



(Header by Sven)

January 2026

A big welcome to our new readers.

I hope you all had a good Christmas. Now it is back to work and Russ is in rehearsal/gig mode. I hope all of you who have tickets have a brilliant time. Let us know for the next newsletter. You will notice that Russ has a new guitarist in the band, Paul Bond. Where has Roly gone? Roly tells us below.

Readers are always welcome to contribute to the newsletter. We sometimes have questions for Russ (please send some in) but this time our reader, Chris, has a question for you. I confess, I didn't know the answer!

Ian is back with a new podcast from The Voices Of Russ Ballard podcasts. You can now find all the podcasts on YouTube. Click on subscribe so you don't miss any.

Thanks to Roly, Chris and Dave for their contributions this month.

Happy New Year. May it be filled with good health, good fun and good music.
Sue

THIS MONTH - RUSS'S DIARY

I hope your Christmas was happy, merry and healthy...

Mine was great, with the family, playing games - Brilliant.

Since then I've been back in to my studio, writing songs - also rehearsing with the band for the shows coming up from this weekend. We have a new member join the group, he's very much a music enthusiast... it's a good exercise going over songs I've written and played for years, it's like hearing them as new. We're starting in Hull, at the 'Wrecking Ball' to Barnoldswick, to Milton Keynes Stables ending in Worcester Huntingdon Hall
Hope to see you there.

RUSS - LIFE STORIES

Hello again my friends. I'm continuing my autobiography, this time from late autumn of 1969 - Argent was formed, we had written and recorded our first album and travelled to Munich to play in a club on the Leopold Strasse. This was to get used to playing together 'Live' in front of an audience.....

November 1969,

We played for two weeks in Munich, then we came home, rehearsed again for a month and were on our way back to Munich. This time we only stopped there for one night, while we continued our Journey to Rome, where we were to play a club called The Piper. Jim had played the club with The Mike Cotton Sound two years before...and playing again to an audience seemed to make more sense than play day after day at The Pioneer.

We left early to travel to Munich. Our roadies, Fred Wilkinson and Brian Spencer, traveled in a Commer truck that carried the instruments, P.A. system and cases...while Rod, Bob Jim and I followed in a huge American 'Beast' we called, 'The Yobmobile'. The journey to Munich was quite uneventful, although tiring.

We left the hotel in Munich and headed for the Brenner Pass and Rome...When we first knew we'd be playing in Rome, Jim bored us silly with his Mantra, "We've got to get chains before we drive to Rome". Jim's experience when driving there, two years before, lead him to believe we were ill prepared. He said, "While driving across The Brenner Pass it started to snow, then the snow turned into a blizzard". We didn't take too much notice of Jim.

We all thought it snows most years in England, and we don't need chains on our tyres. We left Munich and the weather wasn't too bad...dry, although grey.

When we arrived at The Pass, it was snowing heavily. "Told Ya", Jim looked smug - but of course he was right. It was lucky that Fred had bought chains a few days before. Fred and Jim fitted the chains and we were on our way....

Rome was as beautiful as ever, however, The Piper club wasn't....It was more 'plush' than the PN but it didn't have atmosphere. The best thing about playing there was the fact that we only had to play three sets of 45 minutes each set....

COMING UP IN JANUARY

Apart from Barnoldswick, there are still a few tickets left for the UK gigs. Not many. Why not brighten up this dull January with a Russ gig. You will have a fun time.



UK
2026

RUSS BALLARD

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

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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>

There will be high quality merch on sale at the gigs.....t-shirts, caps, tote bags and signed Songs From The Warehouse/The Hits ReWired CDs. Tote bags £10, everything else, £20. Bring your cash....merch is cash only.

COMING SOON

As you know Russ is playing in Portugal on 8th May. This is always a popular gig and one of the best. This time he is supported by the amazing Tyketto. Chris Childs, Tyketto's bass player played in Russ's band some years ago. Get on a plane and have a little break at the same time. It's not sold out just yet but it will be. Get your tickets now, while there are still some available. <https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ticketline.pt%2Fevento%2Fruss-ballard-tyketto-live-in-estoril-2025-> There will be merch on sale as at the UK gigs.

