



The official Russ Ballard newsletter

(Christmas card by Sven)

Welcome to our new readers. We hope you are enjoying the newsletters. Because people have been emailing me about buying the merch, I have had a bit more feedback than usual. Thank you so much for your lovely comments.....like this one....".....it is always interesting and written with so much passion." I won't name names as I haven't asked for permission to use it but, in Russ's usual words, that is what makes it all worthwhile. Thank you! Please feel free to join in. You can send me anything for inclusion in the newsletter as long as it is relevant to Russ. Thank you to Elizabeth for her contribution this month.

This is the end of another busy year for Russ and it looks like next year will be even busier with shows in Germany and Portugal already arranged and maybe more to come. So, on behalf of all Russ's team... Dave and myself, also Carole, Sven and Ian... I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and an exciting

and music filled 2024. 🎵🎄🧑‍🎅🔔🧑‍🎅🎄🎵

Sue

THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

Well, almost another year is passed....Here's my December diary....

Some of you will know I'm going on tour to Germany in 2024. The tour is called Rock meets Classic - The concept has become very popular in Germany, it's simply, artists sing some of their well known tunes and being accompanied by a classical orchestra - [about sixty musicians] along with a group, [guitarist, drums, bass and keyboards] - I'm looking forward to it....I think there are a few of my songs that will sound cool with strings and woodwind behind.....Anyway, since the beginning of December I've been promoting the tour with magazine and radio people in Germany....

Dec. 4th. Darkstars Mag. - Chris Streider

Dec. 5th Bleeding 4 Metal Carsten

Dec. 7th Justin Shukat - [Not a journalist, but my new publisher] It was the first good chance to speak to Justin, who played me some new versions some of my old tunes... Justin lives and works in New York, so it was interesting that he played me two new versions of 'New York Groove'. I also mentioned that I intend to release an album of new songs next year.

Dec. 8th My great friends from Liverpool came to see me for the weekend....Michael Angel, Ranko and Dave from 'Fugitive', arrived 10am, Friday, we talked about life for an hour, then decided to write something together. We came up with a good idea which we developed, then at 4pm. the guys drove to the Premier Inn to check in.....We'd arranged to meet in the Indian restaurant nearby at seven.....Had a great evening, laughing , drinking and stories...what could be better?

Dec. 9th At 10am. Mike, Dave and Ranko were back at my place expecting to develop yesterday's idea, however, I did get up early, I sat at the piano and came up with a good chorus idea for our song....played it to them and they loved it.

Dec. 10th Christian [my son] phoned to tell me he intended to see his son play football in Hertford in one hour. I said I'd like that, he offered to pick me up. I watched the match, they won one nil....I came home and watched football on Sky.

Dec 11th in my studio, recording.

Well that's the main things for December....I've been in the studio most days.....something which still makes me high.....I still have friends, Julie and David from Space Elevator coming to write, up to Christmas.....

Well , Ladies and Gentlemen.....I WISH YOU ALL, A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR - See you in 2024 xxx,

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Hi, everybody, I'm continuing my biog this week, where we, The Roulettes, were in Summer season with our then boss, Adam Faith. It was summer 1963 and this particular day was a Sunday, which meant we were playing a Sunday concert in Yarmouth. Biog Continued.....

We were booked for this concert which was to be held on the Pier Theatre. When we arrived the theatre manager told us, "There's pandemonium in the town because The Beatles are playing a concert at the ABC Theatre and, apparently, there's 3000 kids outside blocking the streets, waiting for a glimpse of them" - Tel, [Adam] replied, "It won't affect us, we have a family audience" - Just the term "Family audience" had less than a good ring to me.

After our show on the pier, we were ready for our long journey back to Bridlington. As we sat in Tel's Mark 10 Jag, he said, "Let's go into the Carlton Hotel for a cup of tea". Bert drove the short distance to the hotel. We filed through the front door, into the tv room on the ground floor. We entered to find we were the only people there. The waiter took our order, "Tea for six," Bert smiled. We had only chatted for five minutes when the door flew open and in walked the four Beatles all laughing and joking. They were followed by their tour manager, Neil Aspinall and singer Helen Shapiro. Paul McCartney sat next to me and Ringo sat to his right...George Harrison and Helen sat next to Tel and Bert on the sofa at the far end and, because there weren't enough chairs, John Lennon sat on the floor, his back to the wall. Waiters came into the room to take orders for drinks - Paul ordered scotch and coke and they ordered sandwiches....I can still see Ringo pulling bread apart and eating the chicken separately. I told Paul he looked tired - "We've been up all night making an album". It was to be - 'WITH THE BEATLES'. The waiters came in with autograph books and scraps of paper and, [because we all had the same haircuts] they didn't know who was a Beatle and who was a Roulette. Paul kept handing the books to me, saying,

