FROM THE ARCHIVE OF

PROG CLASSIC ROCK

JETHRO TULL



The Full Story
From blues rock to prog genius - and beyond!

Exclusive Interviews
Ian Anderson & Martin Barre speak!

The Albums
The stories behind *Aqualung*, *Thick As A Brick* & more!

Unseen Photos
Opening up the Tull archives!

148 pages of maximum Tull!

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Ian Anderson isn't one for grandstanding celebrations. When Jethro Tull, the band the flute-wielding frontman founded in 1967, turned 50 a few years ago, he had to be cajoled, prodded and pushed into celebrating that landmark anniversary.

It has taken a lot less persuading for us to commemorate the rich history of this great British band, one who helped lay down the foundations for the entire progressive rock genre before becoming bona fide megastars in the US.

As anyone who has ever immersed themselves in the world of Tull and Anderson can tell you, there's no one else like them. Of course their music is complex and groundbreaking – not least of their twin masterpieces, *Aqualung* and *Thick As A Brick* – but it's more than just that. Their songs take in folk, rock, classical, blues, world music, even the occasional foray into heavy metal (maybe that infamous 1989 Grammy wasn't entirely misplaced after all).

And Ian Anderson remains one of the finest lyricists not just in rock, but in the whole of music. Whether he's skewering organised religion, satirising the rock'n'roll lifestyle, digging deep into the myths and folklore of Great Britain or, as on 1979's *Stormwatch* album, predicting catastrophic climate change, he's always been an utterly unique voice

We're celebrating that amazing legacy in this special one-off magazine, which collects the best Jethro Tull and Ian Anderson interviews and features from the pages of *Prog* and *Classic Rock* magazines. We chart the band's rise from blues-rock hopefuls to rock giants, telling the stories of the albums that made them superstars in the words of Tull members past and present. And Ian Anderson himself has opened up the band's archive to present photographs that have never been seen before.

So crank up *Locomotive Breath*, bust out the air flute and enjoy…



Dave Everley,
Editor

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GETTY X2 INSET: FUTURE/ROB MONK

Blues Progression

He's known globally as the wild-eyed, flute-playing leader of progressive luminaries **Jethro Tull**. In a five-decade career he's covered folk, jazz, electronica and even heavy metal. With over 60 million albums sold, it seems **Ian Anderson** has always been a stadium-filling rock deity. But it all had to start somewhere... and that somewhere was with rock'n'roll, the blues and the John Evan Band.

Words: **Jo Kendall** Portrait: **Kevin Nixon**

The pre-Jethro Tull era. According to people in the know, it's a subject that Ian Anderson has always steadfastly avoided. But having caught up with him at the Progressive Music Awards in September 2013 – where he was proclaimed Prog God – we proposed the idea and a chink in the space-time-prog-blues continuum opened up. So here we are, inside Anderson's cosy *pied-a-terre* on a cobbled mews in West London, with October sunshine streaming through the French windows and a brew on the go, made by wife Shona. So far, so good.

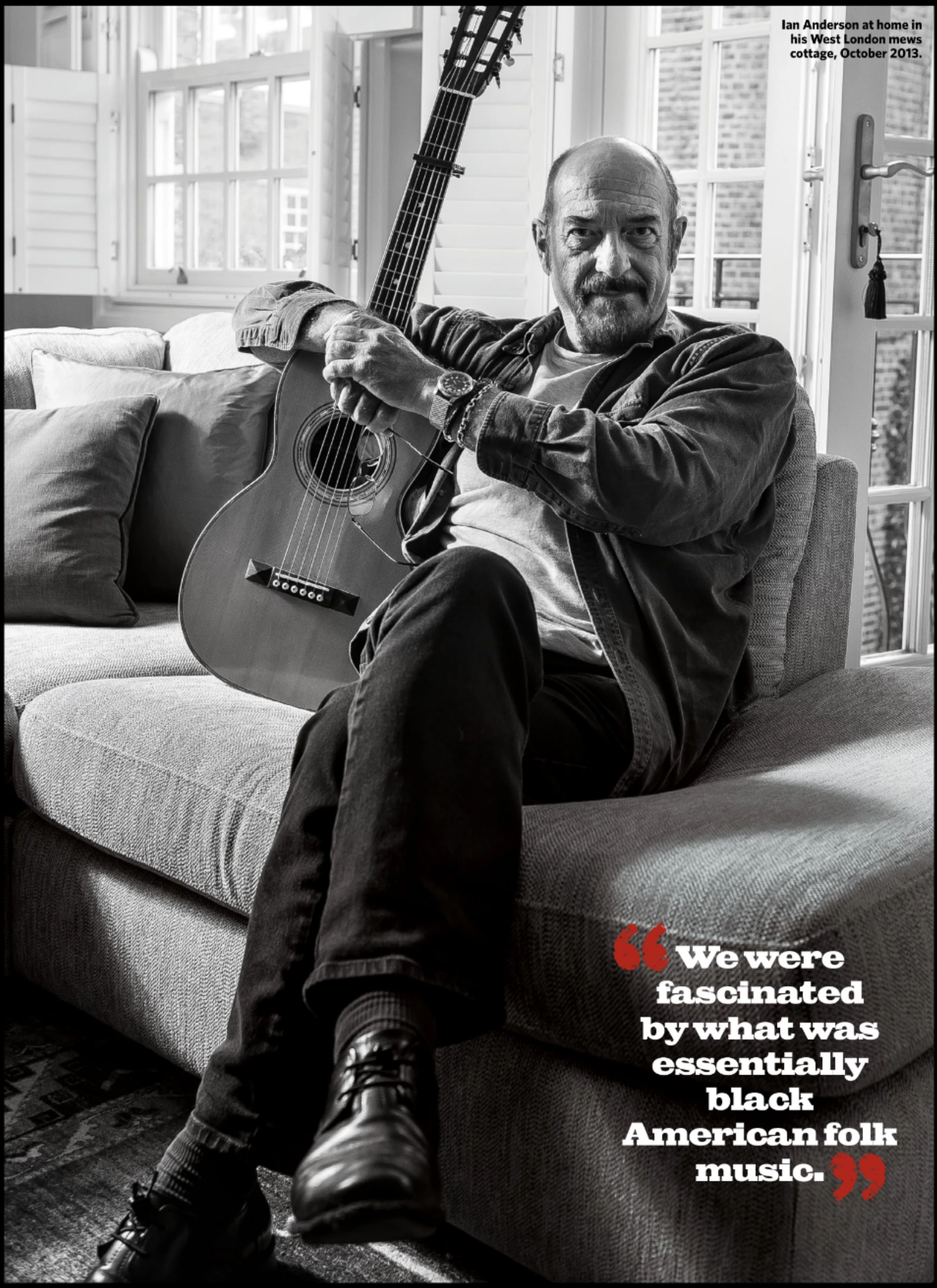
Leaning back into a comfy corner sofa, Anderson chats about his childhood in Edinburgh where he discovered big band music such as Benny Goodman and Count Basie through his father's 78s, before Bill Haley and Elvis caught his attention on TV. With a plethora of Elvis wannabes emerging on to the pop scene, such as Billy Fury, Marty Wilde and "dear old Cliff", the nine-year-old Anderson started to show an interest in making music, and his parents got him his first instrument: an Elvis Presley signature plastic uke.

"We got it mail-order from a Sunday newspaper," he says. "I remember it cost 22 and six and even it if had been two and sixpence it still would have been complete crap. It couldn't get in tune, it was completely useless."

Undeterred, Anderson's father acquired a Spanish guitar with metal strings where nylon was required, "which made the action ridiculously high and almost unplayable", he laughs, but admits, "I managed to make a bit of a noise on there without knowing any chords," just as the skiffle movement began to boom. It was perfect timing for kids everywhere with imagination, musical hunger and basic ability. "There were elements of Lonnie, elements of Elvis and the big band jazz that I could tie together," he continues, "But it was the blues scale that I was playing, the flattened fifth, the minor third."

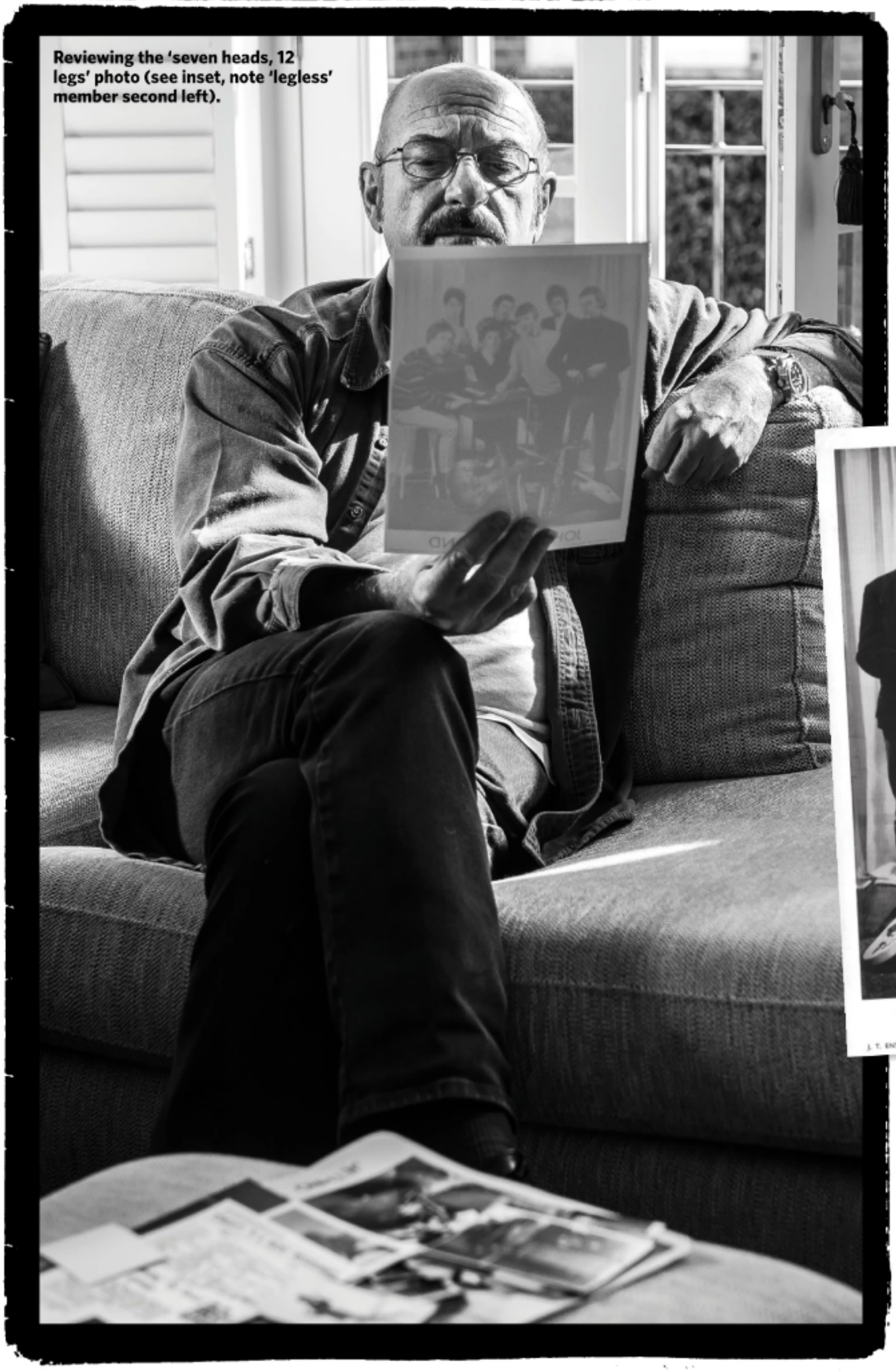
In 1959, the Andersons relocated to Blackpool. Aged 12, and with TV programmes like *Six-Five Special* and *Hullabaloo* getting live music and blues and folk musicians on British TV for the first time, Anderson lapped up performances from artists such as Muddy Waters, who were finally coming out of $20-a-night US dives to European concert venues and getting recognition. "We were fascinated by what was essentially black American folk music," he says. "It was raucous and untrained, and quite a lot of it was acoustic music and not electric rock."

Soon, Anderson was off to experience the blues as they hit nearby locations like Manchester Free Trade Hall. A standout show was by J.B. Lenoir. "Unlike most of his peers, he didn't just sing songs about waking up in the morning feeling a bit sexy," he explains, "these were politically motivated ➔



Ian Anderson at home in his West London mews cottage, October 2013.

“We were fascinated by what was essentially black American folk music.”



Reviewing the 'seven heads, 12 legs' photo (see inset, note 'legless' member second left).

KEVIN NIXON

"That's a press shot where the guy next to me has no legs."



screams in the dark against the persecution of black minorities in the southern states of America. It tied in with the Watts race riots, the Vietnam draft and the beginnings of emancipation for black society.

"But we white kids in the UK knew nothing about that. As far as I knew, he was almost alone in that community singing about this stuff in a clarion voice. That impacted on me a great deal. Not because of the politics or the history but because I recognised the emotion in this man's voice. Some of his most powerful songs, like *Alabama March*, motivated me to get involved as a young teenager in acoustic blues."

In 1963, the 16-year-old Anderson began to sing and play "crude electric guitar" with his schoolmates John Evans, a drummer, and bassist Jeffrey Hammond, forming The Blades (named after a club in Bond novel *Moonraker*). With harmonica player Harry Hartley and another guitarist, Michael Stephens, they found their slightly shaky feet playing blues and R&B covers at Catholic Church hang-out the Holy Family Club. Where other local bands such as Johnny Breeze And The Atlantics emulated popular bands they'd seen on television when they played, Anderson admits, drolly, "We were a rotten band to book at a youth club, 'cos we weren't a dance band. We left everyone absolutely unmoved and where there might be 20 people at the beginning, by the end everyone would be outside and chatting. It wasn't just a case of falling on deaf ears; it was falling on deaf chairs."

Someone was listening to them though: their maths teacher, Paul Jones – affectionately called 'Granny'. "He was a thoroughly nice man who always had time for all the students," Anderson remembers of the sole exception at a heavy-handed establishment. "He was the only master who, when he walked into class, everybody would just stop shouting and talking and just listen to him. Granny Jones got through by just being a nice guy, and actually reasoning."

Granny put himself forward as their guarantor for an unofficial hire purchase agreement with the owner of the music store in Lytham. "You kind of 'borrowed' what you wanted. It was like a club guest list. You had your name on a piece of paper there and you went in and 'borrowed' an instrument in return for him paying 10 shillings a week. He ended up going nearly bankrupt."

The group were also funded by John Evans' mother, a respected piano tutor, who provided a kitchen to rehearse in and a van for transport. A few line-up

changes later, under the influence of the Graham Bond Organisation, they added brass, Evans switched from drums to Farfisa, ("a terrible, terrible organ" bemoans Anderson), and 14-year-old drummer Barrie Barlow was recruited after answering an ad in the *Blackpool Evening Gazette*. By 1965, a newly-christened John Evan Band (a tribute to Evans' mum for the patronage but dropping the 's' to sound cooler) was ready to take on the club circuit of the North West. But first, that all-important promotional band shot.

"That's a press shot where the guy next to me has no legs," Anderson smirks while holding up a picture taken in Studio D in Blackpool, commonly known as the 'seven heads, 12 legs shot'. The original photo had been taken with six members. Then Johnny Breeze's guitarist, Chris Riley, came onboard to play rhythm guitar. He was shot in the same studio a little later on his own. "It was the days before Photoshop so he was cut out and pasted in the old-fashioned way." You can certainly see the join.

Also in the shot are "Barrie, aged about 15, then Jeffrey Hammond, then a one-lunged trumpeter called Jim Doolin who never actually performed with us live, Martin Skyrme who was a saxophonist who went on to play flute as well, and John Evans." It's a snapshot of a moment in time where you have five members of a future Jethro Tull, and the flute player from 1973's *A Passion Play*. The shape of things to come.



"We were a rotten band to book at a youth club, 'cos we weren't a dance band."

