last.

Sue Robinson, who devised and manages the newsletter, was key organiser of the event, supported by Carole Williams, who looks after the official Facebook page. Both received a large bouquet of flowers from Russ for their efforts. It's great that he gives back so much to those who support him.

Parting thought. I think this is 'The First Time' I've attended an event where both a Duke and a Duchess have been present!!

NOVEMBER GIGS 2023

Russ is going to be heading out on the road in the UK again in November. As of now, here are the dates.

7 th November	The Beaverwood	Chislehurst, Kent
9 th November	Nell's	London
10 th November	HRH Prog Festival	Great Yarmouth
11 th November	The Tivoli	Wimborne
17 th November	The Wrecking Ball	Hull
18 th November	Long Street Blues Club	Devizes

I am sorry I won't be playing in Scotland. I was asked about the dates last year and said it was too soon to commit to them. When I knew they had been left in place and added to the dates I had later agreed to, I advised my agent that I couldn't do them. My band members had other commitments. I was quite surprised that the dates were booked as I had not agreed to them.

Russ.

LYRIC OF THE MONTH

What is this one? I know someone who will definitely know which song this comes from.

*"Keep it in your head, you won't take it with you when you're dead
Bear it in your mind, what good's a fortune left behind
Make a point to save, if you keep your money in a cave
But keep it in your mind, what good's a fortune left behind"*

Scroll down to the end of the newsletter to find the answer and have a listen to the track while you are there. If you have a favourite lyric, please send it in.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

From Ronnie

In the early days with Adam, did you guess a forthcoming hit and or feel a sense of excitement when you heard Chris Andrews (I guess demos) compositions for the first time (excuse pun)? I wonder if they (the ones that made singles at any rate) all arrived at once or in chronological release order. You had mentioned The Roulettes on their own were kinda presented with songs so was the way Chris's songs were given to the group planned in a set order or just first come basis?

Thank you for considering these queries as a fan and an active musician back then, I was always excited with the anticipation of the next 45rpm single from Parlophone.

Russ: *I don't remember Chris making demos - He usually sat at the piano, played and sang them. He did the same with Sandy Shaw's recordings. At that time (1963-65) I remember Chris playing, "If He Tells You" and the complete Adam album which featured us (The Roulettes) on one side and The Bobby Woodman Orchestra on the other. "It's Alright " was another tune that sounded strong. Although, it was used as a 'B' side in the UK, however, it was the A side in America, and was quite a big hit.*

LETTER OF THE MONTH

From Graham Gilbert

(Sue: Graham had asked if Russ performs Time Of The Season now)

Sad re Time of the Season and I can understand it's non-inclusion, it not being one of his songs. I found that seeing Russ you can sense his air of professionalism and he did execute his part in that song to a T. Precise handclaps!!!

I was checking my old 45's and was amazed at how many Russ + Hello releases I had. You can tell Russ that I saw a 5 piece all girl acapella group perform Since You've Been Gone with 5 key changes. Must check the original!!! This was Brighton in the 80's at the Arts Club.

Happy trails

Graham

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month we go way back to those carefree days when Argent first appeared on the scene. Great to hear this cover of one of Russ's earliest songs.

No.59



Schoolgirl by The Jordans

With the name inspired by The Jordanares, the band that accompanied Elvis Presley in the early days, the group began their career in January 1958 in the Mooca neighbourhood, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. Guitarists Romeu Mantovani Sobrinho and Olímpio Sinval Drago, formed the band with drummer Tiguês.

The Jordans' first single, "Bouddha", was released in 1961, just seven years after Elvis Presley's first single **That's All Right Mama**. The LP **Suspense**, released at the end of 1961, featured the song **Blue Star**, which remained for more than six months at the top of the charts. On a tour of Europe in 1967, the Jordans were trapped for 20 minutes in a studio with **The Beatles**. **John Lennon** took the opportunity to keep five LPs from the group, from which Ringo Starr allegedly learned to play bossa nova on drums.

The 1971 LP **The Jordans**, featured a cover version of Argent's **Schoolgirl**.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYQsyOg2i44>

In 1972 the group disbanded, each going their separate ways outside of music. Sporadically, the group gets together to perform old hits at special events.

LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

<https://youtu.be/2x-j82Zsq8w>

More Argent... at their best and here is a double treat with It's Only Money parts 1 and 2. Does anyone else find this exciting? Genius writing!