



(Christmas card by Sven)

December 2025

I just had a look to see what was in last December's newsletter, specifically the Spotify stats. It feels like some of those things happened only recently. How quickly this year has gone!! Russ had a busy year. As one of his family said to me, the older he gets, the busier he gets. And it looks like next year isn't going to be any quieter. Keep your eye on the newsletter and Russ's Facebook page.

Do you wish you had bought tickets for the now sold out Barnoldswick gigs coming up in January? I can help. Read below.

See below for a taster for a special Voices podcast coming up in January. Have a guess who it is before you look.

Thanks to Sven for the Spotify stats, Ian for some of the info in this newsletter and, as always, Dave.

All of you, have a very Happy Christmas. 🎄📺🧑‍🎄

Sue

THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

This past month I've been focused on the forthcoming shows in January and how quickly they've come around. I decided to concentrate on the songs I'll be playing, and especially guitar solos....muscle memory is a component every musician must pay attention to, and one can become lazy with a break of a month or so. Also my great band members, PJ and my new guitarist, Paul Bond, have been coming over to my home every Wednesday to rehearse the songs, which has been very enjoyable.

I hope to see you in January at the shows in Barnoldswick, also The Wrecking Ball in Hull, The Stables at Milton Keynes and Huntingdon Hall in Worcester. I'm looking forward to it.

Come and say hi. 🎵👉

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Hi My Friends, After the last month's edition of my biog, I wrote about Rod's phone call to Bob Henrit and myself with his vision of forming a new group, and asking if we would be interested in being a part of it. We both said we would, as we were aware of Rod's ability as a musician and writer.

So, here we are, the group, Argent, ready to take on the world. After listening to the twelve songs written by Chris White and Rod, all on demos, well produced by the writers - I played the one song I had that I thought would be good, called 'Schoolgirl'. Rod, Bob, Jim and Chris thought it was strong...so we had enough to begin recording. If you didn't see last month's story and you're wondering about 'Jim', he was the first musician for Rod's group vision. Bob and I had seen him playing in The Mike Cotton sound and commented that he was a fabulous player...very fortunate that he was also Rod's cousin. We started recording at Abbey Road in the spring of 1969...the other studios we used were, "Olympic" in Barnes and 'Sound Techniques' in Church Street, Chelsea, London.

The recording and mixing of the album took about three months or so. While we were recording, I wrote two more songs, one called 'Lonely Hard Road', also a blues called 'Liar'. I was still writing the lyrics to Liar driving in to Sound Techniques for our final session.

So, for the first seven months of the group's existence, we'd been rehearsing - for last three months we'd made the album...."Argent". The album was recorded, mixed and mastered. Our record company, CBS along with our management, had arranged gigs in The UK and Europe namely, Holland, Belgium, Italy and another trip to our haunt of the year before, along with trips to the Apatek/Pharmacy, 🎵🎵🎵😄🎸 to buy Anein Pils. Germany . It was crazy, wonderful tough time. Hope you're there next month Happy Christmas.

COMING UP IN JANUARY

UK 2026

RUSS BALLARD

16 TH JAN	HULL	WRECKING BALL ARTS CENTRE	
17 TH JAN	BARNOLDSWICK	MUSIC AND ARTS CENTRE	SOLD OUT
18 TH JAN	BARNOLDSWICK	MUSIC AND ARTS CENTRE	SOLD OUT
18 TH JAN	BARNOLDSWICK	MUSIC AND ARTS CENTRE	SOLD OUT
23 RD JAN	MILTON KEYNES	THE STABLES	TICKETS ON SALE
24 TH JAN	WORCESTER	HUNTINGDON HALL	TICKETS ON SALE

RUSSBALLARDMUSIC.COM | @RUSSBALLARDMUSICOFFICIAL

Here are the ticket links for the UK gigs

Hull: <https://wreckingballmusic.myshopify.com/products/russ-ballard-friday-jan-16th-2026-8pm-10pm>

Milton Keynes: <https://stables.org/boxoffice/ticket/487001>

Worcester: <https://purchase.worcestertheatres.co.uk/ChooseSeats/93801>

I still have two seated tickets for the Saturday evening show in Barnoldswick if anyone is interested. These are my own tickets as I can no longer go to that gig. If you would like them, please email me, Sue, at russ.b.news@hotmail.co.uk. All the Barnoldswick shows are sold out.