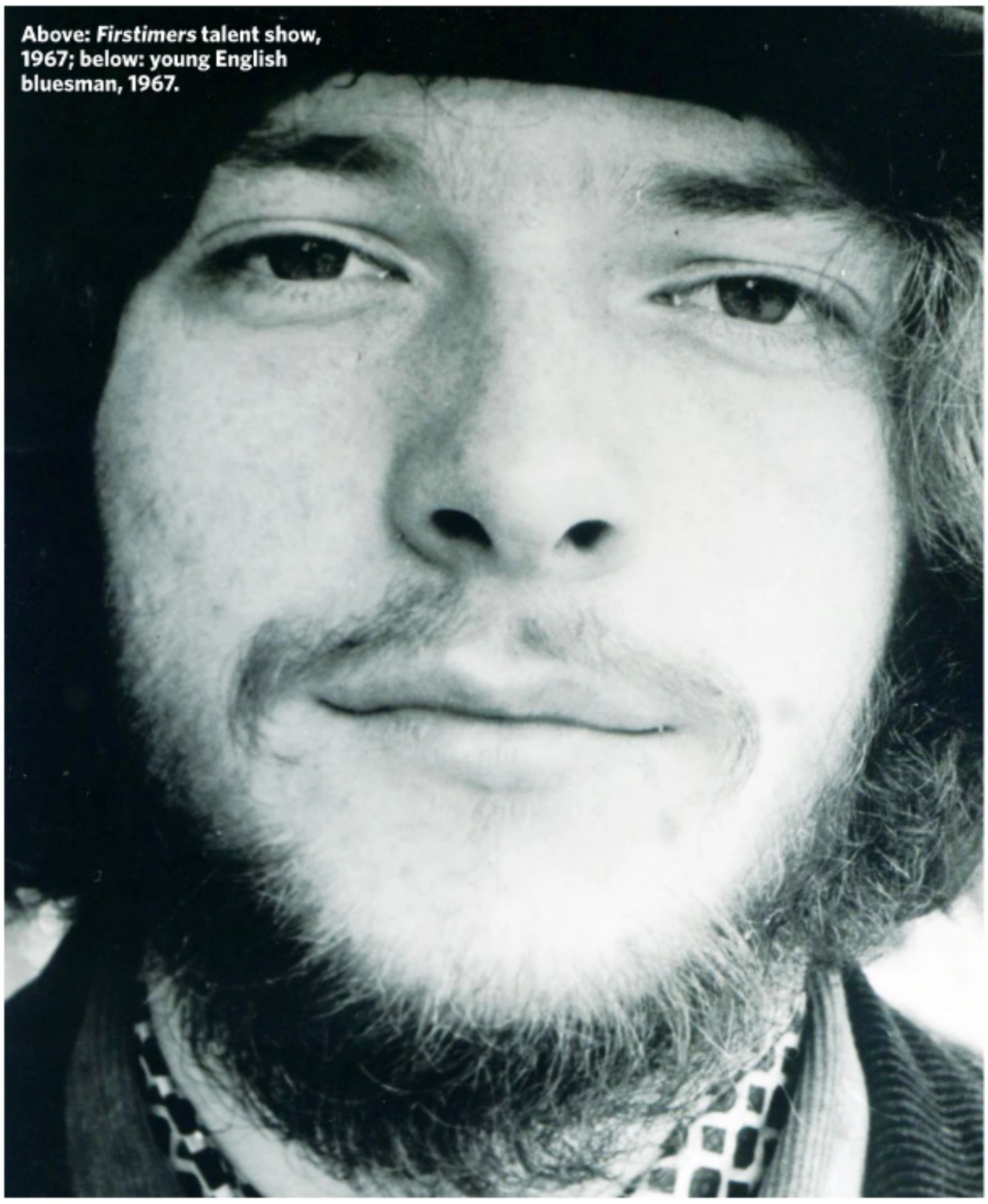
By now the JEB sound was influenced by Booker T, Joe Turner, James Brown, Georgie Fame and Sonny Stitt. Some Stones, Sam & Dave and Otis Redding covers crept in, but that was to please crowds as the seven-piece hit the road in a Commer van, playing clubs such as Kirkham Elizabethan Club, Oldham Top Twenty and the Twisted Wheels in Blackpool and Manchester. "That was the Northern Soul scene," says Anderson. "We had to do those more obvious soul hits, and probably the saxophone players liked it but I was hopeless at that kind of thing! I felt more relaxed with the jazz-blues feel. You've got to have a good voice for black American soul music and I didn't."

Anderson's stage persona veered from Elvo – the nickname bestowed on him by his bandmates after a fan had excitedly blurted out how much he sounded like Elvis – and Anderson's own "distorted idea that I might be a musical version of Patrick McGoohan in *Dangerman*, a slightly mean and moody kind of thing." Since moving from Scotland, Anderson felt "my accent was a bit of a mess anyway. So I became the Patrick McGoohan of rhythm and blues."

At this point Anderson was dropping playing guitar. A big influence on him had been Johnny Breeze's other guitarist, Frank Blackburn. "While the music was just top 10 covers his meticulous and accurate approach was something that impressed me a great deal. But by the time I was beginning to play bluesy solos we were already hearing rumours of these hot-shot players down in London, so I decided I'd be better off playing another instrument." Anderson traded in his Fender Strat for a flute and a mic and now felt he had "all I needed to change direction."

More new members resulted in a volatile relationship between Barrie and baritone sax man Tony Wilkinson, sometimes ending in fist fights, often while travelling in the van. "When he was younger, Barrie's personality was always a problem 'cos he was pushy, outspoken and very critical," says Anderson. "He'd speak his mind straight away, which wasn't always the best thing to do!"

Anderson saw himself as a peacemaker, and on those long, arduous journeys from club to club you needed to remain calm with cramped conditions for hours on end. It was a real labour of love. Take one eight-hour road ➔



Above: *Firstimers* talent show, 1967; below: young English bluesman, 1967.

trip to Strathpeffer in the Highlands. "We'd been booked by somebody to play what we thought was a blues gig and when we turned up they were expecting an Irish showband playing folky party music. We started to soundcheck and they said, 'You don't sound very Irish. I'm going to pay you to go away. I'll give you half of what you were going to get.' We got in the van with enough petrol to head back south."

If the boys couldn't make it back home, the sleeping arrangements in the van got tricky, especially since purchasing a Hammond organ. Emergency plans came in to play such as the night they were parked up by Coniston Lake. "We drew straws as to who would have to find somewhere to sleep," Anderson winces. "So John and I lost, and got out of the van, in a horrible, whiny, pouring-with-rain night. I saw some sailing boats pulled up on the edge of the lake covered in tarpaulin, so I guessed we could slip inside one of those and get shelter. John and I got inside a dinghy, pulled the tarp over our heads and tried to get off to sleep. The boat was moving about a bit, then it started moving about a lot more. I peeped out, and all I could see was the fact that we were now out in the lake. Luckily we were still moored so we were able to pull ourselves back to shore."

The next weekend, the boys drew the short straw again. "Two or three of us again had to sleep in a complete pea-soup fog in the middle of the Yorkshire moors," he laughs. "We pulled up in a little area where we could see some stones and things and a building in the swirling mist. So we huddled up against the edge of this farm building, or whatever it was. Dawn finally broke and we realised we'd been asleep in a graveyard. The next thing, we were running to the van, screaming, 'Get us out of here!'"

In early '67, a manager they'd been working with in the North West called Don Read crammed the boys into a Mini – now without Jeffrey and Chris but having acquired another future Tull member, Glenn Cornick, from Blackpool mod band The Executives – to go to London to record demos with Derek Lawrence of MGM. Lawrence was keen to hook them up with a young guitarist called Ritchie Blackmore, but they already had Neil 'Chick' Murray. The recordings were never commercially released, but Anderson's songwriting was starting to develop.

In May 1967, the band appeared on the first show of a tea-time Granada TV talent contest, *Firstimers*. "We'd been accepted to go on and play a song that I'd written, [*Take The Easy Way* from the MGM sessions]," Anderson explains. "It wasn't very good, but it was okay. Most bands were rubbish and very imitative anyway."

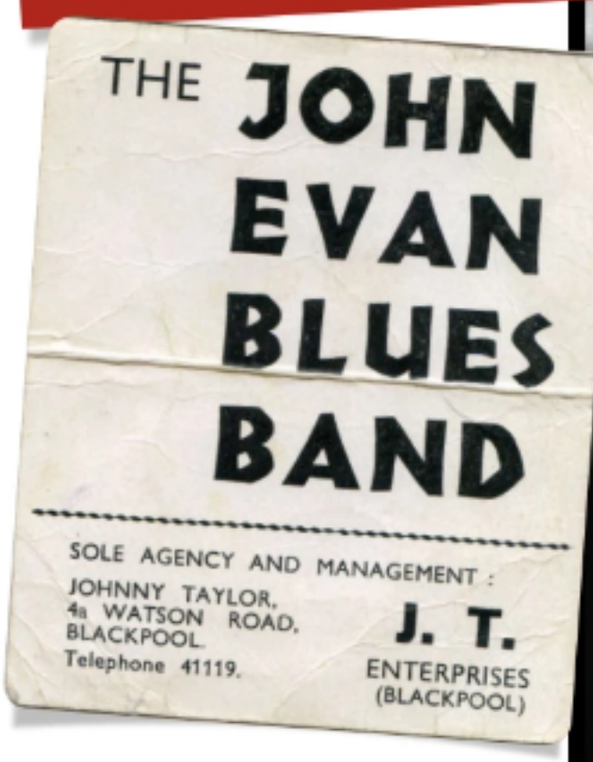
The band's stagewear that night featured Ian in a black jumpsuit and the rest in matching outfits. "I remember it very well," he nods. "We'd all gone to get some suits made by Jimmy the Tailor, this gloriously camp chap, so we were all wearing matching hipster trousers and blue shirts, and I, being the frontman, was wearing a satin two-piece outfit with slightly high-rise wrinkly trousers. It was termed the Gene Vincent suit for no good reason other than it was some sort of Elvis-era jumpsuit. An absolutely enormous mistake."

Jimmy the Tailor had a place by Blackpool's North Pier and seemed eager to cater to every young-man-in-a-band's whim. "Barrie was quite intimidated by Jimmy," Anderson recalls. "One day he came to me and said, 'He did my inside leg measurements four times. I'd only gone in to get a shirt made!'

"Another time I remember Tony being onstage at a dancehall. Tony was a big guy and when he bent over to play bass sax, you'd see what we referred to as 'builder's bum'. At one point when he was moving about, bending low, it just went over the edge and his trousers fell down. Brilliant, because right behind him was Jimmy Savile, who was the disc jockey. Jimmy was most amused, of course…"



Promo shot for the John Evan Blues Band



"I left home... with a flute, a harmonica, a tin whistle..." Below: young Ian (right) with bassist Jeffrey Hammond, inspiration for Tull's '*A Song For Jeffrey*'.

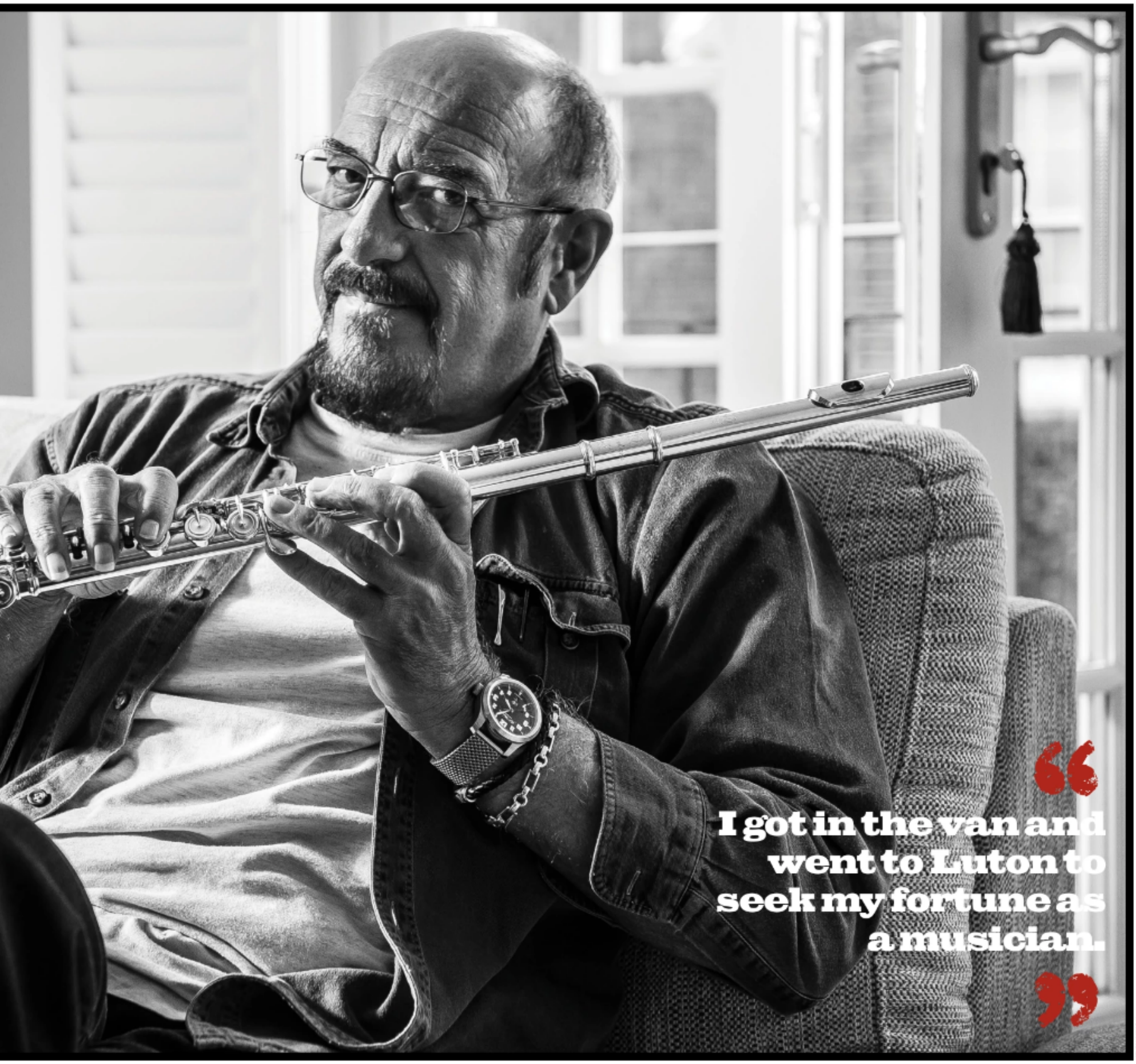


"We drew straws as to who would have to find somewhere to sleep."

The winners of the *Firstimers* contest were Cardiff pop group Amen Corner. This didn't go down well with Anderson and co. "I was so upset that they won! Andy Fairweather-Low was this insipid, limp creature who sang in this little boy voice and went down on his knee and did this praying thing. All the mums and little girls just loved this limp wimp. I remember meeting him at a gig months later and I was quite rude to him.

"Many years later I went to see Eric Clapton at the Royal Albert Hall and, God help me, it's Andy Fairweather-Low playing guitar with him. I thought, 'The boy made good,' and he did it in the most credible of ways, instead of being a wimpy little singer he actually learned to play blues guitar. Hats off."

Firstimers didn't give the band the momentum they



KEVIN NIXON

hoped for, though they crossed paths more with bigger bands like John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. In late 1967, they played with heroes the Graham Bond Organisation at Barking Technical College. But that was more distressing than exciting.

"While there was a drum solo going on, [Bond] was at the back with a strap around his arm, injecting himself with heroin *on the stage*. He'd turned away from the audience, but it was so awful."

More recordings had occurred with Derek Lawrence, this time for CBS and mainly cover versions, with some other recording at Abbey Road a month later, as Don Read guided them into the hands of a new band agency set up by Chris Wright and Terry Ellis. It was clear the band had to get closer to the capital to get more out of the blues scene, and this new partnership. In November that year, they packed up en masse and moved south.

"I left home without a guitar," Anderson says. "It was about what I could physically carry. So I left with a flute, a harmonica, a tin whistle and a big fat book by Jack Kerouac called *Desolation Angels*. I had a little suitcase about this big [mimes two-foot in width] and a big overcoat that my dad gave me. I got in the van and went to Luton to seek my fortune as a musician."

In just a few months, the John Evans Band fizzled under the stress of relocation. But Anderson stayed in a small bedsit, with Cornick moving in with his parents in London. And as they became friends with McGregor's Engine members Mick Abrahams and Clive Bunker, on guitar and drums, it was a new day…

Meanwhile, back at Anderson towers, the brew's gone cold and we've come to the end of the story. But how did those early days really shape this man?

"The simple basis of improvisation was always seductive and the elements of the blues scale are still present sometimes in my music," he says. "But I was born the wrong colour, in the wrong country and at the wrong time to have ever been a real blues man.

"I was happy to leave the spirit of that to those hot-shot professionals, they did it much better!"

Arguably the first prog album to reach No.1 in the charts, **Jethro Tull**'s *Stand Up* celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019. From Elvis encounters to penning hits in 5/4 time, **Ian Anderson** remembers the making of one of the band's most pivotal albums.

Words: **Dave Everley** Image: **Heilemann/Camera Press**

A NEW DAY yesterday

When Elvis Presley summoned you, you came. It was August 1969, and the King Of Rock'N'Roll was in the midst of a lucrative four-week run of shows at Vegas' International Hotel, where he received a stream of awestruck visitors before and after his sets. No one said no to an audience with Elvis. No one except Ian Anderson.

"We were playing in Las Vegas around the time of the *Stand Up* record, and we were dragged by the scruff of the neck to some casino where he was appearing," says Anderson, 50 years on. "I was never really a big Elvis fan but I suppose the first couple of songs that he ever recorded were part of my childhood fascination with music."

Anderson wasn't impressed with what he saw. "I was just appalled by the commerciality and the triteness of it all. And he was clearly out of his box. He was slurring his words, he didn't know where he was, he would stop the band halfway through his song. It just wasn't the way to see Elvis."

But the King had heard that this hotshot new Limey band with the crazy hair and the flute were in the audience, and he wanted to meet them. Or at least that was the message Anderson got from the Elvis camp.

"They said, 'Elvis would like to see you in his dressing room.' I replied, 'Tell Mr Elvis that it is a really great honour to have been here tonight, but we've got a show tomorrow, we're a bit tired and we need an early night.' And they said 'No, you're not listening — Elvis *will* see you backstage in the dressing room.' I thought, 'This is not this is not an invitation, it's a fucking instruction.'"

Jethro Tull leader Ian Anderson is many things, but bulliable isn't one of them. His heels were dug in so deep that not even the Memphis Mafia could strong-arm him into meeting the King in his court.

Stand Up-era Tull, L-R: Martin Barre, Ian Anderson, Clive Bunker, Glenn Cornick.

"I've always said that the biggest driving force behind prog rock is boredom. That's the thing that pushes people – they get bored with three chords."