Remember Minds M/18

RUSS BALLARD

8 MAIO 2026 CASINO ESTORIL
SALÃO PRETO E PRATA | 21:30

Tyketto

CASINO ESTORIL

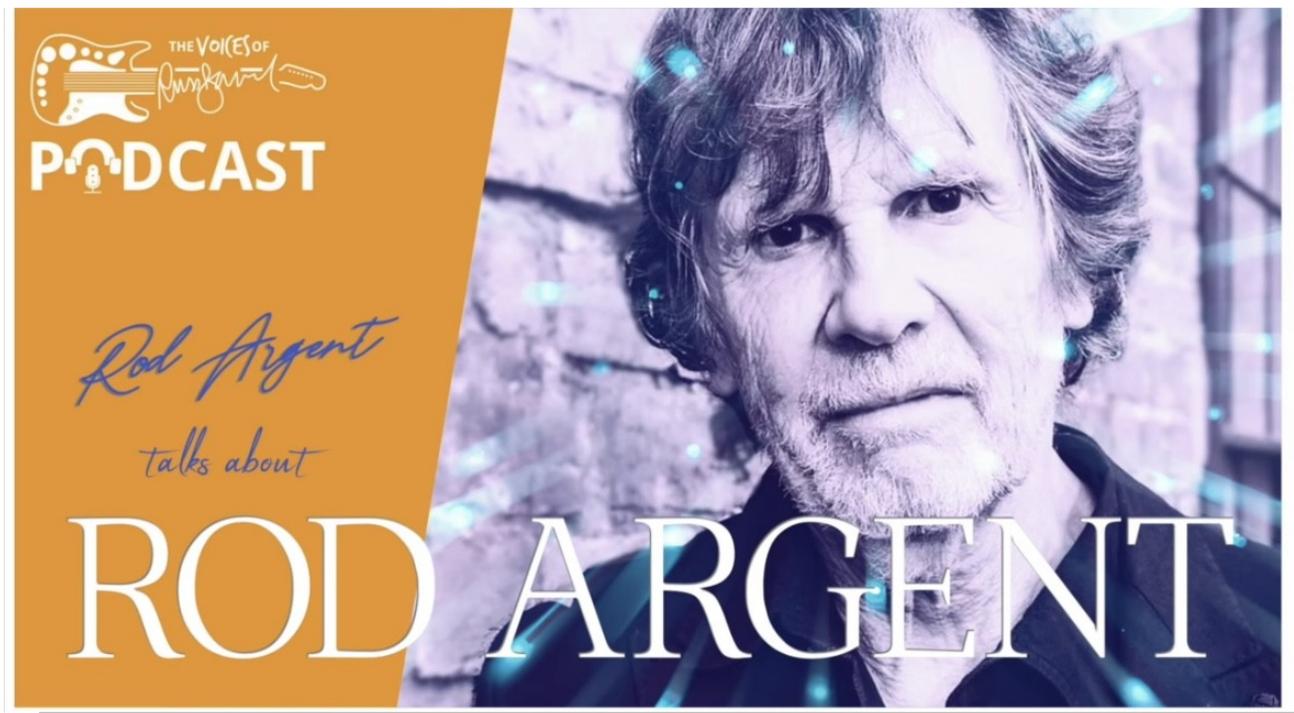
FROM ROLY JONES

Thank you for all the heartwarming messages I've received about my leaving Russ's touring band. I had been considering leaving for some time as I have a lifetime of songs (not just Resurrection!) that I have been neglecting and they need to be unleashed on the unsuspecting public! I will let everyone know what's happening in "Roly's World" once I've fully recovered from my recent hip operation - in fact 2½ weeks on and I already feel close to being fighting fit! On a serious note, these last few years playing and writing with my childhood musical hero has been the most awesome experience, a genuine labour of love for me. I sincerely hope that Russ and I can do something together in the future. Finally, may I wish everyone a Happy New Year! Love, Roly x

THE VOICES OF RUSS BALLARD PODCAST

In the first part Ian talks to Rod about his solo work after The Zombies and Argent, especially stories about Rod's solo album, Moving Home. The next two parts, which I will feature the next two months, are Rod and Russ together. Well worth a watch.

