



(Header by Sven)

January 2025

A big welcome to our new readers...quite a lot this month. Good to have you all with us.

We are still having a few problems with sending the newsletter. You might sometimes get a very long block of random letters, numbers and symbols. The only people who have reported this so far have a Gmail account. It doesn't happen to all of them every month. If you do get this, (and you can read this, of course), scroll right down to the bottom and click on "view entire message". The newsletter should magically appear in its usual form. This month we have a podcast from Colin Blunstone. Colin is very easy on the ear! We have news from Markus in Germany and, of course, our own Dave has been researching a good cover.

It seems to be very easy now to make fake profiles on Facebook. Probably on other social media platforms too but that is outside my experience. Recently, somebody has been using Russ's name and the cover and profile pictures from his official FB page on their own profiles. **None of these are Russ.** His official page has almost 7000 followers. All the others are fake. Any personal profile on FB called "Russ Ballard" is not him. There is one Instagram account under russballardmusicofficial. It re-posts the FB page posts. And there is one and only one official FB group and that is "Voices Of Russ Ballard".

I would like to wish you all a very happy 2025. Let's hope it will be full of music.
Sue

THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

Hi Everybody, First of all Thank you for the many good wishes you sent me and the support throughout the years. I hope your Christmas went well and I want to wish you a great 2025 - May you achieve your dreams.

This past month I've been playing more guitar than usual. Since signing with Frontiers and coming closer to the April and May tour, I decided I should brush up on the new songs that contain guitar solos.

I've also spent time in the studio finishing tracks I've written with David Young and Julie Maguire (aka The Duchess). David is guitarist and Julie is singer of 'Space Elevator'. The songs have a great vibe, and something a little different for me. Pretty soon I'll be rehearsing with my band for the tour of Germany for late April and May. I'm really looking forward to it - My good friend Michael Voss will be supporting on the show. He's a great musician and has a great new album.

It's always a blast taking the stage with The Super Hippies (that's the name I've given my band...don't tell them, they don't know it yet 🤫). PJ Phillips bass - Marc Rapson keys - Roly Jones guitar and John Miller drums...They're an amazing bunch of musicians, and I can't wait. Hope to see you in Germany and Switzerland 😊 Love Russ xx

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Margate - September 1964 - I remember the final night of our Margate season and saying our goodbyes to the cast and having a different feeling from the farewell from the year before at Bridlington. It was as if somehow I knew it would be the last one, or maybe, I was growing up. I felt I'd learned a lot about life in the last twelve months. We usually drove home from shows together - On this occasion I drove home alone and definitely had a melancholic feeling. It was the middle of September and the night was chilly. Also for much of the journey I was driving through patchy fog.

Chris Andrews was writing prolifically, and we recorded some more singles with Adam and although they made the charts, the positions were getting lower. Our record producer, John Burgess, suggested we make a 'Live' album, which indeed we did.

The recording took place in Abbey Road studio number two. It was to be a fun night....A stage was erected at the far end of the studio and along with our amps and drums was an upright piano which Chris Andrews played as well as singing backing vocals with us. The audience came from the Adam Faith and the Roulettes fan club. We didn't actually record our usual stage show, instead, along with Adam's hit medley, we included 'Rockier' songs....'I Need Your Lovin' and a Ray Charles song "The Night Time is The Right Time'. Another song always enjoyable to play was a blues shuffle, called 'I Need Your Lovin' Everyday'. It was a fun night.

The album was called 'Faith Alive' and sold quite well....We sang 'I Need Your Loving' on a TV show a month or two after release of the album. The show was 'Ready Steady Live', It was the same show as 'Ready Steady Go', but the Producers decided the bands should play live instead of miming to records. On this particular show The Kinks were one of the 'Star' bands, along with an interview with John Lennon and George Harrison.....The director asked if we would close the show playing together with The Kinks.

After the transmission we were invited to the green room for drinks. When we arrived the Kinks were there along with John Lennon and George Harrison....They were both very friendly....I remember one comment that George made which surprised me. He thought the Beatle sound was as popular as it was because, "The rhythm guitar was so loud" _ I wonder?

Sue: Carole, who looks after Russ's Facebook page, and I were at the recording of "Faith Alive" at Abbey Road studios, along with our friends Jan and Sandra, who receive this newsletter. We were all very young, of course. 😊 We reckon we were standing very close to each other but Carole and I didn't meet until 2012, when Russ introduced us at one of the Argent reunion gigs. Thanks to Carole for this photo she took after the recording.



VOICES OF RUSS BALLARD PODCAST

Here is a podcast for Zombies fans. For the first podcast of 2025, Ian spoke with Colin Blunstone. Colin, of course, had a hit in the early 70s with Russ's I Don't Believe In Miracles. Did you know that Argent provided the instrumental track for that record? Colin talks about his career in the Zombies, which started in the 60s and continued until recently. He will be touring with his own band this year. I can vouch for the fact that Colin is an entertaining speaker.

<https://russballardmusic.com/podcast>



LYRIC OF THE MONTH

This track is just a little bit topical at the moment. Do you know what it is? Scroll right down to the end of the newsletter for the answer and listen to a very beautiful track.

