



(Header by Sven)

March 2024

A big welcome to our new readers.

This newsletter marks the beginning of our 12th year!! I haven't quite got the new email ready to mark that occasion but, hopefully, next month.... Some of you might receive this one from the new email if Outlook fails to deliver.

Markus Linten, in Germany, often tells me about Russ's plays on radio in Germany. How brilliant it would be if we had the same in the UK! Have a look in "Letters" for the latest on his local radio station.

Russ's tour of Germany, Rock meets Classic, is coming up fast. The first date is 10th April, with seven shows over eleven days. If you are going, have a great time. This is something a bit different.

Sue

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Hi All, Ended last months biog in summer 1963, in Bridlington, where we [Adam Faith and the Roulettes] were playing a 12 weeks season . My mother and father

had surprised me by travelling from their home in Hertfordshire to Brid in Yorkshire.

Around about 9 - 9.30 one July morning, there was a knock at our front door where The Roulettes were staying. I was surprised to find my mum standing in the doorway, she said 'hello love' as she walked past me straight in to my bedroom.

She also exchanged pleasantries with Pete Thorp and dancer Sandra...She walked out of the bedroom then into the next door, which was a sitting room. At this time it was a sleeping room occupied by four of our friends, who had arrived to have a free holiday. Before I could apologise, she had stepped over three bodies in the dark. "Mum", I shouted, "Come into the kitchen" - "I'll get dad". She told me they left home at 5.00 am. It was great to see them, they were always interested in what I was doing. However, I did feel as though I was being spied upon, which, I realised in time wasn't true, but I thought they were still treating me like a little boy. The other Roulettes' parents never came to see them. Now I see they were missing out. They came to see the show and really enjoyed it. Mum said it took her back to her time 'On the boards'. One strange situation occurred, from the first night the audience was made up of families along with groups of girls and boys having their week or two week holiday. The crowd politely applauded until Adam or The Roulettes came onto the stage, then the young girls would scream at the top of their lungs. It was a little like being on two different planets. There was one girl in particular, a local girl, who often appeared to be alone in the audience, however, it didn't stop her running around the theatre screaming her head off while the rest of the audience just laughed or scowled at her....it was weird.

The cast of 'Make It Tonight' took part in a charity cricket match against the cast of another summer show. It was the cast of singer Frankie Vaughan's show, and it was to be held in Scarborough....It was something I would love to have taken part in, however, I decided I didn't want to get cricket ball in my one sighted eye. We went to Scarborough by coach and it was just like family holiday. Tel's sister Pam was on board along with my brother Roy, his wife to be, Jean...Mum and Dad and all our friends from Hertfordshire. I can't remember who won - it's irrelevant....we made some money for charity.

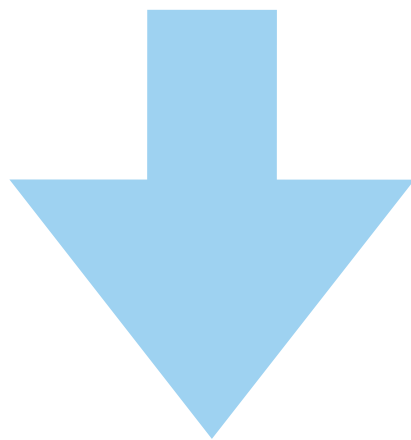
Well I'll continue the story next month. I wish you all well - Lots of Love, Russ
XX

Sue: I was at the cricket match in Scarborough. Here are a few (not very good) photos I took with my little Brownie camera. 1) Bob Henrit, 2) Mod Rogan, 3) if you are old enough, some of you might recognise Frankie Vaughan at the bottom of the picture, 4) down in the corner is Adam's brother, Roger.



PORTUGAL

A reminder that Russ will be playing with his usual band, at the Casino Estoril in Cascais, Portugal on 10th May. Also playing will be Brian Spence. I don't know what the ticket situation is just now but this show always sells out and it is only a few weeks away. Here is the link for tickets.... <https://ticketline.sapo.pt/evento/russ-ballard-and-band-brian-spence-live-202-79213?fbclid=IwAR2VsN5a0il2oZiTIKXEndXfaNdTdNJX8dzNMaITEuwtFQyOLuQDrtZLTOg>
Why not treat yourselves to a few days in Portugal. It's not very far from Lisbon.



Remember Minds



RUSS BALLARD
LIVE @ THE CASINO ESTORIL
MAY 10th 2024



RUSSBALLARDMUSIC.COM | [@RUSSBALLARDMUSICOFFICIAL](https://www.instagram.com/RUSSBALLARDMUSICOFFICIAL)

RECENT INTERVIEW

Here is an interview Russ did recently with Craig Garber of the podcast, EveryoneLovesGuitar. It went live on YouTube on 16th March. This is a very long one but shows a deeper side to Russ than most interviews.