<https://youtu.be/z-FBOulip9M?si=AhNoo3G3u4AQjGj>



A QUESTION FOR YOU, NOT RUSS FOR A CHANGE

Dear Sue (and all),

Here is a nerd's question for Russ fans... Russ has co-written some songs with Chris Winter and Roly Jones. But there is only one track on a studio album, that Russ did not write. Which song is it? (As it happens Paul McCartney also covered the song on his Run Devil Run album - but credited the song to the singer, not the writers).

Best wishes, Chris Stevens

Sue: Zoom down to the end of the newsletter to find the answer to Chris's question. But have a go at Lyric of The Month first as you will find that answer down there too.

LYRIC OF THE MONTH

How about this one? Staying with Songs From The Warehouse for now.

You have the power, you stand strong
And I'll keep believing I know I must
Long may you keep your faith and your trust

The answer and the track are down at the bottom of the newsletter.

FROM DAVE

HE'S NOT THERE - THE ARGENT REUNION THAT NOBODY WANTED

Sunday 9th June 1985 finds me driving up to Bradford for a hastily organised concert at St George's Hall, a venue Argent graced many times over the years. The group had split ten years earlier, so I wasn't sure who was going to be in the line-up. Certainly not John Grimaldi, who had sadly passed away by this time. The whole 3-day event was conceived and put together by John Verity, so I knew he would be in the line-up. The question was, would Russ be joining them?

The story, and it's a tragic one, begins a month earlier, on Saturday 11th May at Valley Parade, the home of Bradford City Football Club. Supporters, players and staff were in a celebratory mood, having won the Division 3 title a week earlier, and before this, at their final game of the season against Lincoln City, the team had been presented with their trophy. To mark the occasion, TV cameras were present, and more than 11,000 people, almost double the normal attendance, came along to celebrate the club's first silverware for 56 years. Nobody could have envisaged the horror that was about to unfold.

The game was goalless with neither side looking like scoring. With about 5 minutes left to play before the half time whistle, a TV commentator remarked that a small fire appeared to have broken out in the main stand. Started by a discarded lit cigarette, initially the fire didn't sound very concerning, but within just 4 minutes, the fire, fanned by a brisk wind, spread the entire length of the stand, causing panic as 3000 supporters attempted, by whatever means they could, to escape the inferno. They headed for the exits, others jumped over the fences and onto the field of play. Sadly, 56 people died and at least 265 were injured. Not only the football community, but people over the whole of Britain and beyond, were deeply shocked.



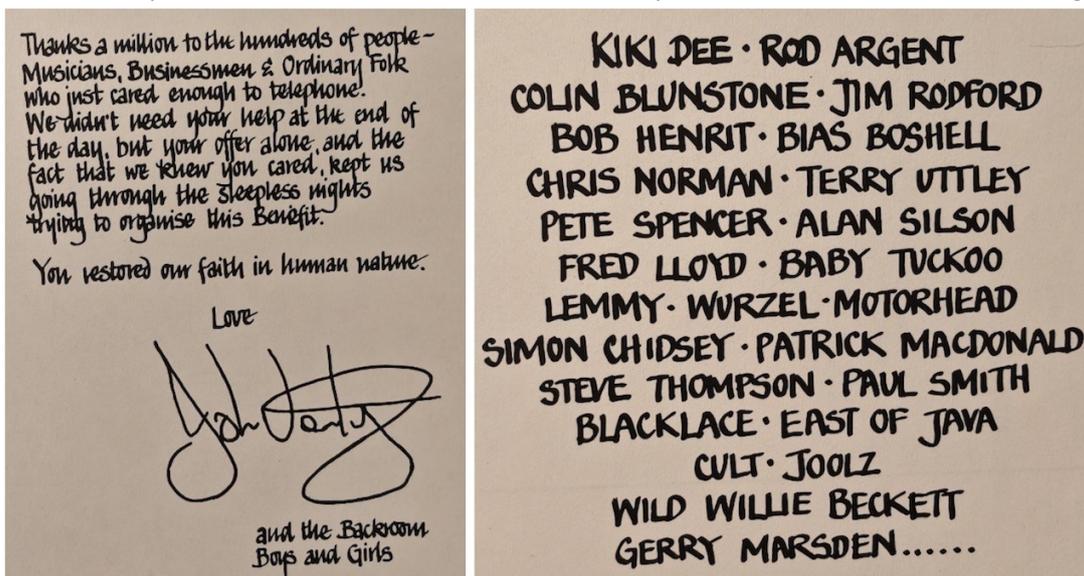
Tragedy in four minutes. A discarded cigarette leads to a fatal inferno at Bradford City's Valley Parade. Within 48 hours, the Bradford Disaster Appeal Fund was set up and supported by a number of fundraising events. A re-recorded version of You'll Never Walk Alone was released by The Firm, featuring Gerry Marsden, and topped the charts. The 1966 World Cup Final teams of England and West Germany came together for a re-match at Leeds United's Elland Road, England winning 6-4. (Note: the game is available on YouTube). My visit to Bradford was to attend the final evening of a 3-day session of concerts in aid of the charity, which was billed to include Argent, Kiki Dee, Smokie, Colin Blunstone and a number of other artists associated with the wider Bradford area and West Yorkshire. In the title, I called this the reunion that