THE VOICES OF RUSS BALLARD PODCASTS

Last month we had Ian's interview with the band, The Damn Truth. Now we have part 2, when Russ joined them for a chat.

<https://youtu.be/om5Un7CM5Qk?si=mfcdGawfU9Hq9VOX>



The Voices podcasts are all now on their own channel on YouTube.

[https://youtube.com/playlist?](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLx8EoLui0i_qNqxDPZeAZnqfllaiGSwb&si=OZUyiSa92CC3O7SZ)

[list=PLx8EoLui0i_qNqxDPZeAZnqfllaiGSwb&si=OZUyiSa92CC3O7SZ](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLx8EoLui0i_qNqxDPZeAZnqfllaiGSwb&si=OZUyiSa92CC3O7SZ) Click

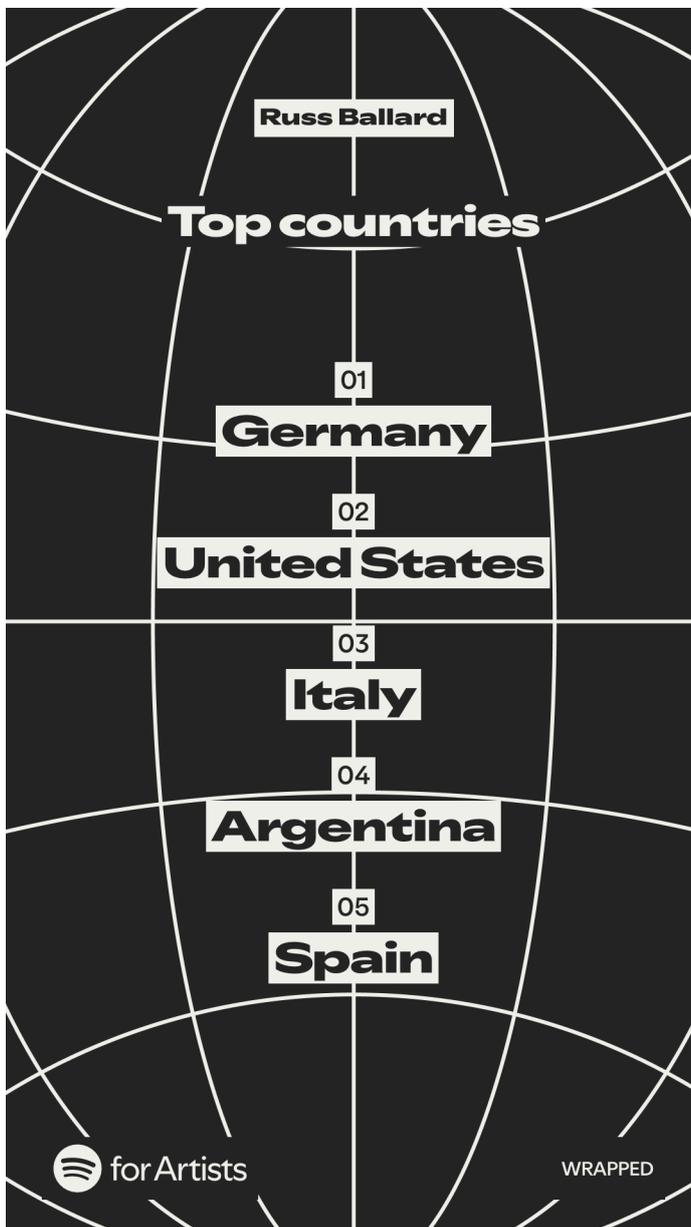
on the link, click subscribe and you will be the first to get the podcasts when they are released.