<https://youtu.be/7acU844PmaA?si=m2ka1zEDbPdk8iGP>

VOICES OF RUSS BALLARD PODCAST

Sven and Ian's latest podcast is with Graham Bonnet (Rainbow, Michael Schenker, Alcatrazz and many more). Graham has recorded many of Russ's songs over the years including, of course, Since You Been Gone with Rainbow. You can listen to the podcast via Russ's website here <https://l.facebook.com/l.php?> or wherever you usually listen to podcasts.



VOICES PODCASTS - BAND INTERVIEWS

The final part of the short, entertaining chats with the band, recorded during Russ's last Germany tour. Here is Sven with drummer, John Miller.

<https://youtu.be/MsUUIkoEaRQ?si=WsFiZiqZTieoplqA>



LETTERS

From Markus Linten

Hello Sue,

It was a good evening yesterday for Russ on MDR Sachsen-Anhalt (Magdeburg); the show's motto was "Money", and "It's only money" by Argent was played two times – mentioning Russ and Rod!

Part 1 starting from 1.16.28 and part 2 from 1.38.30 – you can listen to the songs here [Der „Oldieabend“ vom 29. Februar 2024 bei MDR SACHSEN-ANHALT – Das Radio wie wir | MDR.DE](#)

Best wishes from the Rheinland & a happy weekend
Markus

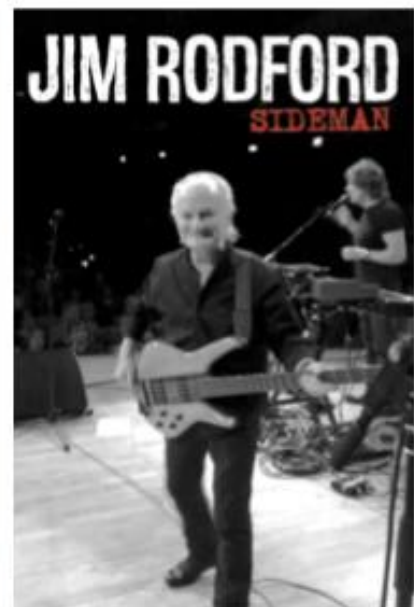
Sue: Sorry, the link in Markus's letter might not work.

FROM DAVE

Three of a Kind

We all love to see a few words written about **Argent** from time to time. Formed in 1969, Russ was a founder member of the band, along with Rod Argent, Jim Rodford and Bob Henrit. After Russ left the band to pursue a solo career, his replacements were John Grimaldi and John Verity, the line-up expanding to a quintet. Argent MkII veered towards the jazz-rock genre that Russ wasn't too keen on. After two albums, *Circus* and *Counterpoints*, and tours of the United States and the UK, the band decided to call it a day. John Verity, like Russ, wasn't comfortable with the musical direction, with John Grimaldi taking on most of the guitar, and before the split, he had already decided to form a side project that was more rock focussed. On mentioning this to Jim and Bob, they too, showed interest, and when the decision was made to put Argent on hold, at least for the foreseeable, it was full steam ahead with the new project, initially to be named Henrit-Rodford-Verity, but quickly changed to **Phoenix**.

All three members of Phoenix, have gone on to publish books, and within those pages, there's plenty to interest Argent and Russ Ballard fans.



The first of the three books released was **Banging On**, ISBN 978-0957305830, by **Bob Henrit**. Bob, as newsletter readers will know, is a brilliant writer. His pieces are always informative and infused throughout with humour. Whether it be a report on a tour of a drum factory or a review of a new drum kit for a musician's journal, or an account of a Japanese tour with the Russ Ballard Band, Bob makes it entertaining. *Banging On*, which was published by Bank House Books in November 2013, is long out of print, but should still be obtainable if you search hard enough. In fact, as I write this, there is a used copy available on Amazon's

website for a mindblowing £195. 40, though there is another copy going slightly cheaper at £113.98. All I can say is Wow, I'm glad I invested when the book was originally released. Would I part with my copy for £195? Probably not. I've read the 360 pages from front to back at least twice, and I still refer to it often. The book covers Bob's career right from the beginning, which predates working with Russ. He goes on to talk about all those early bands he played with in the Cheshunt area of Hertfordshire, then onto Adam Faith and The Roulettes, Unit 4 + 2, Argent, Phoenix, The Kinks and plenty more besides. It's a fantastic book, not just for Argent and Kinks fans, but anyone who grew up enjoying music from the beat era, the seventies, through to the arrival of punk. There's also plenty of family related content, including his son Jos, who covered on drums in Russ's band when his dad became unwell. I honestly can't recommend this book highly enough.