nobody wanted, but of course what I am referring to are the sad circumstances which led to it. Of course we wanted it.

Being a Sunday, the city was fairly quiet when I arrived. I remember seeing more people as I got closer to the venue, and suddenly, there in front of me, was a sea of flowers. More flowers and wreaths than I'd ever witnessed before. I stopped to read some of the attached messages including expressions of sympathy from dignitaries from across the World. If I hadn't fully grasped the seriousness and human loss, I felt it now. It brought a lump to the throat and tears to the eyes.

That aside, I was looking forward to the charity concert, put together by John Verity, Bradford being his birthplace. The big question was whether or not Russ would be there, and that had been playing on my mind for days leading up to the concert. Although it was a busy year for him, I genuinely saw it as a possibility, and if that was the case, I wasn't going to miss it. He wasn't in attendance, so seeing Russ playing live alongside Rod, Jim, and Bob would have to wait a little longer and, in the meantime, this 4-piece version of Argent consisted of Rod Argent, Jim Rodford, John Verity and Bob Henrit. Not Unit 4 + 2, but in mathematical terms Phoenix + 1, or Argent MkII - 1, depending on how you look at it. Whatever, John Verity filled in for Russ Ballard on guitar and vocals, and if my memory serves me right, they only performed no more than 4 songs, which included the obligatory Hold Your Head Up. However, they did act as house band when required. Colin Blunstone joined them to sing the two Zombies classics, She's Not There and Time of the Season. Hitmakers Smokie and hard rockers Baby Tuckoo were among other well-known locals that graced the stage. I couldn't figure out why there was an army of leather jacketed bikers standing at the front of the stage until somebody explained that Lemmy's Motörhead were apparently appearing, but this turned out not to be the case. However, their drummer, Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor, was in attendance, though I cannot remember if or who he performed with. That was good enough for the biker brigade.

In the meantime, Kiki Dee was introduced to the stage. She took one look at the leather jacketed army in front of her and admitted she felt scared. Feeling daunted by these Lemmy lovers, she said she didn't know what to play. Somebody piped up "Play Smoke on The Water", which broke the ice. She may even have sang a few opening lines before opting out, or did I just imagine that? Anyway, she performed her hit Amoureuse, after which the bikers launched into loud applause. You could see the tension drain away. A cover of Billie Holliday's That Ole Devil Called Love followed, with Kiki apologising for having to read the lyrics as she'd never performed it before. The bikers loved every minute and so did Kiki, a charming lady.



Left: Programme notes from organiser John Verity, right: some of the artists involved