**Is there wind, is there rain, is there love, is there pain
Can you see this world from there
Does life mean anything - the answers time may bring
Your secrets one day we'll share.**

A REMINDER

As if anyone needs it. Coming up in a few months. If you are lucky enough to be near, now is the time to get your tickets. Hear some new tracks, hear some favourite tracks.

RUSS BALLARD
Songs from the Warehouse
On **TOUR** 2025

28/4	HAMBURG	Gruenspan
30/4	NÜRNBERG	Hirsch
01/5	MÜNCHEN	Muffatwerk
02/5	LUDWIGSBURG	Scala
04/5	KARLSRUHE	Tollhaus
05/5	AUGSBURG	Spectrum
06/5	FREIBURG	Jazzhaus
08/5	CH-RUBIGEN	Mühle Hunziken

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Rock **GFM** **SLAM**

FROM MARKUS

Markus Linten in Germany is a good friend to the newsletter and often sends me things we can use. Markus has told me about recent radio play for Russ, including a request by him to play an Argent song. You can listen to it from **1:35:15** <https://www.mdr.de/mdr-sachsen-anhalt/programm/der-oldieabend-mit-peter-hofmann-100.html> (Oldieabend vom 16.1.2025). I don't know for how long this link will work.

Markus also sent this link to an interview with Russ in Classic Rock magazine from February 2024. This is one for our German friends because it is in German and I can't see a translate button. I can translate the title for you, though.....My fire still burns.

<https://classicrock.net/russ-ballard-mein-feuer-brennt-noch-immer/>

FROM THE ARCHIVES

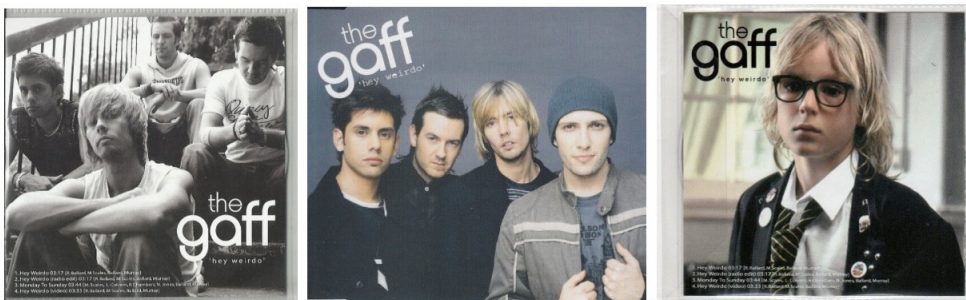
Not too far back. Here is an article from Songwriting Magazine in 2022. Russ talking about how he wrote the classic, God Gave Rock n Roll To You. There is always a little bit more to find out.

<https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.songwritingmagazine.co.uk%2Fsongs%2Fhow-i-wrote%2Fgod-gave-rock-and-roll-to-you-argent-russ-ballard>

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Something more up-tempo this month, taken from a project that Christian Ballard was involved with back in 2005. I'm reminded of Hello, who were discovered by Roy Ballard in the early 1970s, and developed into a successful chart act by his younger brother Russell.

No.77



Hey Weirdo by The Gaff

Released on 2R Records in 2005, **Hey Weirdo** is a song recorded by Hertfordshire group The Gaff, formed in January 2002. They consisted of Matt Scales on vocals, Neil Jones on guitar, Leon Colven on bass and Rich Chambers on drums. The song, co-written by Russ, his son Christian, Andrew Murray and Matt Scales, raises the subject of not fitting in at school, and carries an anti-bullying message. A few words about Matt Scales. Matt grew up in Hoddesdon and suffered from Cystic Fibrosis, but steadfastly refused to let this hold him back from achieving his goals in life. Involved in local bands from an early age, Matt was a colourful and fun loving character, so much so that many people were unaware that he had the condition. Sadly, his life was cut short in April 2007, aged 28, as a result of an infection brought on by the disease. A talented songwriter, in both words and music, he was working on his first solo project at the time he became ill, cutting short what might have been a promising music career. His legacy includes a song called Breathe, which he wrote and performed at the Cystic Fibrosis Awards. Matt was always supportive of fellow sufferers of the disease.

Hey Weirdo, is a fantastic song and crept just inside the Top 100 singles chart.

Here is a link to the video: <https://www.bandmine.com/mattscalesofficial/videos/2/h5HTmerbExs>

There is also footage of the actual making of the video, which took place at Parliament Hill School in Highgate, London. Though it isn't mentioned, Matt chose to eat a jam doughnut just before shooting the video, and the jam spilled down the front of his white shirt, causing delays and disruption to the shoot, as well as a telling off from the Wardrobe lady, as this was the only white shirt available. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7IP8styGDY>

LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

This month six of the planets, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are aligned and are visible in the night sky so this seems to be an appropriate track to play. From Russ's first self-titled album Venus (Shine Your Light).

https://youtu.be/hNSiD4p_z2Q?si=UafM1nIkJp8gQMhX