THE VOICES OF RUSS BALLARD PODCASTS TASTER

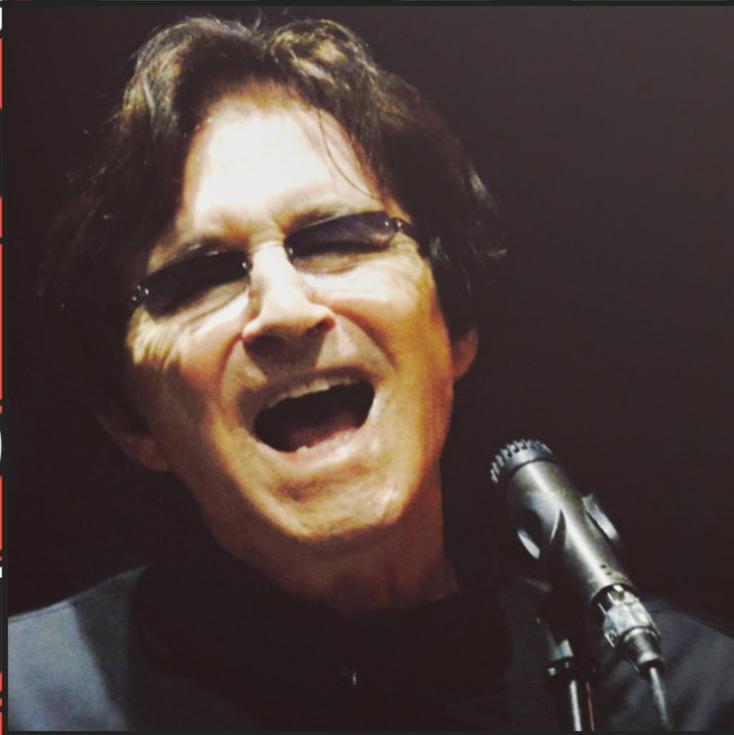
There is a special podcast with someone important in Russ's life coming up in January. Here is a little taster... <https://youtu.be/81VeD0mKA60?si=qK3zgvCUT4ilAEdY>

SPOTIFY STATS

Russ's Spotify figures for 2025...



2025



Russ Ballard

Listeners

531K

Hours

211K

Streams

2.9M

Countries

172

Last year Russ had 454k listeners and 2.61M streams so that has gone up nicely this year. Thanks to a new album!

MERCH

We still have merch for sale. Tote bags £10 + p&p (£2.50 for UK). **Signed** Songs From The Warehouse/The Hits Rewired CDs £20 + p&p (£2.50 for UK). Please email me, Sue, at russ.b.news@hotmail.co.uk if you are interested. This merch, plus caps, £20, will also be on sale at the UK gigs in January.

LYRIC OF THE MONTH

Still staying with Songs From The Warehouse. Do you know this one?

**"You don't need to know my name
But remember my face."**

Scroll down to the end of the newsletter to see if you were right and, while you are there, why not have a listen to the track.

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

A few weeks ago Russ did an interview for Anomiezine.com. This is read only but an easy read.

<https://anomiezine.com/blog/news/iconic-70-s-star-russ-ballard-talks-late-nights-with-the-beatles-working-with-kiss-and-touring>

FROM DAVE

Shakin's not all over

Reflecting back on 2025, wasn't it great to have the gift of a brilliant double album of new songs from Russ. Back in the 70s and 80s, artists and bands used to release LPs, either with jacket sleeves or gatefold sleeves. Examples of gatefold releases by Argent include Ring of Hands, In Deep and Encore, whereas it seems that Nexus only warranted a jacket sleeve, which felt underwhelming at the time. I seem to recall that gatefold albums became very expensive to

produce beyond the mid-70s, so a lot of record companies switched to providing paper inserts containing song lyrics. Maybe that was why Nexus only had a jacket sleeve. Once CDs came along, many of us were at an age where our eyesight was beginning to deteriorate and we couldn't read the small font size in the booklet anyway, even with spectacles or contact lenses. So, after all those years of living with Jacket sleeves for Russ Ballard's run of solo albums, from the first Russ Ballard solo LP through to *The Fire Still Burns*, how refreshing to have *Its Good To Be Here* and *Songs from The Warehouse / Hits Rewired* on beautifully crafted gatefold sleeves. Thank goodness the situation now seems to have been reversed, and buyers have an option of buying the CD or paying a premium for a nicely packaged vinyl version. I can only imagine how nice it would have been to have gatefold sleeves for the complete library of Russ's albums.