"Here Ringo", and I'd sign while Ringo sat eating his sandwich. I also recall, when Paul sat down as he first entered the room, he was quietly singing "It's My Party", a song that was a big international hit at the time for Lesley Gore. They were all very friendly. I asked how the show went at the ABC, "Great", he said. The only problem was there were so many people outside the theatre, we had to get in by helicopter, which landed on the roof". Billy J. Kramer had just had a number one with a Beatles song, "Do You Wanna Know A Secret?". Paul and John had just written his follow up, "Bad To Me" - I told Paul I liked the song and he seemed pleased.....We played all kinds of venues with Adam, from Debutantes ball in hotels to arenas, like Wembley Pool, and it was a problem...sometimes it was hard to modify our sound level to the venue and the sound systems at the time were not very powerful and singers struggled to be heard on P.A.s at the time...I asked Paul, Do you modify your sound to the venues you play? " No", He said, "we'd play the same level if we played in 'ere'"....that made us laugh..

CHRISTMAS VIDEO

Russ has been busy in his studio making this year's Christmas video for us all. This is a rocky one! It is too big to put directly into the newsletter so here is the link to Russ's Facebook page, where Carole has posted it today. No preview coming up so click to find out.

<https://fb.watch/p2yV67jT4z/>

PORTUGAL - 10th MAY 2024

Tickets went on sale for the gig at the Casino Estoril in Cascais on 12th December. These tickets sell out quickly so, if you would like to go, get your ticket sooner rather than later. Russ will be supported again by Brian Spence. Ticket link here.

[https://ticketline.sapo.pt/evento/russ-ballard-and-band-brian-spence-live-202-79213?
fbclid=IwAR2VsN5a0il2oZiTIKXEndXfaNdTdNJX8dzNMaiTEuwtFQyOLuQDrtZLTOg](https://ticketline.sapo.pt/evento/russ-ballard-and-band-brian-spence-live-202-79213?fbclid=IwAR2VsN5a0il2oZiTIKXEndXfaNdTdNJX8dzNMaiTEuwtFQyOLuQDrtZLTOg)

MORE FROM THE UK TOUR

Some good reviews came up after the last newsletter was finished. I thought they were worth looking at. Well worth having a read.

The first one is from Ian Francis from Russ's first gig of the tour at **The Beaverwood in Chislehurst**. I have had Ian's permission to use this as it was just a post on his Facebook page. The link to his post isn't working so here is his review in full.

Here for the legend that is [Russ Ballard](#), the man who gave God rock'n'roll to give to us... Yep, the former Argent frontman is touring the UK again, at the ripe old age of 77..! And blimey, I hope I look that good at 77 (actually I didn't even look that good at 27... 😊) As a huge Argent fan as a kid ('Hold Your Head Up' was one of the first riffs I ever tried to learn..!) this was a must-see show. Last time I saw him was at a one-off Argent reunion for charity in 2012 in Aylesbury, where they played immaculately (and for the first time in nearly 40 years..!) to a packed house. And this show was just as good! 😊 The first treat of the evening was the inclusion of "New York Groove" in the set, a song he wrote for glam rock band 'Hello' and which became a big hit in 1973. It was also covered by Kiss guitarist Ace Frehley in 1978, giving Russ his first big US hit. Incidentally, get well soon [Bob Bradbury](#)...

We didn't have to wait too long for arguably Russ's greatest ever guitar riff, in fact one of the greatest in rock'n'roll... the opening chords of 'Since You've Been Gone', the breakthrough hit for Richie Blackmore's Rainbow in 1979. Certainly sent shivers through the collective spine of us punters, as did the killer riff of the aforementioned 'Hold Your Head Up' which he did a couple of songs later.

Of course the show couldn't have been complete without his most commercially successful song, and no doubt his pension fund. Returning to the stage after a superb 90 minute set, the encore was inevitably the iconic "God Gave Rock'n'Roll to You", a song that was a big hit for Argent in 1973, but then a worldwide mega-hit for Kiss in 1991 when it was featured in the film 'Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey'. And, introducing the song, Russ didn't seem at all bitter about the fact that Gene Simmons changed a couple of lyrics (eg the 'please don't tease Cliff Richard' line..!) and was consequently awarded HALF the publishing royalty...! No, bitter? Never... nor would I be.... er... NOT..! Still, half of a very BIG figure is still a very BIG figure so he was ok in the end... 😊

The only disappointment of the evening was the turn-out... I've seen The Beaverwood absolutely rammed in the past, for tribute acts such as [Absolute Bowie](#) and [The Rollin Stoned](#) (both of whom are playing there next month folks... get your tickets early..!) but tonight was not one of them... In fact it was probably only just a little over half capacity last night, yet more proof if it was needed that it's the tribs who are keeping music live in our smaller rock venues...