Second of the trinity is **Sideman**, ISBN 979-8543873090, from **Jim Rodford**. For those who don't know, the late Argent bass guitarist used to keep a diary throughout his career. Both Bob Henrit and John Verity have previously commented that if they were unsure of something that happened in the past, Jim was the person who'd know. In that sense, Jim's posthumous book, independently published in 2021, is a reliable account, again, of growing up as a teenage musician from the late 1950s' slightly earlier than Bob, being a few years older, and experiencing working alongside The Beatles in their infancy, as well as the beat boom that followed. Jim was more than just a bass guitarist. He was a great all-round musician with a good singing voice, who loved playing, even locally when his professional touring schedule allowed the time. More than anything, he was a gentleman and a dedicated and much-loved family man, proud and supportive of his children and grandchildren, as well as a friend to thousands of fans he met along the way.

Again, there is plenty for Argent fans to enjoy, and his memoirs cover up to his early days in The Kinks. Sadly, Jim passed away before he was able to complete his story, but the 289-page book continues to a conclusion thanks to contributions from family and friends, and its' editor Mike Southon. The book is still widely available and is selling for around £30 new.

John Verity filled the shoes of Russ Ballard when Russ left Argent. Well to be more precise, John V filled one of Russ's shoes. The other was filled by fellow guitarist John Grimaldi, aka John G. I'd previously read a shortened biography by John Verity in a book titled **Guitar Gods of Bedfordshire**. Those who know anything about John will know that, whilst he lives in Bedfordshire, and has done for many years, he was actually born in Bradford, West Yorkshire. Slightly younger than Bob and Jim, JV started his career in the early 60s, playing in local

bands until joining his first professional band Richard Kent Style, playing sometimes twice a night, 7 days a week. John takes us on his own career path, spending a lot of time working in America, including prestigious support slots with Jim Hendrix, Canned Heat and Janis Joplin. Richard Kent Style became Tunnel and then in 1970, the first John Verity Band was formed in Miami. John's experiences whilst working in America are quite interesting to say the least, and not at all plain sailing. He experienced some very hairy moments, including having a gun held to his head.

In 1971 he returned to Great Britain and signed to Probe Records, again, the full story is quite an eye opener. He goes on to talk about the JV Band supporting Argent on tour, and how he eventually was invited to join them. Argent fans will enjoy the few pages about Argent, given that the band split two years later. Then from the ashes of Argent came Phoenix, which was John's brainchild. After Jim Rodford left Phoenix to join The Kinks, John got more involved in recording and engineering for a while, simultaneously working as a solo artist. Beyond the early 80s, John's story really takes off. He suffered some astonishing mishaps that would have caused most people in the industry to throw the towel in, but each time he came back stronger, and nowadays he is riding the crest of a wave working with Stray guitarist Del Bromham in the Verity Bromham Band. In the 1980s, he did quite a lot of studio sessions with Russ Ballard, including the demo versions of I Surrender and So You Win Again. These are covered in the book. John was also a member of Russ's band **The Barnett Dogs**.

John's book, titled **This Rock 'N' Roll Won't Last Forever**, ISBN 978-1-915246-43-1, was released at the end of last year, runs to 223 pages and is available in hardback from Wymer Publishing.

There are two, possibly three or even four, books missing of course. Wouldn't it be great if Russ Ballard, Rod Argent, Chris White and Colin Blunstone shared their life stories in book form. We live in hope!

LYRIC OF THE MONTH

Thank you to Michele Turner for this month's lyric. Michele said, "*Such great song/lyrics. I love the energetic performance from Russ and the band in this video*". This is one of my favourite videos too.

**When your friends let you down
It cuts like a knife
And that old devil wind, yeah
It blows into your life**

And those times
When you feel you are in hell
Think of me, if you're alone
Pick up the phone
Yeah, I want you to know, want you to know that.....

Scroll down to the end of the newsletter to check whether you are right and to watch the video.