"I think a couple of bandmembers were miffed," he says. "But I felt so embarrassed for him and I didn't want to make things even worse. And obviously he would have had absolutely no idea who we were, no matter what they said."

It was a typically Ian Anderson-ish reaction. He has built a career on confounding expectations, turning left rather than right, marching to no beat other than his own. It's an approach has served him well during his band's 50-plus year career. And never more so than on their second album, *Stand Up*: a transformative record and a key point in Jethro Tull's half-century-long journey – one that marked the beginning of the band as we know them now.

We're a long way from Las Vegas today. It's a crisp winter morning, and Anderson and *Prog* are sitting in a lounge room in the grand Wiltshire pile that he and his wife, Shona, have called home for decades.

2019 doesn't quite mark Tull's 50th anniversary. The band formed in 1967 and their debut album, the blues rock-indebted *This Was*, followed in 1968. Anderson grudgingly marked the latter with an anniversary tour that began last year and extends into this. "I did think about hiding under the bed and not coming out for 12 months," he groans.

But the fact remains that 2019 is a milestone year, if only because it marks the half-centenary of one of their most pivotal albums. Released in July 1969, *Stand Up* was a watershed for the band, one that put them in vanguard of the burgeoning progressive rock movement and turned them into ascendant stars in their own right.

In late 1968, Jethro Tull had seemingly little need to change anything. *This Was* had positioned them in the midst of the Brit-blues pack, alongside Savoy Brown, Chicken Shack and Fleetwood Mac. Titling their debut *This Was* was a sly indication on Anderson's part that Jethro Tull had moved on from their initial sound before the album had even hit the shelves. The singer was already itching to broaden the band's horizons.



GETTY IMAGES

Below: Jethro Tull and their manager Terry Ellis (right) at Elvis Presley's show in 1969.



PRESS/TULL ARCHIVES

"At that time I was going to see, at the Marquee Club, King Crimson, and the very first concerts by Yes," says Anderson. "They gave me confidence that I could be more adventurous, at least if I had the musical chops to do it. Of course, I didn't have the musical chops. I had to spend a bit more time learning to play a bit better and write songs that were a little bit more evolved."

Anderson was writing songs for the follow-up that fitted his new brief before *This Was* had even come out. He ran through some of these ideas with guitarist Mick Abrahams, who was unimpressed.

"It wasn't that he wasn't interested and it wasn't that he was incapable," says Anderson. "It was just out of his comfort zone. Mick was a dyed-in-the-wool blues and R&B guy. He wanted to do more of the standard



blues kind of thing. He wanted to make *This Was Pt II*."

Anderson persuaded Abrahams to record a new song, *Love Story*, for a single. The track swapped earthy R&B for galloping folk rock. The B-side, *A Christmas Song*, was an even greater departure: a knockabout Yuletide ditty complete with mandolin, jingle and tart festive ambience, it was a marker of Abrahams' disinterest that he didn't even play on the latter.

Above: Jethro Tull with their Best Group trophy at the *Melody Maker* Pop Poll Awards in 1969.

"It was I who had to have the showdown with Mick," says Anderson. "He got a bit puffed up and made some veiled threat. At which point I put down my flute and guitar and said, 'Right, let's have it out, man to man,' knowing that Mick was a big bluffer and of course he would back down. Which was just as well, as he was twice my size."

Fisticuffs averted, Abrahams left the room and the band. Jethro Tull might have lost their best musician, but they'd gained a future.

Love Story managed to sneak into the Top 30, justifying Anderson's bold new vision, but there was still the matter of recruiting a new guitarist. One of these was Davy O'List, until recently a member of proto-prog trailblazers The Nice. Anderson was a fan and invited O'List to his North London bedsit to try a few ideas.

"We went through a few ideas and thoughts, but he was at least as odd a character as I probably appeared to him. We weren't really making contact. He seemed to be very ethereal and weird and not really capable of a punchy conversation. I don't think he was comfortable with me and vice versa."

Slightly more successful was an unassuming young guitarist from Birmingham named Tony Iommi, who was a member of a heavy blues band named Earth. Anderson liked Iommi, and he seemed to be more broad-minded than Mick Abrahams.

"He was much more open to different ideas," says Anderson, "I didn't realise that he had lost the tips of several of his fingers in an industrial accident, and he did have a little physical difficulty in playing some of the things that I outlined to him. He had to simplify it in a way that might not have been a bad thing for some of the songs but it just wasn't right for others."

> "*Stand Up* is the first album that I felt creatively responsible for. It was a first wet dream involving somebody else at the same time."

"I'm lucky to have done something so iconic..."

Artist **James Grashow** discusses *Stand Up*'s cover.



PRESS

James Grashow (left) was a young art student in New York City specialising in woodcuts when he got a call from Jethro Tull's manager Terry Ellis asking if he would be interested in designing the cover for their second album, *Stand Up*.

"I have to be honest, I hadn't heard of them," he tells *Prog* today. "A friend of mine at school knew Terry and told them I could be great. I'd done things for magazines and advertising, but never an album cover."

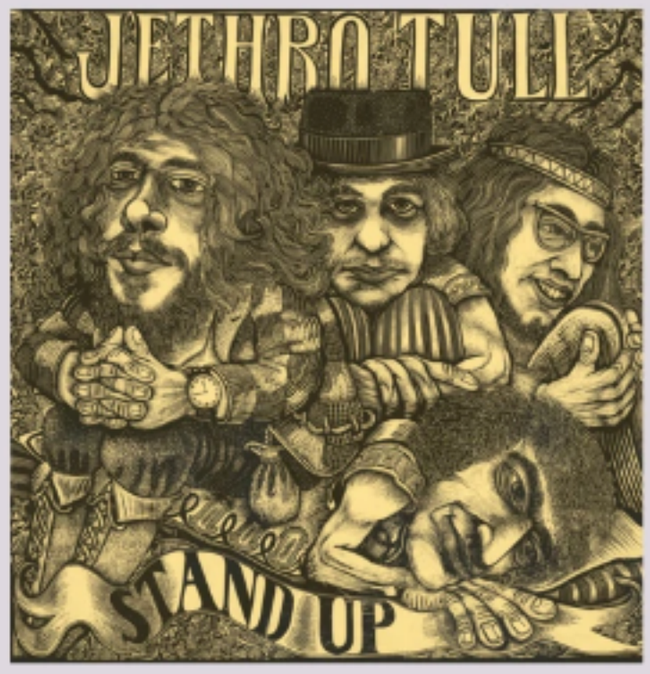
Ellis and Ian Anderson really liked the idea and sent a limousine to pick up Grashow and drive him from his apartment to New Haven, Connecticut, where the band were playing. "I was so excited, I'd never been in a limousine before," he says. They told Grashow that they wanted a drawing of the band that popped up when the gatefold album was opened. "I think to this day Terry Ellis and Ian Anderson are discussing whose idea it was to have the pop-up in the centre," he says. "But I wanted to make them sitting down on the cover, standing up in the centre, then walking away on the back cover."

Grashow says the process of creating the artwork took two or three months of work. Anderson dropped by his apartment at one point. "Here's this English guy in red leather pants, fuzzy hair, looking completely out of place."

In subsequent years, Grashow has seen his work on everything from T-shirts to rugs. "I'm lucky to have done something so iconic," he says.

Of course, there's one element of the cover that has kept Tull fans curious for years. Look closely and you'll see that Ian Anderson has 11 fingers rather than the customary 10.

"I was just cutting away and didn't notice," says Grashow. "After it got published, I started getting letters from all over the world asking what it meant. I can imagine people sitting round, getting stoned, counting the fingers and asking what the significance of the 11th finger was." And was it significant? "No," he laughs. "It was just an accident." **DEV**



JAMES GRASHOW/PRESS

Iommi was briefly a member of Tull, long enough to appear in the Rolling Stones' *Rock And Roll Circus* concert movie, where the band played their 1968 single *A Song For Jeffrey* and a new number, *Fat Man*. But by mid-December, he returned to Birmingham, and to his old band, Earth, who would soon change their name to Black Sabbath. "He did alright for himself, did Tony," says Anderson warmly.

One guitarist who had auditioned at the same time as Iommi was Martin Barre, whose band Gethsemane had played with Tull at a gig in Portsmouth. Barre's audition had been a disaster: his amp didn't work properly and the guitarist was a bundle of nerves. Yet Anderson had spotted a glimmer of potential amid the technical and personal snafus. "I invited him back for a more private, less pressured little get together," he says.

The pair crammed into the singer's bedsit. Barre began playing once more, this time without an amplifier. Afterwards the two of them went for food at a greasy spoon café on nearby Highgate Road. "I seem to remember thinking, 'He's a good guy, he seems interested in a lot of the same sort of things as me and he's probably about as unformed as a musician as I am, so we could sit down and learn together,'" says Anderson.

It helped that, temperamentally, Barre was a world away from his predecessor, Mick Abrahams. "Mick was a strong character, but he was terribly insecure," says Anderson. "He would needle people, test them out. He was a tricky guy to be around. Martin wasn't like that at all. He just wanted to be on his own most of the time. His idea of rock'n'roll was retiring early with a sandwich and an Agatha Christie book, which wasn't a million miles away from mine."

By the time 1968 turned into 1969, Barre was the band's new guitarist. The reimagining of Tull was underway.



ALAMY

If Barre was hoping for a gentle entry into the world of Tull, he was in for a shock. The first few months of 1969 were a whirlwind. In January, the band played a three-week UK tour, then flew to the US, where they'd spend the best part of the next three months, sharing stages with everyone from to Detroit firebrands the MC5 to Led Zeppelin.

"You knew that was a pretty racy lifestyle going on," says Anderson of the latter. "At least in some parts of the band. Of course, there was quite clearly a difference between the behaviour of the rather remote and calm John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page, that boyish, smily, fun-loving guy who always wanted to share his photos with you. Photos usually involving soft fruit..."

It was in the US that Jethro Tull wrote and recorded the song that would become a key stepping stone in their transition from blues rock eccentrics into full-blown prog pioneers.

Anderson remembers being in a hotel somewhere in the Midwest when the band's manager, Terry Ellis, collared him in the lobby and told him he needed to write a hit single. "So I said, 'Right, so you want me to pop back to my hotel room and write a hit single?' and he said, 'Yes!'"

Challenge accepted, Anderson returned to his hotel room to knuckle down. Awkward bugger that he was, he opted to write it in 5/4 time – emphatically not the tempo hit singles are made of. Despite this deliberate cussedness, *Living In The Past* gave Tull their first proper hit single, reaching the Top 3 in June 1969.

By then, Jethro Tull had already begun recording *Stand Up* at Morgan Studios in North London. They had road-tested a handful of new songs on their US tour, among them *Back To The Family*, *For A Thousand Mothers* and the muscular *A New Day Yesterday*. They sounded little like anything Tull had recorded on *This Was*.

"I've always said that the biggest driving force behind prog rock is boredom," Anderson says now. "That's the thing that pushes people – they get bored with three chords or repetitive things, they go looking for something else. Your threshold can become quite low and you can end up feeling a little been-there-done-that. You do need to stretch out a bit."

Jethro Tull certainly stretched out on *Stand Up*. The folk influence that had always buzzed away in the background was brought front and centre on *Back To The Family*, the gauzy *Look Into The Sun* shimmered with the faintest psychedelic haze, while *Reasons For Waiting* possessed what Anderson today describes as "something there that was evocative of a very quiet, more spiritual, almost church music. The kind of thing that I grew up with as a child in Edinburgh."

Tull in 1969, L-R: Martin Barre, Ian Anderson, Clive Bunker, Glenn Cornick.

Below: Tull on *Top Of The Pops* in 1969.



PRESS/TULL ARCHIVES

"Our necks were on the line!"

Martin Barre recalls joining Jethro Tull and recording *Stand Up*...



Martin Barre very nearly missed his chance of joining Tull.

PRESS/TULL ARCHIVES

How did you end up joining Jethro Tull between *This Was* and *Stand Up*?
The connection was through flute playing. Ian and myself were pretty much the only two people in England playing flute in a rock style. I knew about him because I had friends who were musicians who had been to see Tull at the Marquee and other places, and had excitedly told me there was somebody else doing what I did – probably a lot better! Then my band, Gethsemane, supported Tull at a club in Plymouth. We found we had a lot in common, we listened to them, they listened to us. And that carried through to when I heard that Mick Abrahams had departed and they were looking for another guitar player.

Did you approach the band or did they approach you?
It was a bit of both. They were looking at options, but they'd forgotten my name and the name of my band, so they had no way of getting in touch with me. I heard about an advert in *Melody Maker* where they were looking for another guitar player, but I didn't have the courage to phone up so I left it. Then at a very last gig Gethsemane played before we split up, this guy approached the stage and said, "You're Martin, aren't you? My name's Terry Ellis, can you give me a call in the morning?" He handed me this card, and I'm like, "Oh my god." It was very exciting. And if he hadn't caught me at that last show, he probably wouldn't have found me at all.

Did it feel like you were joining a band on the way up?
Definitely. It was everything I'd worked for. I'd spent three years with my old band trying to be successful, and we'd given up. For me, this was a like a door had opened to this whole world. Finally, I had a chance to do something with music. And I wasn't a particularly studied musician. We were all still learning to play our instruments. But there was the excitement of finally having the opportunity to play good music and great gigs with a great band. As far as I knew, it was going to change my life for a few weeks or a few months or maybe a year. But even just that was exciting.

The first single you recorded with Tull, *Living In The Past*, was a hit. Did you think, "Wow, I've made it!"?
It was never like that. The first few shows were really bad. The audience were expecting 12 bar blues like they'd always heard. And when they heard the songs we'd written for *Stand Up*, they weren't expecting it and most of them didn't like it at all. It was a very negative response to that. We were all, like, "Oh dear, is this going to work?" Ian was very nervous about this big step he was taking in his writing, and my neck was on the line – if they didn't like this music, I was going to be out of there.

What was the turning point?
A gig at Manchester University. All the previous gigs had had a very lukewarm reception, and at this point we were all getting very nervous. But that night they loved it. I remember coming offstage and smiling, and Ian was smiling. And we just thought, "Okay, the first step has worked." And the next thing, we were supporting Hendrix in Europe.

> "People thought we were old men because they'd seen the cover of *This Was* and they thought the photograph was real: 'Oh wow, we thought you were in your 60s.'"

What do you remember about making *Stand Up*?
It was exciting. The songs were new, the direction was new, there was nobody else playing that style of music. We all had elements of naiveté – we were all learning how to play that music together and try and be better players. It was a real discovery for us. It was very spontaneous – a lot of nervousness and anxiety because it was an important album. We were serious, but then Jethro Tull always took ourselves seriously. Maybe too seriously in retrospect. We weren't like other bands – we didn't party, we didn't go crazy. We were always on tour, always writing.

That must have made it interesting when you supported Led Zeppelin in America, given that you weren't interested in the kind of behaviour they were into...
Oh, I was! But only as an observer. It was like being a reporter with a notebook going, "No! Wow!" It was hilarious. We had all the fun but we didn't have to go through the lifestyle.

Why did you recoil from it?
I dunno. There's probably something wrong with me.

What did American audiences make of you?
They loved it. They were so hungry for British music. It was all laid out in front of you – if you messed up the process of getting through to them, you were pretty bad. And they didn't know what to expect. A lot of people thought we were old men because they'd seen the cover of *This Was* and they thought the photograph was real: "Oh wow, we thought you were in your 60s."

How did *Stand Up* change your life?
Not long after *Stand Up* reached No.1, Terry Ellis got us in a room and said, "Right guys, you all need to buy a house." Before then, we'd been on 50 pounds a week, with meals and hotel rooms in when we were on tour, and we thought we were in heaven with that. So when Terry said that, we just stared at him: "But Terry, why would I buy a house when I've got a nice flat in Shepherd's Bush? It's a bit damp and it smells, but it's cheap." And he just said, "No, you've made some money, I advise you to buy a house." "Right, so how do we do that...?" We really had no clue.

Other than financially, how did it change your life?
It gave me freedom. It meant I could listen to music and play guitar whenever I wanted. But all along we were just touring like crazy – this express train was still going. Although I did get a house as a base in England, I was never there. There was never a time when you could just sit back and think about things. There was constant pressure to improve because we were playing with every whizz kid and every hotshot band in the world – Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Hendrix, Paul Butterfield, Chicago. That put pressure on me because I wanted to get better, I needed to survive.

How do you look back on it now?
I love it. I'm doing a 50th anniversary tour this year with my band, and Clive Bunker's joining me. And there's another Tull musician – a very important Jethro Tull musician that I can't mention at this stage – who I want to join us on this tour. I'm doing a big celebration. And in my mind, *Stand Up* is the centre of it. Those songs are so powerful, it's the 21st century, I'm playing *For A Thousand Mothers*, and it's still an amazing piece of music. It still really works. **DEV**

Even more interesting were *Bourée* and *Fat Man*. The former was a playfully manic update of 18th-century composer Johann Sebastian Bach's lute piece *Bourée In E Minor*, while the latter incorporated tabla-style rhythms and other world music flourishes of the kind popularised by The Beatles two years earlier on the *Sgt Pepper* track *Within You Without You*. *Fat Man* itself has been read as a dig at the departed Mick Abrahams.

"No, no," insists Anderson, before changing course. "Well, actually it was perhaps a little bit of a jibe because Mick was self-conscious about his weight. He had a bit of puppy fat because he drank a lot of beer and was fond of a good pie. I came up with the idea when I was sharing a cabin with him on a ferry on the way back from a gig in Denmark. I'd bought a mandolin from a pawn shop. I had no idea how to tune it, and Mick was getting a bit annoyed with me just plucking strings. I jokingly titled it *I Don't Want To Be A Fat Man*, which annoyed him even more, because he thought it was a jibe against him. Which it was and it wasn't."