Oh well, yah boo sucks to the music fans who didn't attend the show... they missed one of rock's true legends doing what he does best... giving us some great rock'n'roll (via God of course...!) 😊

The next review is from the gig at **The Wrecking Ball Arts Centre** in Hull and is from Fireworks magazine.

<http://wix.to/Qv2APrm>

INTERVIEW - GOD GAVE ROCK & ROLL TO YOU

This came up on YouTube earlier this month...part of an interview...the story behind the song... Russ did recently for the YT channel Artists on Record. It's not long...about 8 minutes.

https://youtu.be/KfoGOhkbrzY?si=l22pJO9l_HkoufQ6

BAND PODCASTS

During last year's Germany tour, Ian and Sven did "three minute interviews" with Russ's band members. These are fun interviews during which you will learn just a little more about the individual members. Just allow a bit more than three minutes, though....maybe ten or so. We start with keyboard player, Marc Rapson.

<https://youtu.be/tMZKjGuCB1M?si=naxBDeM6snC53xps>



LYRIC OF THE MONTH

When I first heard this I didn't think it sounded like one of Russ's songs at all. A real rocky one from Russ's hidden "hard man" side 😊. But what is it? Scroll right down to the end to find the answer.

**People ran for cover when they rolled to town
Stand in the way and, baby, you were run down
Every night after light
You could always bet they'd be in a fight**

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

From Elizabeth Palmieri

How long have you been vegan and why?

Russ: *I first became Vegetarian , 43 Years ago, always feeling I should become Vegan. I always hated the way humans exploit animals.. When I looked at the way animals cared for their young I decided not to be a part of that anymore.....and became Vegan 41 years ago. It's definitely a freeing feeling to no longer be involved in the exploitation of animals...*

Best wishes to you Elizabeth...I hope to see you again before long, to savour one your (vegan) cakes and best to your husband.

Love,

Russ

FROM DAVE

THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE...OR SHOULD I SAY, APPRECIATION

By Dave Williams

Back in 1976 I became penfriends with two girls who like me, are massive fans of Argent and Russ Ballard. No emails or internet back in those days, so plenty of news and discussion was transported between Derbyshire, Berkshire and Merseyside via Royal Mail. The three of us continue to keep in touch to this day, but not at the same level as the mid-70s when long letters were been exchanged once or even twice a week..

One of the girls, Belinda, has a natural talent for drawing, and when one year we decided to send Russ an extra special birthday card, I sourced the required card, measuring something like 24" by 18" in old imperial dimensions. Belinda set to work on drawing a giant picture of Russ, based on the image on the inner sleeve of Argent's In Deep. A border was created all around the drawing in the form of musical notes, which, had Russ attempt to play it on piano, he would have discovered that it was the music for his song Liar, which we purchased from a music shop. All three of us had some input on other parts of the card, so it travelled to and fro several times between three counties under the care of Postman Pat before the point was reached where it was completed and ready for despatch to Hertfordshire. This presented a problem. With no address, how could we deliver it to Russ with certainty that it wouldn't go missing and not reach him. This is where Sue, the third member of the team, came in. Sue had ways and means, and working at the telephone exchange, she managed to track down Russ's brother Roy. She was very hesitant about calling him, but Roy was very amiable and agreed to receive the card and pass it on to his brother on his big day.

Afterwards, nothing was heard for weeks, and we weren't really expecting to hear anything anyway. Then one Saturday morning a letter dropped through the door and landed face down. On the back of the envelope, I could see RB printed on it, in italic font. If you've received such an envelope, you'll know. Wow, could it be 'the' RB? Indeed, it was. A very nice thank you letter, with Russ saying that the card was on top of his fridge and was monopolising his kitchen. Meanwhile, similar letters were dropping through letterboxes in Warrington and Burghfield Common. Yes, Russ had taken the time to write individually to all three of us. He apologised for not writing sooner, saying he'd been in America, no doubt writing another New York Groove whilst on the plane! In fact he'd been recording At the Third Stroke, and gave us all a few lines about the musicians and producer, and how pleased he was with the results.