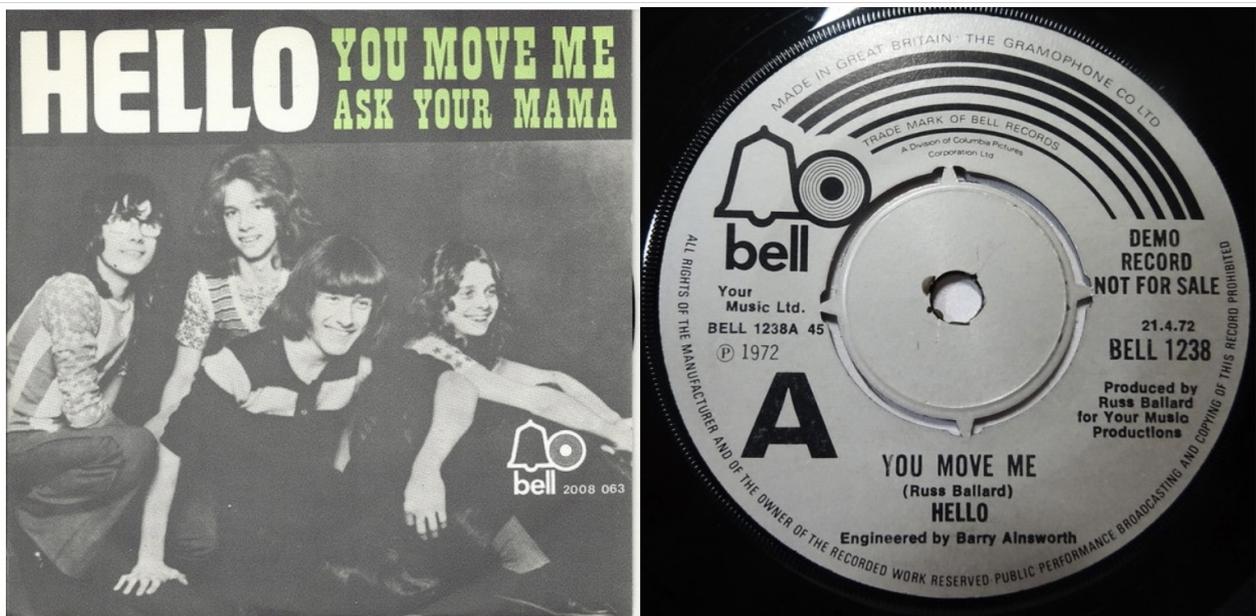
The finale was quite something. Argent and Kiki Dee returned to the stage and invited the whole cast of artists to join them in performing a rocked-up version of Kiki's I Got the Music in Me. I must admit it's a song that I grew tired of because it received so much coverage in its day, but not tonight. Stretching to probably 7 or 8 minutes, possibly longer, with Argent in control, it had a real power to it, and other lead guitarists joined John Verity in stepping forward and thrashing out a guitar solo. It was wild and exciting, especially as it reached its crescendo. It was such a shame it had to end, but it ended in style. How I'd love to watch that again.

John Verity told me that a video of the show was going to be made available. I don't know why, but it never happened. It goes onto the list of a trilogy of unreleased videos, the others being two London events; Argent's Roundhouse concert featuring the circus performers, and the UMU recording of An Evening with Russ Ballard, at Leicester Square Theatre. There, I knew I'd manage to get a mention of Russ in this article somewhere!

DAVE'S COVER QUEST

Hello again and Happy New Year. Here at RB News we are familiar with the story of Roy Ballard discovering Hello and bringing them to the attention of his younger brother Russell, who went on to write New York Groove for them, jumping on trestles to get a rhythm going and Bo 'Diddly' a song that would become a worldwide hit, not just for Hello, but also for Ace Frehley stateside. But how many of us are aware that this hit came in 1975, yet Russ had been involved in writing and producing records for Hello three years earlier.

No.89



You Move Me by Hello

Hello, fronted by Bob Bradbury, was formed in 1969, at that time as The Age. They initially backed a female singer called Caroline Hall before changing their name to Hello in 1971.

Their debut release came out in 1972 on Bell Records. Titled You Move Me, it was written and produced by Russ Ballard, as was the B side, Ask Your Mama. Despite its commercial appeal, the song did not reach the charts, although it helped pave the way for their first Top 10 hit Tell Him, a cover of The Exciters hit, which reached No.6 in the UK two years later.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2T0SoN6lmM>

CHRIS STEVENS - ANSWER

Answer: She Said "Yeah" by Sonny Christy (aka Sonny Bono) and Roddy Jackson. The song was included on Barnet Dogs.

LYRIC OF THE MONTH - ANSWER

Here it is...Resurrection, co-written with Roly Jones

<https://youtu.be/ff3zipbimB4?si=PUDkPl1uWHJPyrPl>