Anderson is cagey about his other lyrical inspirations today. He firmly rejects the suggestion that *We Used To Know* – a Martin Barre showcase with tang of bittersweet nostalgia for "the bad old days" – stemmed from his own life. In fact, he shoots down the notion that any of his songs were autobiographical.

"Well, hardly any of my songs are actually about a given person or a given relationship," he says. "Someone like Roy Harper would write some quite personal songs that were obviously born of personal experience in some deep emotional or even sexual moment. But I never wanted anybody to think I was writing a song just about them, because somehow that would seem like a betrayal."

Still, he does concede that the inter-generational tensions he addresses on *For A Thousand Mothers* were partly influenced by his relationship with his own parents.

"I based that on my childhood experiences," he says, "but it's not just *my* childhood experiences, it's everybody's childhood experiences of growing up with parents who are telling them what they must do and what they mustn't do. My parents will have listened to that song and they will have possibly wondered, 'Did he really hate us so much he wrote this song about us?'"

The band finished recording *Stand Up* on May 1, 1969. Two days later, they were back on the road in the UK, before once again making another transatlantic crossing to embark on another lengthy Stateside tour.



GETTY IMAGES

John Peel may not have approved of these guys' new direction, but plenty of fans did.

Before they left, Jethro Tull played a show at Plymouth club Van Dike. It was an old stomping ground of theirs, and this time they were joined on the bill by Radio 1 DJ John Peel, a big supporter of the band during their early days.

"Afterwards, I said to John Peel, 'Hi John, what do you think of the new songs?'" recalls Anderson. "He said, 'I don't like them. You should never have got rid of Mick Abrahams. You should have carried on doing what you were doing.'"

Anderson was crushed. "I thought he would like it because it had mandolins and balalaikas and weird shit going on. But he didn't. It felt like a stab in the heart. And he never spoke to me ever again."

In the end, John Peel's opinion didn't matter. *Stand Up* was released in July 1969. It came housed in a striking gatefold sleeve featuring an intricate caricature of the band on the cover courtesy of American woodcut artist James Grashow and a 3D pop-up insert that saw the band literally living up to the album's title.

Jethro Tull were in the US when they heard that *Stand Up* had reached No.1 back home. Anderson can't recall exactly where, but he's fairly sure that Joe Cocker was present.

"I remember having breakfast when Joe Cocker walked in and told me that *Stand Up* had gone to No.1 in the album charts. I said, 'Oh wow. That's nice. I don't suppose you're going to finish all that bacon are you, Joe? If you're not going to eat it, could I have a bit?'"

This, too, is a typically Ian Anderson-ish reaction. There would be no celebratory party, not even the popping of a champagne cork, let alone anything more potent.

Even as a hairy 20-something, Anderson seemed out of step with his contemporaries: a young fogey in a tattered army greatcoat, a remote observer rather than an active

> "I was going to see, at the Marquee Club, King Crimson, and the very first concerts by Yes. They gave me confidence that I could be more adventurous."

participant. When the counterculture came knocking on his door, he hid behind the curtains and pretended he was out.

"I had very little relationship with all that," he recalls today. "I remember going to clubs and everyone else being plastered, knocking back beers and brandies and whatever else. I didn't drink, I certainly didn't take drugs. I genuinely felt ruled out of that whole thing."

He doesn't sound regretful when he says this. Instead, he cites Jimi Hendrix as a cautionary tale against the more extreme aspects of the rock'n'roll lifestyle. The pair had crossed paths when Jethro Tull supported the guitarist in Stockholm earlier in 1969. "I only spoke to him once, while we were both smoking cigarettes in a corridor before a press conference that he didn't want to do. He was having a little quiet, private time. He seemed like a man who was really uncomfortable with what he was becoming."

Six months later, Tull found themselves on the same bill as Hendrix at a big US festival. Things had changed. "He was surrounded by this phalanx of groupies-come-drug dealers-come-bodyguard-come-whatever. Harmful people. And we know how that turned out."

What Anderson did share with Hendrix was a sense of showmanship. The first recorded instance of him attacking his flute while standing on one leg was at the Rock And Roll Circus at the end of 1968. But as the stages got bigger and his confidence grew, he began to inhabit the role of twitching, spinning, flute-handed wild man.

"The way it happens is that you get lost in the moment onstage, then you see photographs of yourself and read people talking about you. And you think: 'OK, I'm getting noticed, so I'd better be that guy.' You start to deconstruct the whole thing privately. You think, 'What am I doing that makes people think I'm on amphetamines or just demented?' And then suddenly you're onstage in a codpiece and tights, playing the flute.'"

Contrived or not, it worked. Jethro Tull's profile began to grow in the UK and the US – the latter assisted by a second stint supporting Led Zeppelin throughout the summer of 1969. Anderson could have been forgiven for allowing himself to sit back and think, 'Job done', but there was still a nagging fear that it might all be some kind of horrible accident.

Look Into The Sun

Ian Anderson on what the future holds...

It was a reluctant Ian Anderson who embarked on Jethro Tull's 50th anniversary tour. "I'm embarrassed by that kind of thing," he says. "I wanted to hide under the bed and not come out for 12 months."

The tour also meant that Anderson put the writing and recording of his first album since 2014's *Homo Erraticus* on ice. "I thought I'd rather just put it on the back burner and not think about it until I can press the 'go' button properly again."

Before hitting the road, Anderson and his band had written and recorded the music for seven songs, and completed vocals and flute for two of them. "We tried to make it as live as possible," he says.

The singer says the album is likely to feature 12 tracks. "The intention is that seven of them are full band rock numbers, and the other five are things I intend to record alone with just an acoustic guitar and voice. I like the variety and dynamic extremes of doing very spartan acoustic things alongside things with full band members."

He's cagey today about specific details. "Oh no, until it's got to the stage where I'm doing artwork, or maybe even the point of release, it's best to keep schtum. The minute you start talking about song titles or album titles or lyrical themes, you're tying your hands behind your back. At this stage, nothing is set in stone."

That isn't stopping him toying with the notion of releasing the album in a different way – or perhaps not even releasing it as an album at all. "Part of me thinks, 'Wouldn't it be nice to do three EPs, each of them four or five months apart? Wouldn't that be satisfying for the fans more than me?" he says. "Having said all of that, this could be a rubbish album and never get released, because I'm getting a bit old and constantly reminded that I only have a little while ahead of me and should probably spend that time doing live shows..." **DEV**



STUART WOOD

Ian Anderson is adamant he's keeping schtum about new album details.

ADVERT: ALAMY

Below: A very modest 1969 advert for *Stand Up*.



"Did I think, 'Blow me, we're famous?" he says. "Yes. 'Blow me, I'm famous in *Melody Maker*, but blow me, I'm certainly not famous and Italy, Spain, North America or anywhere else in the world.' You might have had your first No.1 album but only in the UK. And it could also be your first and last No.1 album anywhere. You're constantly reminded of all the one-hit wonders who have passed through town."

Retrospectively, *Stand Up* has been viewed as the point at which Ian Anderson assumed control of the band he had helped to found two years earlier. It's a claim he doesn't agree with – at least not quite.

"It wasn't really a question of assuming control, it was a gentle transition really. I suppose it was more of a democracy to begin with. But then there wasn't a busting amount to really discuss. There was no formal gathering to thrash out issues. I suppose as it progressed, there was probably more coming from me in terms of input than anybody else in the band. But it didn't really get to be what you would call 'control' until probably 1974 or '75."

Benign dictatorship or not, the approach worked. Tull rounded out 1969 with wind in their sails – wind that would carry them through recording the follow-up, *Benefit*, and eventually onto *Aqualung*, the album that would elevate them to the superstar bracket.

But all that was in the future. After the necessary false start of *This Was*, *Stand Up* provided a significant marker in Jethro Tull's long career. Today, Anderson looks back on it with fondness.

"I see it through slightly rosy spectacles, of course," says Anderson. "But when people ask me what my favourite Jethro Tull album is, *Stand Up* will always be one of the two or three that I mention. The reason is that it's the first album that I felt creatively responsible for. It was a first wet dream involving somebody else at the same time. It's incorrect to say that we wouldn't have carried on without it, but things could have been very different for us."

THE LA's

SF GASP

Tramps, ghosts, religious outrage and globalisation – *Aqualung* made **Jethro Tull** stars, but its creation wasn't easy. On its 40th anniversary in 2011, **Ian Anderson** and full supporting cast looked back on their prophetic masterpiece...

As opening lines, and indeed opening riffs go, the beginning of the title track on Jethro Tull's multi-million selling and undeniably seminal fourth album must rank as one of prog's most striking, memorable and deservedly revered. On the brink of its 40th anniversary, *Aqualung*, the less than savoury tale of a wheezing, soap-dodging, wildly hirsute vagrant, remains as conceptually vivid and musically potent, and the rest of the remarkably diverse, dynamic and ferociously intelligent album that follows it, has aged incredibly well. The prog rock canon would be considerably poorer for the absence of *Locomotive Breath*, *Cross-Eyed Mary*, *Wond'ring Aloud* or *My God*, and yet Tull have always seemed to be a distinct entity in their own right; a progressive rock band by happy accident, rather than due to any real affinity with the other giants of the genre. *Aqualung*, their best-selling record and the one that continues to define them in the eyes of all but their most devoted and clued-up fans, is simply a classic rock album that has never lost its magic.

Aqualung creator, Ian Anderson, isn't looking too shabby either; fit, healthy, smartly-attired and as reliably articulate as ever, he has weathered those four decades of near-constant creative work far better than the vast majority of his peers and, a few aches and pains aside, looks considerably younger than his 63 years. And given his evident enthusiasm for making music, there seems little that is likely to stop him from charging boldly on into his seventies, a career musician with no shortage of ideas or things to say. Somehow, Anderson just doesn't seem like someone who has the time or inclination to engage in dewy-eyed nostalgia, and when *Prog* asks him whether it really feels like 40 years since the release of *Aqualung*, his response is both immediate and laudably rooted in the present.

"Well, some of the songs on *Aqualung* belong 40 years ago, yes, because there are some that have rarely been played live on stage," he notes. "There's three or four that have only ever been played in the last two or three years, for the first time ever. So some of them are relatively new friends as far as live performances go, but then there are the other songs which are very much part of every Jethro Tull concert, or any Ian Anderson concert for that matter. *Aqualung* and *Locomotive Breath* are nearly always going to be in there, so it's hard to think of those in the context of 40, 30 or 20 years. I tend to think of them in terms of 30 or 40 hours since the last time I played them. It's difficult, when you try to separate material from your more recent experiences of it. When you're in the middle of a tour and it's something you're doing every night, songs never feel like a piece of ancient history. And that's certainly the case with most of those songs, because they are about social realities."

Progressive rock's relationship with reality has often been quite a distant and complex one, not least because the adventurous and often otherworldly musical ethos that has always driven the genre has tended to elicit lyrical conceits of a largely fantastic or fictional bent. From its description of the album's titular anti-hero suffering in *'December's foggy freeze'* through to *Wind Up*'s visions of institutionalised religion and Anderson's adolescent shrugging off of its influence, *Aqualung* is an album that exists very much in the real world.

"These songs seem to stand the test of time pretty well, because they're still relevant," Anderson avows. "Even the song *Locomotive Breath*, if I go back to what was in my head at the time, even back then we were talking about population issues. It's still not politically correct for the most part to talk about it, but that increase in globalisation, the planetary population, the growth of industry, the commerciality, that was what that song was supposed to be about, this runaway train and a sense of helplessness when you find yourself on something that you can't stop. It's a juggernaut that won't slow down, and that's where we are. In 2011 we're staring nine billion people in the face in 40 years from now, with no earthly hope of feeding them. We're struggling to manage with six and a half billion now and we're making a much more difficult



Barre, Bunker, Hammond, Anderson and Evan: slightly overdressed for that July junket.

MAIN: GETTY INSET: BARRY PLUMMER

"These songs aren't ancient history, they are social realities."

– IAN ANDERSON

habitat in terms of water and food and the quality of air that we breathe, as people continue to take resources without a longer term plan. So *Locomotive Breath* is the song that deals with those issues."

Of course, it is the album's title track that has the most obvious axe to grind; its central point underpinned by *Aqualung*'s iconic artwork (of which more later). Far more than just a tongue-in-cheek portrayal of a tramp '*spitting out pieces of his broken luck*', the song remains extremely close to Ian Anderson's heart; an oblique but heartfelt plea for compassion for one's fellow man.

"*Aqualung* is a song about homeless people, but more importantly it's a song about our reaction, those of us that are fortunate enough to have homes, to have a degree of wealth and happiness and family and friends and support," he says. "It's about our reaction, of guilt, distaste, awkwardness and confusion, all these things that we feel when we're confronted with the reality of the homeless, whether it's the slightly Chaplin-esque tramp figure on the *Aqualung* album or whether it's a 17-year-old young criminal, drug-addicted or working in the sex trade or whatever it might be. Homelessness has shifted in terms of the age and the demographic. It's changed from how I remember homeless people, tramps as they were in my day. Tramps were homeless people but they had a certain dignity about them. These days it's more of a socially frightening phenomenon and one that we feel more guilt and awkwardness about dealing with, I think."

Unlike so many albums released during prog's early 70s heyday, *Aqualung* now seems an extraordinarily prophetic piece of work, and as its author warms to his theme, it swiftly becomes apparent that spending the last 40 years singing the title track to audiences all over the planet has caused Anderson to think very deeply about the issues it raised.

"I've seen it so often. You see someone who's clearly in desperate need of some help, whether it's a few coins or the contents of your wallet, and you blank them out," he says, looking momentarily forlorn. "The more you live in that Madison Avenue world of affluence, in that business-driven, commercially-driven lifestyle, you can just cease to see them. It's the same in the middle and upper rankings of any major Indian city. There are invisible people, those that are so far down on the social scale that they become invisible. I've marvelled, being in India with people who are wealthy, that they're able to remain absolutely untouched by these people. They just have a filter that says 'They're not there' and they can walk by without noticing them. It's quite horrifying and deeply wounding to see this happen, but maybe if you're there for long enough you'd eventually become like the locals and you'd become blind to them as well. So that's *Aqualung*. That's what it means to me after all these years. It's not about selling 12 million copies of an album or whatever it is. It's an album of songs and some of them still touch me when I sing them or talk about them to this day. It's not hard to get up and sing a song like that and still feel it. The repetition doesn't blur what's going on in there."

On a musical level, *Aqualung* stands out as a major milestone in both the evolution of Jethro Tull as a creative force and the development of rock music in general. Tull's first three studio albums – *This Was* (1968), *Stand Up* (1969) and *Benefit* (1970) – had been imaginative but ultimately familiar affairs, rooted in the blues-inspired bluster that was very much de rigueur at the time. Anderson's flute was one significant factor that separated the band from their obvious peers, but it still wasn't until *Aqualung* that Tull began to sound like a band with a unique sound, or indeed one that had much to do with the nascent prog scene that bands like King Crimson and Pink Floyd had unknowingly coined and refined through their own early works. *Aqualung*'s impact can be partly attributed to the way the album bridged the gap between thunderous, riff-based simplicity and the wide-eyed experimentation and stylistic cross-pollination that would later be regarded as the essence of progressive rock. Anderson, who was only 24 when the album was recorded, has his own theory about why it was that particular batch of songs that ended up as such a lauded landmark in his band's story.

"We had some good models as songwriters around us," he explains. "Whether it was the early days of Simon and Garfunkel and Bob Dylan or the polite and the impolite so-called folk revival



Blanket coverage: Full *Aqualung* line-up in an early DFS endorsement, 1970.

SUPPORTING CAST

GLENN CORNICK

"I felt I could still contribute..."



GETTY

Although he'd been fired from the band before *Aqualung* was recorded, bassist Glenn Cornick was involved in the early studio sessions.

"I recorded a song for album called *Wond'ring Aloud*, which was eventually released as *Wond'ring Again* on the *Living In The Past* album. I also did the first version of *My God*. I'm also on the backing tracks for a couple of other songs, although I can't be specific as to which ones they might be."

Cornick had been a member of the John Evans Smash before this band became Jethro Tull.

"I'd been in lots of local bands in Blackpool, and joined this one when they were still called The Blades. They were only one in the area doing out of town gigs, which was quite a big deal."

After playing on the first three Tull albums, Cornick was dismissed in December 1970.

"At the end of an American tour, our manager told me I was being sacked. Probably Ian felt he wasn't getting along with me. However, I thought our relationship was pretty good. It's a shame, because I felt I could still contribute."

Before this happened, Cornick went into the newly opened Morgan Studios in London with Tull, to start work on what would become *Aqualung*.

"We had real problems with the studio, so abandoned the idea of recording there. By the time, the band went into Island Studios in Basing Street and properly got down to recording, I wasn't there anymore."