Talking of record releases, I just discovered today that a young female singer called Alessi Rose, has been headlining a major UK tour having recently come off a tour supporting Dua Lipa. Alessi hails from my home city, hardly a hotbed for homegrown artists, so how come she slipped under the radar locally? In bygone days, Alessi would have most likely served an apprenticeship on the local gig circuit, but that barely exists anymore, and where it does, the demand seems to be for tribute acts or covers bands. It appears that she was studying poetry at Liverpool university. When Covid came along, she used lockdown as an opportunity to dabble with music. Evidently a quick learner, she started writing and recording songs using Apple's Logic software and incredibly, besides supporting Dua Lipa, she's already been signed by Polydor, has a few singles with videos under her belt, and is now headlining a tour of major venues across the UK and The Netherlands. She's now competing for air time with the likes of Sabrina Carpenter, Olivia Dean and Charlotte Roan. I ask myself "How is this even possible?". Of course, the Liverpool influence. I hadn't thought of that. It all makes sense now.

With the likes of Russ Ballard, Leo Sayer and many others, still producing great records, what's to stand in the way of any of these releases catching the attention of a radio producer in 2026. In fact, that actually happened in recent months when a new release by Shakin' Stevens, titled *All You Need Is Greed*, made the BBC Radio Playlist. It didn't sound at all out of place. Actually, the chorus could easily have come from Russ himself. So, I find myself wondering whether a 'Song from the Warehouse', or a 'Rewired' hit, with a push and a shove from the right people, could yet see Russ back on the BBC airwaves? Wouldn't that be something.

Happy Christmas to all....and here's some old Shaky <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZthduXqQQ5M>

BUSY BAND!

We know that Russ's band is made up of extremely talented musicians, who are individually successful. Two of them, **PJ** (bass) and **Marc** (Keyboards) have new projects of their own.

PJ's band, **Counterfeit Dogs**, has a new Facebook page, called Counterfeit Dogs, and an EP, released at the beginning of this month called Sign Of Four, with PJ on lead vocals. Here is a teaser... <https://youtu.be/Zxu2XdEtDQo?si=hp5e29zydXoZ1FZt>



Marc Rapson has many talents and, amongst other things he is a songwriter. His new Christmas song, **It's Christmas (As Long As You're Here)** was written with and recorded by Brighton based Georgie Sweet. This is gorgeous! <https://youtu.be/AgxrdoI8vSQ?si=Xx6zCBSpfvuZnHAK>

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Once again, we stay with the 1976 album **Winning** this month, and as I said last month, it's the gift that keeps on giving! I believe this was a one-off live performance, and was never released on any recordings.

No.88



Since You Been Gone by Paul Heaton & Jacqui Abbott

I doubt that there will be many people, at least in the UK, who are unfamiliar with the band **Beautiful South**. They've had numerous hits since their formation in 1988, with **Paul Heaton** at the helm, and a trio of Daves; **Dave Hemingway**, who like Paul Heaton, was originally in the band **The Housemartins**, co-lead vocals, **Dave Rotheray** on guitar and **Dave Stead** on drums. The line-up was completed by former Housemartins roadie **Sean Welsh** on bass and, for recordings, **Damon Butcher** on keyboards. A female singer, **Briana Corrigan**, born in Northern Ireland, was added in time for their first record release.

Like The Housemartins, Beautiful South soon chalked up a number of chart hits, including **Song for Whoever**, **You Keep It All In**, **A Little Time** and **Old Red Eyes is Back**. However, Corrigan departed in 1992 following a disagreement with Heaton out over lyrical content.

A year later, Heaton discovered singer **Jacqui Abbott**, a supermarket worker in St Helens, Merseyside, and invited her to join the band. More hits followed, including **Good as Gold (Stupid as Mud)**, **Rotterdam**, **Perfect 10**, **Don't Marry Her** and a cover of the **Harry Nilsson** song **Everybody's Talkin**. After 7 years with the band, Abbott quit in 2000, citing pressures of touring and the need to concentrate on raising her son. Her place was taken by **Alison Wheeler**. They continued until 2007, at which point success fell away and the band split, amusingly blaming it on 'musical similarities' rather than the usual musical differences.

In 2013, Heaton re-joined with Jacqui Abbott, a musical partnership that continued very successfully until December 2022, when Abbott was taken ill whilst on tour. As well as touring, the duo made a lot of appearances at festivals as well as appearing on various radio and tv shows. It was during a **Chris Evans Breakfast Show** on Virgin Radio, that Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott performed a live version of Russ Ballard's **Since You Been Gone**.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jq799Vf_auQ

LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

This month the track is Journeyman. Listen to it here.

<https://youtu.be/UNZn3F7u2Xo?si=Qk0M7uQ1tb0le1W->