AMATEUR REVIEW

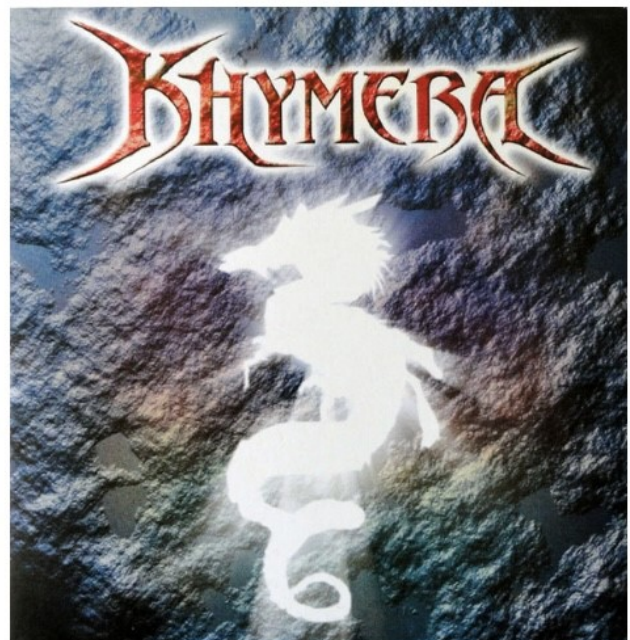
A few months ago I included an amateur video review of Russ's Winning. Here is another, this time, Voices, new on YouTube. I didn't intend to put this into this newsletter but I discovered it on YouTube while I was looking for something else. It is always amusing when the younger generation hears something big but which is new to them. It's not very long, 8 minutes, but entertaining.

<https://youtu.be/j9tQdP6rNKw?si=R9L1-aB5cuH2oPHc>

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

This month's cover features a really great song that Russ co-wrote with two famous American songwriters. When you listen to it, I'm sure you'll agree that its definitely detectable that Russ was involved.

No.67



Tears on the Pages by **Sunstorm** / **Khymera**

Tears on the Pages is a song co-written by Jon Lind, Jim Peterik and Russ Ballard. **Jon Lind** was a songwriter from New York. If I tell you that he co-wrote **Boogie Wonderland** (The Emotions), **Crazy for You** (Madonna) and **Save the Best for Last** (Vanessa Williams), it will give you a good idea of just how good he was at his profession. **Jim Peterik** is best known as founder member of **Survivor**, and co-writer of the legendary song **Eye of the Tiger**. Pairing these two writers with British songwriting legend Russ Ballard was always likely to achieve a result. **Tears on the Pages** is exactly that. This really is a very strong song, and how it hasn't become a classic rock song I'll never know. I've had it in my Cover Quest list for a few years now, and never got around to listening to it until now.

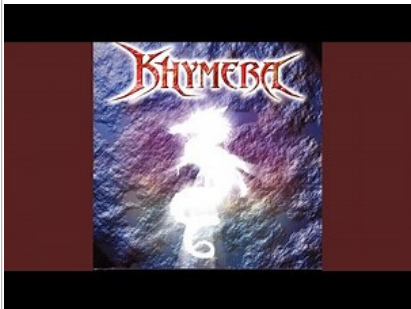
Sunstorm is a project by Frontiers Records, an Italian record label specialising in rock music, not just featuring new acts, but also a host of classic names from the past. Sunstorm featured former Rainbow and Deep Purple singer **Joe Lynn Turner** on lead vocals. Joe, of course, was the singer on Rainbow's **I Surrender**, the Russ Ballard song that was originally planned for release by ex-Argent members **Phoenix**, until Charisma Records said it wasn't commercial enough, but hey ho. Decca turned down The Beatles, proof that you can't win them all. I like Joe a lot. Not particularly for his work with Rainbow or Deep Purple, but he paired up with bass guitarist **Glenn Hughes** in 2001, as the **Hughes Turner Project**, releasing two studio albums plus a live album. I caught them at a concert in the West Midlands and halfway through the concert he threw an electric guitar over his shoulder and proceeded to dazzle the audience with his playing. When asked why he'd never played guitar with Rainbow or Purple, he laughed and reminded everyone that Richie Blackmore doesn't need an additional guitarist.

Tears on the Pages is featured on the second **Sunstorm** album, **House of Dreams**, released in 2009. Frontiers Records had actually already released a version of the song by Italian AOR band **Khymera** six years earlier, which featured former **Kansas** lead singer **Steve Walsh**.

Here are links to versions by:

Sunstorm: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-VuoradZb8>

Kymera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxQw2g1tEGs>



[Tears On The Pages](#)

Provided to YouTube by The Orchard Enterprises
Tears On The Pages · Kymera Kymera © 2003
Frontiers Records Released on: 2005-08-09 Auto-generated by YouTube.

www.youtube.com

LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

Russ and The Barnet Dogs....I Will Be There. Great song and great video. If you are in need of a little uplift, watch this video. You will probably want to watch it again.

<https://youtu.be/NjYKqUthY5U?si=XH3xZxjC3akOzPWE>