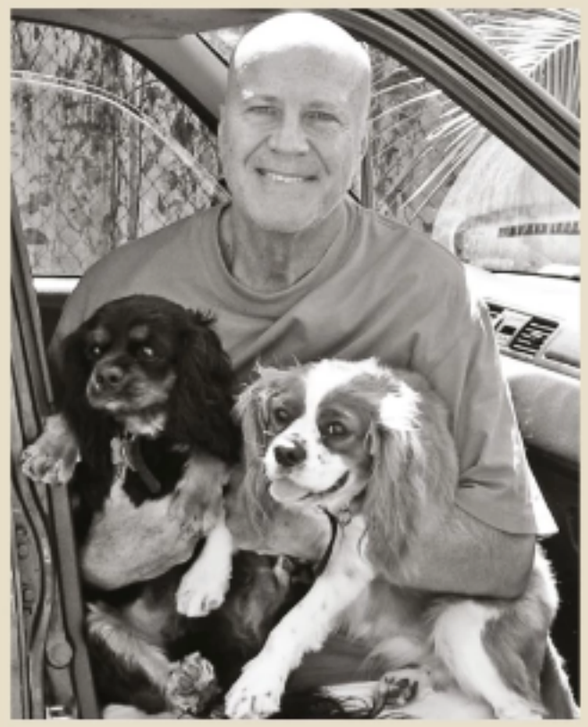
Despite no longer being a member of the band, Cornick was still regularly in touch with one or two of his erstwhile bandmates, and had an insight into how things were progressing.

"I know they had horrendous problems at the new location as well. And I think you can hear this in the album." **MD**

SUPPORTING CAST

TERRY ELLIS

"It's my favourite album..."





GETTY

“The studios were in a church, a cold echoey place with lots of ghosts...”

– IAN ANDERSON

in America in the 60s through to people like Bert Jansch singing songs about heroin and death, and then on to the whimsical and slightly philosophical Roy Harper who was quite an influence, not just on me but of many people of my ilk. We were all moved and indebted somehow to Roy Harper for showing us a kind of purity and a simple clarity of approach. I still listen to his music today and it's a constant reminder of a simple approach where musically and lyrically less can be more, and that's something we could all do well to remember!"

With a freshly-minted line-up completed by guitarist Martin Barre, keyboard player John Evan, drummer Clive Bunker (for whom it would become his final Tull album) and new bassist Jeffrey Hammond, Jethro Tull arrived at *Aqualung* with a renewed sense of purpose, both in terms of their ambitions and of the musical possibilities that lay at their collective fingertips. Interestingly, Anderson was considering new possibilities of his own, particularly with regard to the whole process of recording. Summoning a dash of extra courage, he saw *Aqualung* as the ideal opportunity to exhibit a little more faith in his own abilities as a songwriter and artistic leader of men.

"It was the first time that I'd ever had the courage to go into the studio on my own and sit down and strum and sing a song," he admits. "And then the other guys would come in and add their contributions, but the songs were more or less complete by that point, and somebody just slapped their backsides and they burst into life. There was only one song before the *Aqualung* album where I did it all on my own. People forget that a lot of the album is just acoustic guitar and very stripped down and it's not full-blown rock songs, although there are a few of those on there too."

The recording of *Aqualung* began in December 1970 at Island Records' studio in Basing Street, London. Famously, a comparatively fresh-faced Led Zeppelin were also in the building at the time, piecing together their soon-to-be-hallowed masterpiece *Led Zeppelin IV* in the smaller of two studios which Anderson describes as "a much more manageable and nicer-sounding room."

"The building was a church," he recalls. "We got stuck in the cavernous body of the church, this horrible, cold, echoey place. There were a lot of ghosts in there. It was very hard to go in there and sit alone, in this vast ➔



FUTURE/ROB MONK

The man who was to manage and produce Jethro Tull in their early days first came across Tull even before they'd taken this name.

"I had a booking agency with Chris Wright. We were called Ellis-Wright, and used to mainly book blues bands during the mid to late 1960s. Chris who found this eight-piece band from Blackpool, known as the John Evan Smash. Their leader was Ian Anderson. We brought the band down to London and introduced them to guitarist Mick Abrahams."

In the end, the core became Anderson, Abrahams, bassist Glenn Cornick and drummer Clive Bunker. They changed their name to Jethro Tull, with Ellis becoming their manager.

"As the relationship between myself and the band grew, I also took on the role of producer. I saw my role as dealing with all the peripheral stuff."

After taking on the manager/producer role for the band's first three albums, Ellis decided to have much more of a backseat for *Aqualung*, as he also had other priorities at the time: "I was setting up the Chrysalis label with Chris Wright, so the band began recording without me. But then Ian called and told me that he was struggling to produce the album on his own, and needed help."

Ellis now looks back on *Aqualung* with great affection.

"It's my favourite Tull album. I love the combination of acoustic material and out and out rockers. The likes of *Mother Goose* are very special, underlining why the band meant so much to me."

Ellis never thought that *Aqualung* was a concept album: "To be honest, I don't recall anyone at the time claiming it was conceptual, and that idea never occurred to me, because I knew it wasn't." **MD**

MUSO SUPERFAN!



"Fantastic playing, fantastic songs, it's got it all!"

Steve Harris from **Iron Maiden** speaks!

"Tull are one of my favourite bands, without a doubt, and *Aqualung* is a classic album. Fantastic playing, fantastic songs, attitude, vibe – it's got everything, really. I don't know how you couldn't react to it. Some of the album is quite dark but there's parts where it's humorous, tongue-in-cheek, and also cynical. There's lots of things going on in there. I mean, what an album!"



"We like to do a cover version now and again but we always had this thing: we don't wanna do songs that people know so well, so there's no point doing *Locomotive Breath* or *Aqualung* itself. We chose *Cross-Eyed Mary* for the B-side of *The Trooper* [1983]. Then we discovered the song had got airplay in the US. If we'd known that we'd have chosen something else. The US label was trying to get us to put it on the album [*Piece Of Mind*] – we told 'em to piss off!" **PE**



It was one way of presenting flowers and chocs on Valentine's Day...

place, and sing and play with an acoustic guitar. There was an atmosphere and I really had to look inside myself to find the mindset to do it. Technically it was very difficult too. The studio was new and there was all this brand new equipment that nobody knew how to use, lots of things that weren't properly wired up or working well, so we had absolutely no idea what anything sounded like or what we were working with sonically. I think we might have had one or two times when we got into the other room, but Led Zeppelin had a lockout on it and that was that."

Forty years on, *Aqualung*'s status as a rock milestone is beyond doubt, but with mental images of Jimmy Page strolling by as the then generously-bearded Anderson polished his flute in the corridor in our minds, it is hard not to wonder whether the sessions that spawned the album seemed particularly momentous to those involved. Was there a sense that this was going to be a hugely important album for Jethro Tull, or was it simply business as usual and another stepping stone along the way?

"There was a sense of it being a make-or-break album, that it would either be the first big step up to fame and fortune on an international level, or that it would be the album that took us back to where we started!" Anderson lets out a wry chuckle, amused by what could have been if fortune had been shining its torch elsewhere. "But I remember at the time, when we finished the album, we were down to doing the last mix on the last day and I went with John Evan, and we went for an early breakfast. It was six o'clock in the morning and we staggered out of the studio and went to some nearby diner place and ate breakfast at the crack of dawn and I remember saying 'I don't really know what we've got here! Do you think it's going to be okay?' I had a real sense of doubt about whether it was going to be a positive step up. But we knew it was rather important that it was received well and got off to a good start. I remember being concerned that it might be badly reviewed, at a time when those things really mattered. There were four or five music newspapers at the time, all of which would give you a full page of love or hate depending on their reaction to it, so you couldn't avoid what was going to be on the newsstands along Oxford Street the next day and it was very worrying! I wasn't sure how it was going to be received, but actually it was taken quite well in the UK but it went on to make a big impact in a lot of European countries and, of course, in the US."

Although Tull have always had a large and loyal following in the UK and Europe, it was their success in the US that elevated the band to a level of prominence that took everyone, Anderson included, by surprise. A year after *Aqualung*, the band's epic faux-concept piece *Thick As A Brick* would hit the number one spot in the *Billboard* charts, turning this wilfully awkward band into the unlikeliest of arena-filling rock stars in a country that could easily have rejected them wholesale. In truth, some of the lyrics on *Aqualung* hardly seem like the sort of thing that the average God-fearing American would take to their hearts. Songs like *My God* and *Wind Up* made it very plain that Ian Anderson was prepared to ask some pretty stern questions about religion and its influence over the masses, poking notions of conventional faith with a big pointy stick. Today, of course, no one would bat an eyelid at such relatively tame mischief-making, but in 1971, Jethro Tull must have seemed rather radical to the average rock music fan, particularly in parts of America where the church cast a shadow over everyone and everything.

"Within a year we'd achieved quite a level of awareness and notoriety in some places, because of the elements on *Aqualung* that were quite disparaging of organised religion, and that upset some people," Anderson concedes. "They got a bit bent out of shape in some southern states, and had ritual burnings of the *Aqualung* album. It was in the Bible Belt, so you kind of expected it! But maybe it was kept from me to some degree, but I never had any direct confrontation or attempts to harm me, nothing nasty, directed at me, but I suspect there probably were a few things said and threats made that our managers felt the need to protect us from."

Do you think people misinterpreted what you were saying on the album to some degree?

"Some of them, perhaps! I think what I was saying was that it's not about the religious values that we get from reading or believing every word in the Bible or the ritualised religious services and

SUPPORTING CAST



GETTY

JEFFREY HAMMOND

"I was thrust in at the deep end, it was sink or swim!"

When Glenn Cornick was fired from Jethro Tull, the band turned to an old friend to take over, namely Jeffrey Hammond, who would become known as Jeffrey Hammond-Hammond.

"John Evan, Ian Anderson and I were at school together and played at youth clubs and seedy working men's clubs. After a couple of years of the transit van life the initial excitement wore off, and I deserted to begin a foundation course in art. I then hoped to do a postgraduate one at the Royal Academy Schools. But I wasn't offered a place, and within a few months Ian offered me a position in Tull, making *Aqualung*."

Hammond admits that his creative input into the album was minimal, to say the least.

"Any influence from me would have been obtuse or indirect at best. I was always the lowest common denominator. The *Locomotive Breath* and the *Aqualung* riffs might be examples of that basic simplicity, and occasionally less can be more."

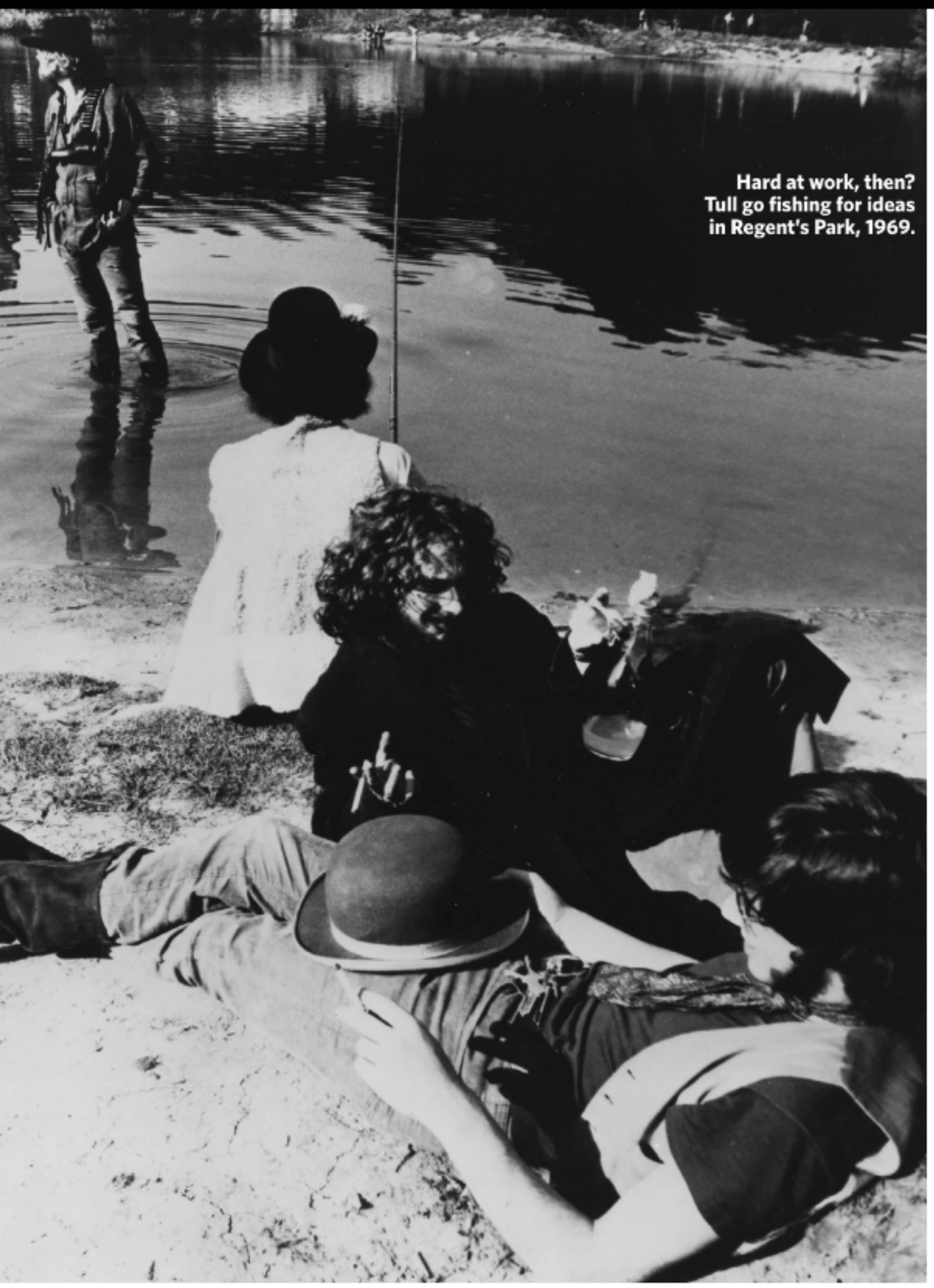
The fact that the new bassist hadn't played for so long meant that he found the recording process more of a struggle than the rest of the band.

"For my part it probably felt more difficult than for the others, being thrust in at the deep end, having not played at all whilst at art school, not to mention the wide gulf in musical ability between the rest of the band and myself. And not all the initial recordings were exactly to Ian's liking."

But Hammond has fond memories of the album.

"It was very special for me. Having been thrust in at the deep end it was sink or swim, and I suppose I needed an *Aqualung* more than most. I thought it might be my first and last recording, so I did have a sense of relief and achievement." **MD**

FUTURE/ROB MONK



Hard at work, then? Tull go fishing for ideas in Regent's Park, 1969.

GETTY X2

ceremonies, often pomp-filled as they can be in certain branches in Christianity. That's not the important issue. The important issue is to see the spirituality in all people, even in the character referred to in the *Aqualung* song or in *Cross-Eyed Mary*, a prostitute. I was trying to say that there's some innate sense of spirituality in us all, and that as musicians we are purveyors of something that communicates with the spirit. Music is caught up in all these things, usually in some ritualised kind of way, which is what a church service tends to be, and so I think I saw this album, these songs, as a way to put a bit of flesh on the bones of that thought, that spirituality is something that's above and beyond and beneath the world of pomp and ceremony in terms of organised religious services, not just Christian ones but others too. But I was 24 years old at the time and I hadn't been to university to study philosophy. I was just rambling!"

One of the benefits of having made such a seminal album at such a young age is that Anderson has now been singing *Aqualung* and *My God* and *Locomotive Breath* for a very long time and, consequently, has had ample opportunity to reflect on the meaning behind them. No kind of hectoring atheist, Anderson is more than happy to talk at length about his love of churches, "our wonderful legacy of historic buildings" and his firm belief that Christianity could and should be harnessed as a positive way of bringing communities together. Where the church and the Jethro Tull frontman diverge, however, is on the specifics of faith itself.

"I'm totally suspicious and cynical about anybody who claims to have found God and is totally immersed and convinced of their undying faith," he muses. "I just want to say 'Bollocks!' because I know that even respected members of the clergy will admit it, maybe not without a little glass of red wine to get the lips loosened, but doubt is part of what drives them. There are days when you feel you've lost it, you've lost your faith and you've become muddled. As one clergyman said to me, 'Faith and doubt are joined at the hip', and it's refreshing to hear that. That should always be the case. From the loftiest of the clergy down to the meekest of lay preachers in some parish church, you should be able to accept that you can feel that you have this faith, this strength, 50 per cent or 80 per cent or 90 per cent of the time, but if you really believe that you have it 100 per cent of the time then you're really living in some kind of dangerous bubble. I'd like to ask the Pope what he thinks about this! I met the Archbishop of Canterbury, and it wasn't the time or the place, but I would've loved to have tried to have a conversational moment with him, to see if someone like that, someone with rather more philosophical and scholarly stature with regard to the Anglican faith, would admit to some doubt or to having less than 100 per cent certainty. I'd be very surprised if he wouldn't."

"The important issue is the innate spirituality in people, even *Cross-Eyed Mary*, a prostitute."

– IAN ANDERSON

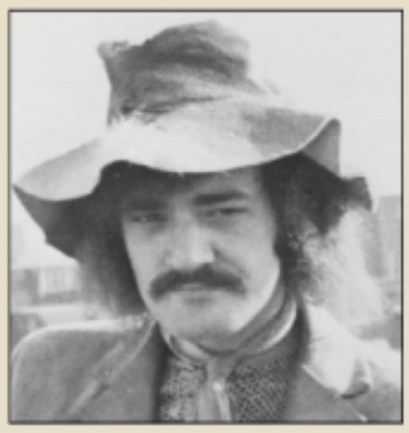
Returning to the subject of *Aqualung* itself, we turn to the album's iconic front cover, asking Ian Anderson what inspired the decision to move away from the somewhat eccentric artwork used on the first three Tull albums and to use what is a fairly literal watercolour depiction of the title song's tramp, albeit one that looks suspiciously like a certain young singer-cum-flautist.