Sadly, we didn't take a photograph of the card. You needed a camera and film in those days. But I liked Belinda's drawing so much that she drew another one as a gift for me, and here it is.



Strangely, despite the fact that our friendship goes back to over 47 years, the three of us have kept our relationship as correspondence only. I've never met Sue nor Belinda, and I think Sue and Belinda met on just one occasion. We have spoken to each other on the phone only once, or maybe twice, and that was

related to getting our card transported safely to Russ. I think we enjoy the mystery. Oh, and by coincidence, our birthdays all fall within the same week, June 11th, June 13th and June 17th, which we always considered a bit spooky, but at least it made it easy to remember.

47 years is a long time, but Carole Williams, who looks after Russ's official Facebook page, can boast an even longer friendship, having made friends with a girl called Sandra back in the early 1960s when they followed Adam Faith and The Roulettes. Their friendship continues to this day.

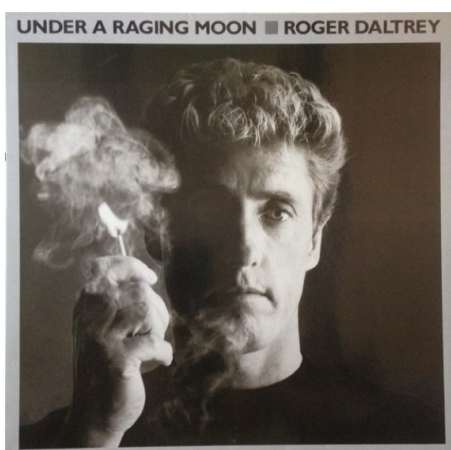
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Russ Ballard is not the only ex-Argent member touring in recent weeks. Rod Argent and John Verity have also been hitting the road, Rod with The Zombies and John with his new venture, the Verity Bromham Band. This is a collaboration between John Verity and Del Bromham, the lead guitarist with Stray, a band that started life around the same time as Argent towards the end of the 1960s. Verity Bromham include the two Argent hits Hold Your Head Up and God Gave Rock and Roll To You in their set, and just as Rod always does with The Zombies, JV made the audience very aware that the latter is not a Kiss song as they lead people to believe. He added "Argent released it first in 1973 and the writer is Russ Ballard", which drew a cheer from the crowd.

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month features a Russ Ballard song recorded by one of Russ's longest associates.

No.64



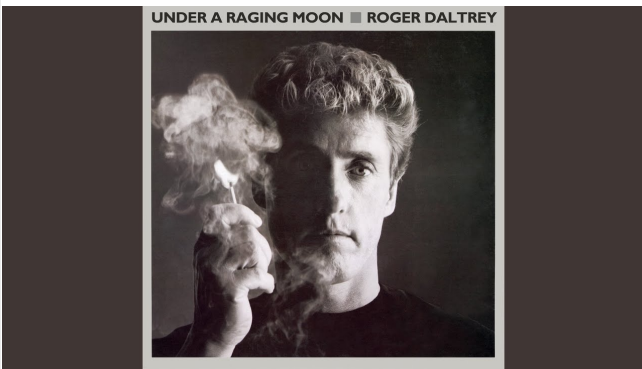
Breaking Down Paradise by Roger Daltrey

Who vocalist Roger Daltrey has a long association of working with Russ Ballard, stretching back to Roger's first solo album on which Russ played as a session musician, before going on to produce his 1975 album **Ride a Rock Horse**.

Ten years later in 1985, Roger released his 6th solo album, **Under a Raging Moon**, which featured this Russ Ballard gem. Readers might recall that Russ guested on Roger Daltrey's US tour in 1985, and this song, **Breaking Down Paradise**, was featured in the setlist.

This is Roger's 3rd feature in Cover Quest, having previously featured with Proud (No.21) and Just a Dream Away (No.50). I make that three down, five to go.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OA-WKHYPHU>

	<p>Breaking Down Paradise Provided to YouTube by Universal Music Group Breaking Down Paradise · Roger Daltrey Under A Raging Moon © 1985 Roger Daltrey, under exclusive licence to Virgin ... www.youtube.com</p>
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LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

From Barnett Dogs - **Riding With The Angels**, first released in 1980. It was later covered by Bruce Dickinson in 1981 and Samson in 1990. Some lovely pictures to look at while you are listening to this with, thanks to Ewan.

<https://youtu.be/4oxZvOxXlhc?si=RW5Nd-b8eRNQeVhH>