"It's not my album cover," states Anderson firmly, grimacing at the thought. "I really didn't like it and I didn't want to do it that way, but Terry Ellis, who was the band's manager in those years, by then he was pretty much full-time involved in the creation and development of Chrysalis Records. Terry liked to muscle in at the last minute and put his stamp on things. The first album, that was all my idea, the photo session with the strange fish being held up and all that. It was my design and the way I wanted it to be. Then ➤

SUPPORTING CAST

CLIVE BUNKER

"We knew it was good but we didn't know how important it would become."



The original Jethro Tull drummer recalls the point at which the band took the name with great clarity.

"We'd messed around with a load of names looking for an identity. When I joined, at the same time as guitarist Mick Abrahams, the band were really bluesy. Then as we were getting ready to release our first single (1968's *Sunshine Day*), someone at our agency who was studying history suggested we become Jethro Tull."

After three increasingly successful albums, the band reached what was to be the landmark *Aqualung*, and Bunker recalls the recording sessions as being exceptionally difficult.

"The problem was that Ian had turned the corner and was going for something and the rest of us didn't know of. So, he wasn't happy with anything we did."

Bunker says that nobody in Tull believed they'd come up with a special album, when it was all finished.

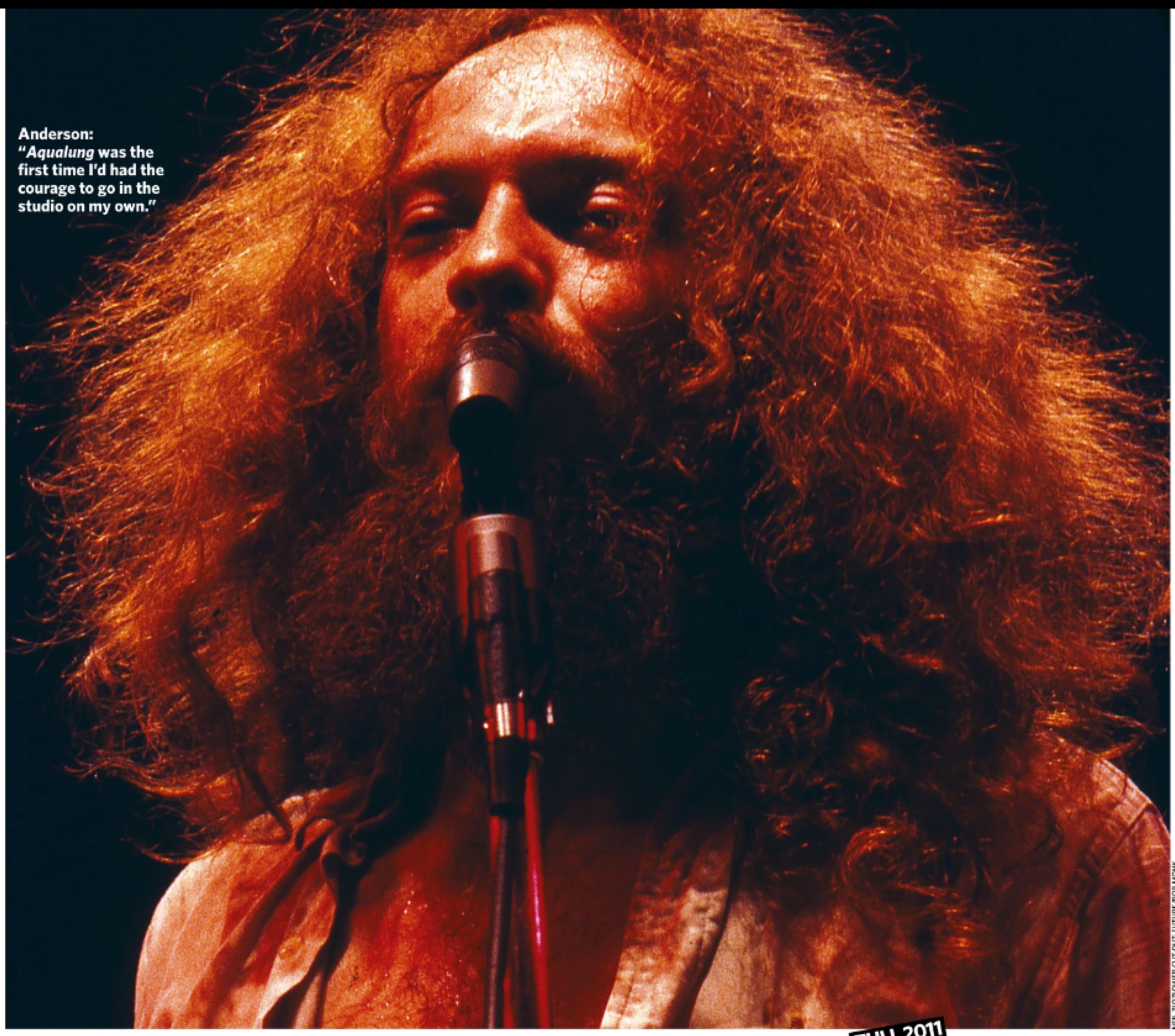
"We knew it was good, but how can you know that anything you're involved with would become so important? I do remember that even when it was finished, Ian was still unhappy with it all."

The drummer also has his own theory on how *Aqualung* became to be regarded as a concept album.

"You play the record to a couple of Americans, tell them that there's a lyrical theme loosely linking a few songs, and then notice the figure of the Aqualung character on the cover, and suddenly the word is out that Jethro Tull have done a concept album. Simple. Chinese whispers."

So how does Bunker, who quit soon after to get married, now view *Aqualung*?

"I'm proud of what we did. I think with a lot of the band's albums there are some amazing songs and a lot of filler. This one just flowed from start to finish." **MD**



Anderson: "*Aqualung* was the first time I'd had the courage to go in the studio on my own."

NEIL ZLOZOWER CUT OUT: FUTURE/ROB MONK

"I said, 'I don't think we should make this guy look like me, I don't want to be the tramp!"

– IAN ANDERSON ON *AQUALUNG*'S ART

Terry commissioned the woodcut for the second album and the whole pop-up thing. *Benefit* was another cover of his that I really, really didn't like either. But on *Aqualung*, he'd seen a watercolour painting by some artist in *Time* magazine, and he'd found the name of this guy and commissioned him to present an idea for an album cover. I remember being at a rehearsal in a theatre on The Strand, and Terry wheeled this guy in and he took some photographs of me in my old overcoat that I'd had since the earliest days of Jethro Tull. I said 'I don't really think we should make this guy look like me! I don't want to be the tramp! I'm singing a song about this character. It's not me!' The next thing we knew, we had this image for the front cover which did look too uncomfortably like me, and I was really not happy at all. I actually thought it was a pretty crap painting. It was lively but I didn't like the colours. It was a messy piece of work. To me, it didn't have the punch and clarity I wanted. I've never liked it as an album cover."

Regardless of Anderson's objections, the *Aqualung* cover has become one of progressive rock's most instantly recognisable and popular frontispieces. Back in 1971, artist Burton Silverman's work swiftly became synonymous with Jethro Tull and perhaps this is why the Tull leader's dislike for the cover remains so strong. Throw in the fact that Silverman later approached the band for a ➔



Wheezy does it: Ian Anderson, London, 2011.

TULL 2011

ANDERSON UNPLUGGED

Mr A strips down for a solo tour...

What made you decide to do a solo acoustic tour this time round?

"What I enjoy now is to mix it up a lot. I do acoustic tours or orchestral things or string quartet things or rock things. There's no point in doing every concert and trying to embrace all these things at once, so doing this acoustic tour as a trio is to take some really stripped down versions of some of the rock songs but also some of the more naturally acoustic songs that were more that way in the first place. It's stripped down for smaller theatres and smaller audiences, and it's a nice thing to do for a few nights."

Is it important for you to avoid becoming just another nostalgic heritage act?

"The nostalgia thing doesn't really impact on me. Songs that I've sung yesterday or the week before, they're part of the real world today, so they're not difficult, but sometimes going back and finding stuff from the early days can be a real moment of taking yourself back through decades. There's a sequel to *Wond'ring Aloud* from *Aqualung* and it's called *Wond'ring Again*, and it was played once in the studio, a couple of takes, and that was it, never done ever again, but we unearthed it and played it for the first time in 39 years during the last couple of US tours. Some of these old songs are little gems that you can unearth years later, while there are others where you think 'That's best left to rot away!'. It's like that with all songs and relationships too. Some you can rekindle and some you should leave well alone! Ha ha ha!" **DL**

Sitting on a park bench

Aqualung cover artist Burton Silverman on the sleeve that became synonymous with Tull.



Burton Silverman is keen to dispel a perpetuated myth about *Aqualung*, namely that the character on the front of the album is based on Ian Anderson.

"It's definitely not Ian. It's actually me."

And how does Silverman know? Because he's the artist who painted this in the first place.

"I started off with a self-portrait, and then developed it from there into something a bit more like an everyman."

Silverman didn't have a rock 'n' roll background when he was commissioned to do this painting.

"It was Terry Ellis who contacted me. At that point in my career I'd done a lot of illustrative work for *Time* and *Esquire* magazines, and I suppose that must have been the reason I was chosen. So, the band paid for me to come over to London, to see them rehearse and to discuss the work."

Not a fan of rock music, Silverman found the Jethro Tull experience rather daunting – and loud.

"I think I was just too old to appreciate this [Silverman was 42 at the time]. There were six very loud amps, seemingly blowing up all around me. It was an extraordinary time."

But Silverman agreed to do three paintings for the cover.

"The centre spread featured caricatures of the band behaving badly in a church setting, while the back had the *Aqualung* figure as a poor, downtrodden beggar. The front I felt was in tune with the lyrical approach on the songs."

Silverman was located in the Cumberland Hotel in Central London during a bitterly cold winter at the end of 1970 and beginning of 1971. It's something that still remains with him.

"I'm from New York, so I'm used to cold weather. But even for me, this was really nasty. I developed a nasty cold as well, while working on the paintings. However, I worked away in my hotel room to get these finished."

Since then, Silverman has become an iconic figure in American art. However, for many he's still the man who did the *Aqualung* cover.

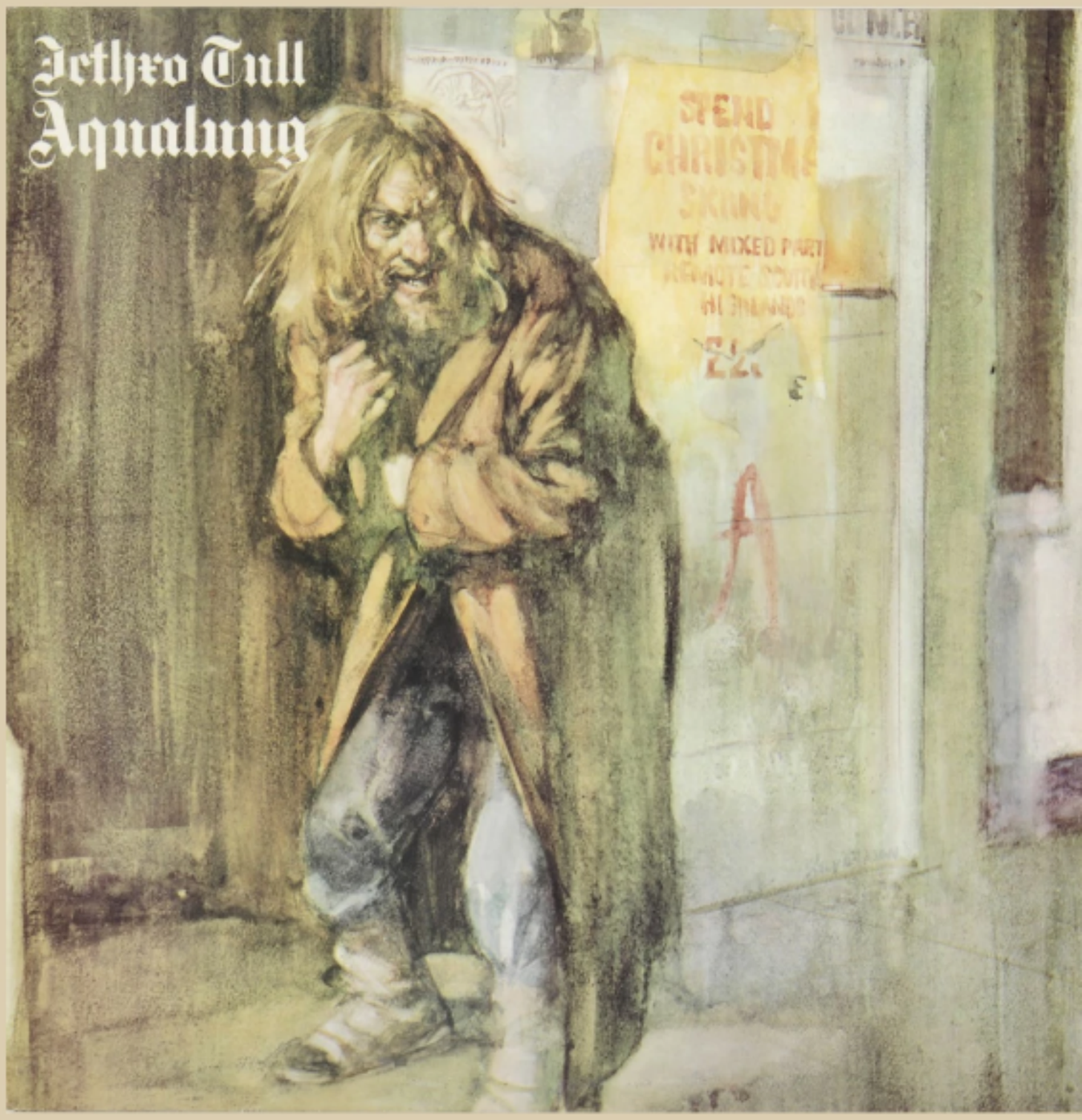
"It's taken on a life of its own. I've lost count of the number of people who only know me through this one piece. For all I've done since, this is where my fame seems to lie. I have to admit it's a little irritating."

What also slightly irks the quietly spoken octogenarian is that he doesn't see a penny of any of the huge sums his artwork has generated down the years.

"I never had a written contract. It was just a handshake deal with Terry Ellis. I sold him the rights for use of the painting for a comparatively small sum. I reasoned that I'd been given a trip to London with my wife, and we'd been put up in a good hotel, so that added to the fee, which is fair enough. However, over the years, that painting has been used for so many different things, everything apart from toilet paper."

Silverman says his agreement with Ellis only covered its use for the vinyl sleeve, and nothing else. So, in an attempt to redress the financial imbalance, a couple of years ago he wrote to Anderson.

"I thought the fact it was cropping up on merchandise and many other uses was excessive. So, I wrote to Ian, as one artist to another, asking if I might get an extra payment for all of these. But what I got back from him was a curt letter, insisting that they owned the rights, and that I wasn't entitled to anything." (See over for Anderson's opinion on the matter.)



Going for a Burton: the artist as a young(er) man, 1960s, top left, and a recent self-portrait, below.



Silverman also has a strange tale to tell of the fate of at least two of the three paintings that he did.

"About two years ago, I got a call from someone in Florida, who wanted $1,000 for the front cover painting. He also said his brother-in-law had the back cover original. He wondered if I'd like to buy one or both. I thought the price was very high, and wasn't sure if these were genuine.

"This guy claimed that his mother had found them in a hotel room in London. Now, that's really odd. What was his mother doing in a London hotel room, and why didn't she hand them into the hotel if she'd found them? Then he changed his story and said that his mother was given them 'as a little gift'. But by who?

"The whole mystery has still not been resolved. Eventually he broke off communication, when I asked him to send the paintings to me for authentication; I was prepared to pay the cost and to sign a letter that I was only to keep for them a couple of hours, before they got returned. And I've not been able to contact Terry to find out if he still has the originals. As for the gatefold painting, nobody knows where that is." **MD**

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settlement for exploiting his work commercially, and it's not hard to see why Anderson would quite like to reissue the album with entirely different artwork.

"Yes, that certainly didn't help," he smiles. "The artist wanted to sue me, the management, the record company and everyone involved in the album for illegal use of the image because it was just supposed to be for a long-playing record and that was supposedly the nature of the original agreement. The artist probably got something like five thousand dollars at the time, so he was pretty well paid by the record company who believed they had bought the image, to be used on T-shirts and whatever. I just shrugged it off and said 'It's nothing to do with me, I didn't commission this artwork. You need to talk to the record company or Terry Ellis, who represented the record company at the time.' And that was that."

If that brush with the legal system seems less than surprising, given the often insanely litigious age that we live in, then Ian Anderson has another anecdote to share. Back when *Aqualung* had only just hit the shelves of record stores in the US, the Aqua Lung Corporation of North America, manufacturers of scuba diving gear, decided to file a lawsuit against Jethro Tull for "inappropriate copyright infringement", citing the fact that the album's title was actually a registered trademark. This, it seems, is the price you pay for not knowing enough about the manufacture of diving equipment.

"I was writing the lyrics with my first wife Jennie [Franks] and one of us came up with the name Aqualung. I can't remember if it was me or Jennie, so I should probably give her the credit! Back then there was an American-made TV series starring Lloyd Bridges called *Sea Hunt*," says Anderson, by way of explanation. "He was a Jacques Cousteau sort of person who got into all kinds of underwater scrapes, a rather unlikely scenario! There was a lot of underwater filming and a lot of shots of Lloyd Bridges with an oxygen tank on, and the heavy breathing noises were all part of the audio effects. I just thought about the notion of this old tramp guy living rough on the streets, under an arch somewhere in south London, and I thought that he's probably got bronchitis and a wheezy cough and so he's known by his friends as Aqualung. I never thought it was anything other than a generic name for underwater breathing apparatus. I didn't realise it was a registered trade name. So they set about having a real go at us, but it was pointed out that the album was selling quite a lot of copies in the shops and that it was probably quite a good advertisement for the Aqua Lung Corporation of North America, so the action was dropped and never surfaced again. So now we let sleeping dogs lie, both with the artwork and the title!"

Released in March 1971 in the UK and two months later in the US, *Aqualung* achieved immediate chart success on both sides of the Atlantic and ensured that Jethro Tull were widely acknowledged as one of the most significant rock bands of the age. An astonishing year for music, 1971 also spawned such prog classics as *Fragile* by Yes, *Nursery Cryme* by Genesis, *Pawn Hearts* by Van der Graaf Generator and *Tarkus* by Emerson, Lake & Palmer. But as integral ➡

"We didn't know 'Aqua Lung' was a trademarked name. They had a right go at us!"

– IAN ANDERSON

NEIL ZLOZOWER

Tull in the US.

SUPPORTING CAST

DAVID PALMER

"Its impact amazes me."



GETTY

David (now Dee) Palmer first got involved with Jethro Tull during the recording of the *This Was* album.

"I went to the Sunbury Blues Festival in 1968, and was so disappointed that I was on my way out when I heard an incredible band come onstage. They were so good I had to go back and watch them. It was Tull. The next day, their manager Terry Ellis phoned and said the band needed someone to arrange some horns on *Move On Alone*. It appears I'd been recommended to them by two different people."

Palmer was involved with the band until 1980, joining in 1976 on keys. For him, the *Aqualung* sessions were "trouble-free. I know they'd had to record the album at least twice before I was brought in. I got paid the princely sum of £63 for my work arranging and conducting orchestration. It was just me, Ian, John Burns [engineer] and a tape op in the studio, plus the string section. None of the other members of the band were around."

Palmer's working relationship with Anderson was such that there were rarely any disagreements.

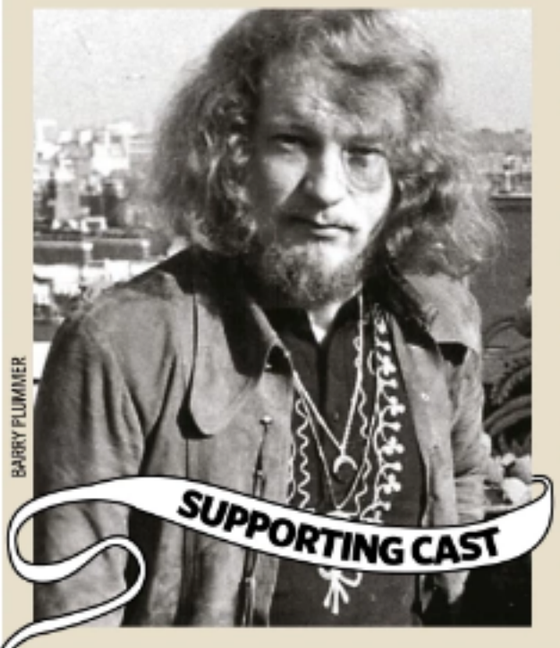
"We became friends very quickly. And such was our rapport that we've never fallen out. He'd play me some tapes of what he was working on. I'd go away and work on this and then we'd record. That would be it."

For Palmer the legacy and success of *Aqualung* is a source of great pride.

"I'll admit this is a far from perfect album. But the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Some of the success of it is because it was never contrived. To this day, the songs resonate, even with younger generations. Its impact amazes me." **MD**

Mind the grass: Tull take a break from prog rock opuses.

MARTIN BARRE "When it was all finished, we were glad to have gotten away with not killing each other..."


BARRY PLUMMER

SUPPORTING CAST

Joining Jethro Tull was no easy task for guitarist Barre, who eventually replaced Mick Abrahams in 1969.

"My audition was a horrible experience. Everyone was crammed into one room, and all the guitarists who were to audition were sitting around the walls. I was terrible. But, because I knew the band a little, I phoned Ian a week later. They were working with Tony Iommi, but it wasn't going well. So I persuaded him to let me have a second go."

For Barre, the *Aqualung* recording sessions were extremely tough.

"Ian set very high standards for himself and the band. He wanted real quality on the basic tracks, which made it such hard work. Plus, we also had major equipment problems in the studio. Whereas most bands would spend little time recording, we slaved away for hours and hours. When it was all finished, we were just glad to have gotten away with not killing each other."

Like everyone else connected with *Aqualung*, Barre is surprised people thought it was conceptual.

"There is a religious theme running through a few of the songs. But to us it was only ever a bunch of songs. Besides, did anyone even know what a concept album was back then?"

But he believes the lasting legacy of *Aqualung* is down to its considerable influence on so many bands.

"Many of the songs mix acoustic and electric moments, but in such a way that the album became the blueprint for a lot that's happened since. Honestly, I don't listen to it, except for reference. When you've played a song like *Aqualung* for so long live and very loudly, it's good to go back and remind yourself what it should sound like. These are the definitive versions of the tracks." **MD**

TULL 2011

LIVING IN THE FUTURE

Ian Anderson on what lies ahead.

What's next for Jethro Tull? Can we expect new material soon?

"Every two or three years I end up with songs that are written just for the live performances and it's kind of fun to road-test these things, so that when you finally get round to recording something you already have some material ready to go. That's the position we're in at the moment. So in 2012, the studio projects we have planned will be utilising some of the material that's already written as well as a number of things that I still have to write! During the next two or three months, I need to come up with another 30 minutes or so of new material, but it's too early to say whether it will be a Jethro Tull album or not."

Do you have any other projects in the pipeline?

"I've always wanted to do a string quartet album. I've worked with string quartets since 1968. I do quite a few Ian Anderson shows with string quartets in odd places in the world, and we do have some string quartet arrangements, so I'd like to an album that's a little bit of a classical crossover in its tenor, but it'll be Jethro Tull repertoire."

And what can we expect from your High Voltage performance this summer?

"Yes, that will be very much more a rock show and it may well be based around *Aqualung*. The thing with *Aqualung* is that there are quite a few of these little acoustic numbers and it's asking a lot of a festival crowd to sit through more than one or two of those quieter moments. We'll be doing an *Aqualung*-themed tour, playing all of the album, in America in June. We did it five years ago when it was the 35th anniversary, but not in that many places." **DL**



Mr Anderson has a quick sit down in preparation for High Voltage 2011...

MAIN: GETTY; CUTOUT: FUTURE NETWORK (ROB MONK)

SUPPORTING CAST



GETTY

JOHN EVAN

"I got the dreaded phone call on a break... We had to do it all again!"

The keyboard player first met Ian Anderson in 1960, at school.

"Ian joined my class, following his family's migration to Blackpool from Edinburgh. We started playing music together from around Easter time, 1963."

Evan dropped out of music in 1968, to go to university, but joined Tull in time for *Benefit*.

"Ian asked me to the studio, to overdub some keyboards. And the next logical step was for me to join the band."

Evan recalls the recording sessions for *Aqualung* weren't at all easy.

"We recorded the album twice. The first time was extremely difficult. We quickly discovered lots of flaws in our playing. Also we kept changing our parts – these didn't stack up on hearing the playbacks. The sessions went on longer and longer. With more and more takes – it's counter-productive after a while.

"We got most of the album in the can and took off for a break. And then I had the dreaded phone call from Ian ...'I've been listening to the new album and it's pretty bad – we're going to have to do the whole thing again'."

Evan is still puzzled by the idea that *Aqualung* was a concept album.

"I was only vaguely aware that several of the songs concerned themselves with the 'less fortunate' inhabitants of London, while others carried Ian's thoughts on organised religion."

For Evan, the idea that *Aqualung*'s anything special is something he's never considered.

"I suppose songs like *Hymn 43*, *Cross-Eyed Mary* and *Locomotive Breath* are immediate – but one of my favourites is *Mother Goose*. And some of the shorter numbers are really beautiful in a whimsical way.

"I just hope people like it – or better still make the effort and learn to like it, which means they've discovered something." **MD**

as it is to the development of progressive rock as a musical form, *Aqualung* seems somehow separate from the rest of those albums, both musically and lyrically. Annoyed by suggestions that the album was a concept piece, Anderson spent the next year writing and recording *Thick As A Brick*, a none-too-subtle piss-take of the whole concept album idea that dared its listeners to take its haughty, elaborate and ambitious conceit seriously. Looking back, he's content that he chose the right path.

"As time went on, prog became a bit of a joke, really," he shrugs. "Perhaps the archetypal prog rock bands were the spaghetti noodlers like Yes and Emerson, Lake & Palmer, who could take a good idea and make it last for days! And, of course, very admirably often in a musical context, but you had to work pretty hard to go through it. *Tarkus* was an album I bought back in '71 or so, and there were some great tunes on it but it was hard work, just as it was hard work to listen to Frank Zappa's work at the time. But it's not all supposed to be easy, is it? Some of it was silly, when you think about Peter Gabriel dressed as a giant sunflower. It was ridiculous."

"Like Monty Python and the surreal humour of the time, musicians were challenging boundaries."

– IAN ANDERSON ON 60S BRITISH ROCK AND THE EMBRACING OF PROG CULTURE

But ridiculous is preferable to boring, surely?

"Well, yes, this was the era of Monty Python and that surreal British humour, and like the rock music at the time, that was part of our culture. We all grew up with The Goons and Tony Hancock and that emerging, rather mysterious British humour that was partly music hall, partly slapstick but that also went into some really weird territory. With Monty Python it became really weird and I think we all kind of liked that, the absurd juxtaposition, the surreal expression. It was humour that wasn't always very funny, and I think looking back today you can see how unfunny a lot of Monty Python actually was, but it was people challenging perceptions of humour. It was progressive. It was prog humour! And like those comedians, we prog musicians were out there seeing where the boundaries lay and many of us eventually found them! Ha ha ha!"

Older, wiser and less concerned with challenging people's perceptions of what rock music can do, Ian Anderson is clearly very proud of *Aqualung* and the impact it had on a young band's career 40 years ago. Plans to play the album in its entirety this year, as they did to celebrate its 35th anniversary back in 2006, promise to breathe new life into this classic slice of prog history, reaffirming Anderson's contention that the songs he wrote when he was 24 still resonate with audiences both old and new. Meanwhile, prior to departing, Anderson shares one more piece of worldly wisdom with male Tull fans of a certain age.

"When playing to our ageing audiences in America sometimes I say 'Hands up everyone who's had a prostate exam in the last 18 months!'" he grins. "Cue embarrassed silence! So I say 'Come on!' and two hands go up, and then I put *my* hand up. The thing is, if you're over 50 you need to get checked out every year. Remember Frank Zappa, remember my pal Tony Snow, all the people who had cancer and didn't make it. So I make everyone uncomfortable, but at the end I lighten it up and say 'Okay, here's a new resolution for all you older guys, make it happen! And what could be better than doing it right now!' and I ask for volunteers! Ha ha! I'm sure that one night someone's going to call my bluff, but meanwhile it buys me a good two and a half minutes of not having to earn my living by playing music! Ha ha!"

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Python, pipes and *The Simpsons* – they all owe something to **Jethro Tull**'s ***Thick As A Brick***, "the mother of all concept albums" according to Ian Anderson. It even saw the creation of Derek Smalls long before Spinal Tap...

Words: **Malcolm Dome**


JETHRO TULL

The St Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser

THICK AS A BRICK

JUDGES DISQUALIFY "LITTLE MILTON" IN LAST MINUTE RUMPUS

FLUTE CONCERT AT PARRIT ROOMS

HEAD INJURY

COMPACT disc DIGITAL AUDIO

MIAN: PRESS

Monty Python. It might seem a little odd to mention the influential British comedy troupe as we begin a journey through the story of the groundbreaking album *Thick As A Brick*. But Jethro Tull mainman Ian Anderson believes there's a common thread.

"Monty Python lampooned the British way of life. Yet did it in such a way that made us all laugh while celebrating it. To me, that's what we as a band did on *Thick As A Brick*. We were spoofing the idea of the concept album, but in a fun way that didn't totally mock it."

It's often been said that the seeds for 1972's *Thick As A Brick* (the band's fifth release) were sown when its predecessor, '71's *Aqualung*, was widely but incorrectly perceived as a fully-blown conceptual piece. Myth has it that Anderson was angry about this, erm, misconception.

"Not angry, no," explains the man nearly four decades on. "I was actually mildly irritated and wryly amused. However much I insisted that *Aqualung* wasn't a concept album, the media still persisted in treating it as such. They seemed to believe the whole record was a major religious story. The truth was that three or four songs were linked by questioning the nature of religion. But the rest were stand-alone tracks. So, after this whole scenario, I thought, 'OK, we'll not only now do a real concept album, but we're going to make it the mother of all concept albums!'."

Adding to this determination was Anderson's belief that progressive rock had become a touch too self-important, needing to be pulled down a peg or two from its Olympian pretensions.

"When progressive rock started out, it was all about bands such as ourselves moving beyond merely being influenced by American blues. We stopped trying to be the next Fleetwood Mac or Chicken Shack – in other words, derivative of Elmore James – and began to take on board so many diverse musical ideas. It was exciting and dynamic. But, by the time the 1970s had begun, bands like ELP were a little up their own arses. Everything was too serious and overblown. So, we set out with *Thick As A Brick* to show up this side of the genre."

The centrepiece of the album was a poem, ostensibly written by 12-year-old Gerald Bostock. However, this is a totally fictitious character, created by Anderson himself. Despite attempts over the years to uncover the true identity of the poet, the truth is that 'Bostock' has no connection to anyone from Anderson's past. However, we can reveal that the poem itself does draw from the man's childhood.

"Yes, there's an autobiographical element in what I wrote. As a child, I was a bit of a rebel. Most of my peers aspired to going to grammar school, getting eight O Levels and three A Levels, then becoming part of conventional society. That never appealed to me. I was the sort of child who loved spending time collecting pond life and then analysing it. I also loved science fiction stories of the era (the 1950s), because they told of a different, exciting future. So, I stood apart from others of my age, and drew on this for the character of Gerald Bostock. But he himself is a fiction."

Having written the crucial poem that became the fulcrum for the concept, Anderson and his band – guitarist Martin Barre, bassist Jeffrey Hammond, keyboard player John Evan, string/brass arranger David Palmer and new drummer Barriemore Barlow – now had the challenge of making the musical form work.

"I suppose I have to admit that I really imposed the whole idea on the other guys," laughs Anderson, a benign dictator in this instance. "But, for whatever reason they went along with it, and actually warmed to the task once we got stuck into the music."

Tull elected to work out the album during two weeks of intense rehearsals using the Rolling Stones mobile studio.

"This was based in Bermondsey, a rather dreadful part of South London. The way it worked was that I'd spend the morning in my home in Hampstead – sadly, not the posh part of that North London suburb – and get three or four minutes of music down on a sheet of paper from an exercise book. Then we'd meet as a band and go through not just the new part I'd written, but everything from the beginning. So, gradually we'd build up the piece."

Finally, in December 1971, the band ➔

Ian Anderson:
ahead of his time?

"It's only recently I've appreciated how complex the music is. There are so many innovations on it."



That Tull *TAAB* line-up in full (*left to right*): Barriemore Barlow, Jeffrey Hammond, Ian Anderson, Martin Barre, John Evan.



went into Morgan Studios in North West London and, under the production aegis of Anderson himself, recorded the album (which is effectively just one composition, split into two movements) over a period of a fortnight, including the mixing stage.

"It's only in recent times that I've appreciated how complex the music is," admits Anderson. "I was only 24 at the time we began to put this together. Yet there are so many weird time changes and musical innovations on the album. I would never compare what we did back then to jazz rockers like Weather Report or the Mahavishnu Orchestra – they were really amazing musicians – but we were a little more sophisticated than the usual riff rockers you'd find on the scene."

But the music was just part of the ambitious concept the band put together. Almost of equal importance was the cover, which was in effect a 16-page newspaper called *The St. Cleve Chronicle & Linwall Advertiser*, which was a spoof of the sort of local newspapers prevalent around the UK at the time.

"That was a massive undertaking. Fortunately Roy Eldridge, our A&R man at the label [Chrysalis], had worked as a journalist on local papers prior to joining the company. So, we drew on his experience. We put together a lot of silly stories and also used lyrics from the album itself. We also got the road crew, label people and girlfriends to pose for photos."

One of those names used was Derek

Ernie! Anderson rocks out.

Cocks away, Ginger...



INSETS: GETTY MAIN: PRESS

Smalls, who emerged over a decade later as the bassist with Spinal Tap.

"I was convinced that Harry Shearer (the actor who played the character in the celebrated movie) must have gotten the name from *Thick As A Brick*, especially as the Smalls in the film smoked a Peterson pipe – and the only three people I know in rock'n'roll who smoke such a pipe were all members of Jethro Tull! But, when I got the chance to interview Harry for a US TV show five years ago, he denied ever hearing *Thick As A Brick*. I find that somewhat hard to believe."

"'The ultimate prog rock album?' Job done, I'd say. We achieved the ambition."

However, the album did get some cultural recognition in the States when it was featured in an episode of *The Simpsons*. Not only does the character of Martin Prince sing part of the song in the episode *Girls Just Want To Have Sums*, but the original is used over the end credits. Perhaps this isn't too surprising when you consider that the album reached Number One in the US when released in May 1972 (it hit Number Five in the UK).

"I must admit to being a little surprised that we got to the top of the charts over there. But everything had been building for us. *Aqualung* sold steadily, so either *Thick As A Brick* was going to take off, or we'd just sink. However, I'm not sure our American fans understood the humour behind our live performance on the subsequent tour. We decided to bring all the characters mentioned on the album and in the cover newspaper to life, and it was quirky, very British. We weren't trying to be comedians, just to enhance the concept. The rest of the band got the chance to step outside of their dapper personae. It was funny because we had a laugh. But in the US… well, all I can say is that I'm none too certain they understood what we were doing. I recall a few years later when the film *Monty Python And The Holy Grail* was released… I'd help to finance it, and saw a preview in New York. The audience laughed in all the wrong places, which was what happened with *Thick As A Brick* live."

But perhaps this comes down more to the whole premise of progressive rock rather than anything else – at least as far as Anderson is concerned.

"Progressive rock is a purely British phenomenon. And these days all of us – and I include the likes of ELP here – know that there was a sense of fun about it. Privately, we all saw the silly side, we were like John Cleese in a bowler hat lampooning the bureaucrats, while revelling in it."

Any spoof done well enough enhances both the perpetrators and the intended victims – think of Spinal Tap and the heavy metal genre. But, surely if it's done too well then it becomes indistinguishable from the real thing? How does Anderson react to the fact that, on the recent BBC4 documentary *Prog Rock Britannia*, *Thick As A Brick* was cited as the ultimate prog rock album?

"Job done, I'd say. We set out to make the mother of all concept records, as I stated earlier, and if that's the way people see the album after all these years, then we achieved the ambition. It is hard sometimes to differentiate between what's serious and what's a send-up. But, for me, that's beauty of true prog rock – it must have both."

EXTRA! EXTRA!

For their 1972 concept album *Thick As A Brick* **Jethro Tull** went so far as to create a 12-page local newspaper for the album sleeve. Ian Anderson gives **Malcolm Dome** the scoop.

There's an irony in the fact that one of the most celebrated concept albums of all time was actually done as a spoof.

The record in question is 1972's *Thick As A Brick*, Jethro Tull's follow-up to the previous year's *Aqualung*.

"We got fed up telling everyone that *Aqualung* wasn't a conceptual piece," recalls Tull leader Ian Anderson. "We insisted that, while two or three songs might have a linking theme, there was no overall concept, but still people chose to ignore that, and just go with what they wanted to think."

So, by way of delivering what Anderson considered the ultimate slap in the face to everyone – fans, media, music industry – the band decided that their next album was not just going to have a concept, but one so ridiculous that it would be a joke at the expense of the whole prog rock obsession with concepts.

"I came up with the idea of basing the whole thing around a fictitious schoolboy called Gerald Bostock (who was also known as Little Milton) and a poem he'd supposedly written. Then we decided that the we'd make the album just one track, albeit split into two parts, one on each side of the vinyl."

But the conceptual approach didn't stop there. The band, in a clear attempt to make life as challenging as they could for themselves, came up with the bright notion of conceptualising the cover: "For whatever insane reason – and who knows where our heads were at the time – the idea developed of not just having an ordinary, or even an elaborate, sleeve but to have a newspaper! And one that reflected the style and approach of the local newspapers back then. To be frank, if we'd have known how much work was going to be involved, then maybe we'd have thought twice, and then twice more, before committing ourselves to such a mammoth task."

"If we'd known how much work it was going to be we would have thought twice before committing!"
Ian Anderson

The 12-page paper had to be an accurate representation of what you'd find on newsstands at the time. So, there's the sports section, a crossword puzzle, a children's section, TV listings and classified adverts. Everything was created from the warped minds and imaginings of the whole Tull team.

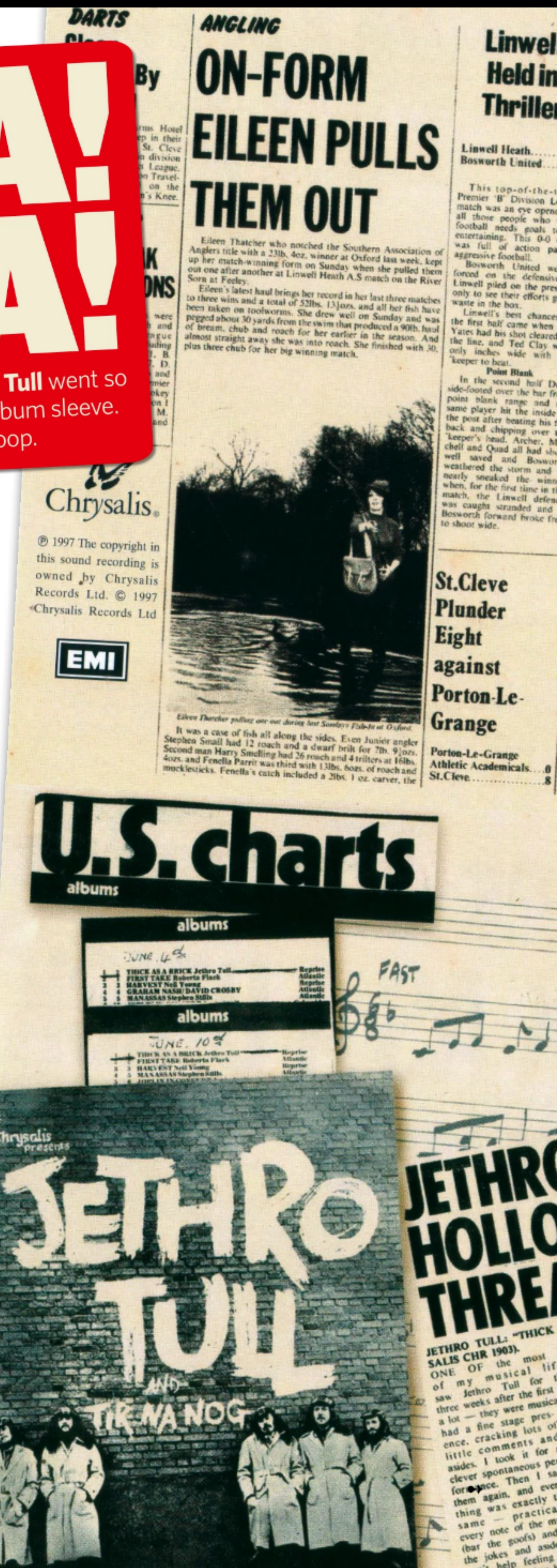
"We're talking about an era when Monty Python was really successful, and we had a similar sense of humour to them. You can see it in the articles written for the newspaper. There's a definite strain of English tomfoolery running throughout."

There's a clear attempt at being contemporary throughout the paper. Take a look at the TV listings – *The Black & White Minstrel Show* is advertised as 'Good clean racial fun', while *Double Your Money* is billed as 'Prime Minister's broadcast'.

"We took the opportunity to lambast a few targets, ones which deserved such attention. I'd like to believe that all the hard work led to people taking the time and trouble to read what we did."

The photos in the newspaper were carefully staged, but those posing could be almost anyone.

"Apart from ourselves, we used people who happened to be around at the time. There are record company employees, road crew. If you were unlucky ➔


DARTS

By

ANGLING

ON-FORM EILEEN PULLS THEM OUT

Eileen Thatcher who notched the Southern Association of Anglers title with a 23lb. 4oz. winner at Oxford last week, kept up her match-winning form on Sunday when she pulled them out one after another at Linwell Heath A.S match on the River Sorn at Feeley.

Eileen's latest haul brings her record in her last three matches to three wins and a total of 52lbs. 13¼ozs. and all her fish have been taken on toolworms. She drew well on Sunday and was pegged about 30 yards from the swim that produced a 90lb. haul of bream, chub and roach for her earlier in the season. And almost straight away she was into roach. She finished with 30, plus three chub for her big winning match.

Eileen Thatcher pulling one out during last Sundays Fish-In at Oxford.

It was a case of fish all along the sides. Even Junior angler Stephen Small had 12 roach and a dwarf brilt for 7lb. 9½ozs. Second man Harry Smelling had 26 roach and 4 trilters at 16lbs. 4ozs. and Fenella Parrit was third with 13lbs. 6ozs. of roach and mucklesticks. Fenella's catch included a 2lbs. 1 oz. carver, the

Linwell Held in Thriller

Linwell Heath.....
Bosworth United.....

This top-of-the-t
Premier 'B' Division L
match was an eye opene
all those people who
football needs goals t
entertaining. This 0-0
was full of action pa
aggressive football.

Bosworth United w
forced on the defensiv
Linwell piled on the pres
only to see their efforts g
waste in the box.

Linwell's best chance
the first half came when
Yates had his shot cleared
the line, and Ted Clay
only inches wide with
'keeper to beat.

Point Blank

In the second half D
side-footed over the bar fr
point blank range and
same player hit the inside
the post after beating his
back and chipping over
'keeper's head. Archer, M
chell and Quad all had sh
well saved and Boswor
weathered the storm and
nearly sneaked the winn
when, for the first time in t
match, the Linwell defen
was caught stranded and
Bosworth forward broke fr
to shoot wide.

St.Cleve Plunder Eight against Porton-Le-Grange

Porton-Le-Grange
Athletic Academicals....0
St.Cleve.....8

Chrysalis

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EMI

U.S. charts

albums

JUNE. 4

1	1	THICK AS A BRICK Jethro Tull	Reprise
2	2	FIRST TAKE Roberta Flack	Atlantic
3	3	HARVEST Neil Young	Reprise
4	4	GRAHAM NASH/ DAVID CROSBY	Atlantic
5	5	MANASSAS Stephen Stills	Atlantic

albums

JUNE. 10

1	1	THICK AS A BRICK Jethro Tull	Reprise
2	2	FIRST TAKE Roberta Flack	Atlantic
3	3	HARVEST Neil Young	Reprise
4	4	MANASSAS Stephen Stills	Atlantic
5	5	GRAHAM NASH/ DAVID CROSBY	Atlantic

FAST

Chrysalis presents

JETHRO TULL AND TIR NA NOG

JETHRO HOLLO THRE

JETHRO TULL: "THICK
SALIS CHR 1903).
ONE OF the most
of my musical lif
saw Jethro Tull for
three weeks after the first
a lot — they were musica
had a fine stage pres
ence, cracking lots of
little comments and
asides. I took it for
clever spontaneous pe
formance. Then I sa
them again, and ever
thing was exactly
same — practica
every note of the m
(bar the goof(s) and
the jokes and aside
can't help feeling

BOWLS 7243 8 57705 2 4

Rido's Revenge in Cliff Hanger

Rido's Rest.....44 Preservation Club.....14

Rido's Rest last years runners up in the Athena League Combination, have avenged their humiliation in last months game with the Preservation Club, with a crushing defeat of 44 pts. to 14. Their astounding victory was marred however by an excessive number of fouls and rough play.

The Umpire's whistle was sounded so frequently that more than 40 seconds worth of continuous play was considered a luxury. Not withstanding, the game produced several items of theatrically effective play, giving Max Quad the opportunity to reveal his uninhibited sense of rhythmic drive.

At Half time Rido had built up an imposing lead of 14-4, due mainly to some frantic exponancy by **D.Small**, but the Preservatives drew level, thanks to the super human efforts of **Jim Fosby-Mullen** bringing the score to 14 all. The game was now balancing on a knife edge. Rido refused to crack under tremendous pressure, storming back to a glamorous and sensitive finale thrashing their opponents in a resounding victory well deserved by such a classy side.

Results

St. Cleve Gas	4	Poet & Painter (A)	14
White Swan	24	Linwell Arms (B)	4
The Thick Brick	44	Parson's Knee	0
Linwell Arms (A)	4	Poet & Painter (B)	4
Rido's Rest	44	Preservative Club	14
Bosworth Park	4	Tulip Grove O.A.P.	24

Athema League

	Played	Home W	D	L	Away W	D	L	Pts.
Linwell Arms (B)	14	4	4	0	4	4	4	44
Poet & Painter (A)	14	4	0	0	4	4	1	44
White Swan	14	0	4	4	4	0	0	34
Parson's Knee	14	0	0	4	4	4	0	34
Rido's Rest	14	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
Poet & Painter (B)	14	0	4	0	0	4	0	24
Preservation Club	14	4	0	4	4	0	4	14
Linwell Arms (A)	14	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
St. Cleves Gas	14	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Bosworth Park	14	4	4	0	0	0	4	4
Tulip Grove O.A.P.	14	4	0	0	0	0	0	4

Passed surveyor's examination

The following local candidate was successful in the examinations of the National Institute of Congregational Surveyors:

Intermediate examination urban section:
Max Quad, Hall Road, St. Cleve

"It was a puncture" says Trenchan

Alleged Hell's Angel, Ricci Trenchan was acquitted on charges of being in possession of a bicycle chain, a sharpened spanner, sawn-off spade and a length of rubber tyre today at Ely Assizes. Said Ricci, "I was on my way to mend a puncture on my bike, honestly."

The Umpire's whistle was sounded so frequently that more than 40 seconds worth of continuous play was considered a luxury. Not withstanding, the game produced several items of theatrically effective play, giving Max Quad the opportunity to reveal his uninhibited sense of rhythmic drive.

frantic exponancy by **D.Small**, but the Preservatives drew level, thanks to the super human efforts of **Jim Fosby-**

JETHRO TULL FEATURE ON PAGE 7

The St. Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser

Friday January 7th 1972 — No. 1003 — Price 3p Weekly

THICK AS A BRICK

JUDGES DISQUALIFY "LITTLE MILTON" IN LAST MINUTE RUMPUS

LATE EXTRA

25th ANNIVERSARY edition digitally remastered featuring previously unreleased live material from Madison Square Garden and an interview with members of Jethro Tull.



THE SOCIETY FOR LITERARY ADVANCEMENT AND GESTATION, (SLAG), announced their decision late last night to disqualify eight year old prizewinner Gerald (Little Milton) Bostock following the hundreds of protests and threats received after the reading of his epic poem "Thick as a Brick" on B.B.C. Television last Monday night.

A hastily reconvened panel of Judges accepted the decision by four leading child psychiatrists that the boy's mind was seriously unbalanced and that his work was a product of an "extremely unwholesome attitude towards life, his God and Country". Bostock was recommended for psychiatric treatment following examination "without delay". The first prize will now be presented to runner up Mary Whiteyard (aged 12) for her essay on Christian ethics entitled, "He died to save the little Children".

The Literary Competition, which was for children aged from 7 to 16 years of age, was sponsored by leading national newspapers and received thousands of entries from schools all over Britain. Mr. Humphrey Martin, the Headmaster of Moordale Primary School said Gerald, nicknamed "Little Milton" by his English master because of his poetic ability, was mentally advanced for his age, although inclined on occasions to obscure and verbose assertions which led him to being somewhat unpopular with his schoolmates. He went on to say that without doubt the child had a great future academically and that his progress was unsurpassed in the history of Moordale Primary. Gerald and his parents moved to St. Cleve four years ago from Manor Park.

Daphne is well known to the Congregation of St. Cleve Parish Church for her activities in social work and her wonderful buffet luncheon at the fete last Saturday. Well done, Daphne! Mr. Bostock said this morning of "Little Milton's" disqualification, "We are heartbroken at the way the Judges changed their minds, and the loss of the prize money and scholarship means we shall find difficulty in paying the instalments on Gerald's Encyclopaedia Britannica. I shall have to do Dr. Munson's roses next week after all." When he heard of the decision against him, Gerald went to his room and locked the door. "Mrs. Bostock and I are sorely vexed at the way this has turned out", said Mr. Bostock of No. 6 Pollitt Close, St. Cleve.

Many local residents are



Flashback to last week's presentation dinner held in Gerald's honour by the Committee of the St. Cleve District Art and Literary Society at the Parish Rooms. Left to right: Lord Clive 'Polly' Parrott, Mr. and Mrs. Bostock, Gerald Bostock, Lady Parrott, Jodie, Gerald's chum with whom he writes poems.

G— — —r on page 7.

Many of the viewers who to appear impressive. Many of the viewers' complaints were centred around "Little "We have come to expect that sort of language from adults on television these days, but to









Roy Eldridge, the pagemaster general.

BRICKING IT

Jethro Tull's press officer Roy Eldridge was the man charged with sorting out the cover for *Thick As A Brick*. Just as well he'd already worked on a local paper...

The man who was given the task of turning Jethro Tull's ideas for the cover of *Thick As A Brick* into reality was Roy Eldridge, who was then a press officer at Chrysalis, and would go on to become the label's A&R director.

"I'd spent three years working on a provincial newspaper, so I knew how to put something like this together from scratch. I was the natural choice to come in and help the band out."

Eldridge's main job was to deal with the practical side of things.

"We had to put this together as if it were a serious newspaper. The first task I had was to figure out the weight of paper we'd use. I had to ensure that the cardboard part still protected the record when it was in the racks, while the paper itself wasn't so thick that it would be hard to fold, nor so flimsy that it fell apart."

In a way, it was a nightmare scenario, because there was a lot more to consider that just printing a newspaper. This was a record that had to survive in the stores for a lot longer than the usual weekly lifespan of a local paper.

"It took ages to get the balance right between paper weights. Once we 'd sorted all of that out, then we had to put the different newspaper sections into place. I acted as the sub on everything, and I also had to make sure that the crossword was correct, and the photo captions read properly. The amount of detail was incredible."

Another problem was that Eldridge was only free to concentrate on the *St. Cleve Chronicle* out of office hours.

"Despite the fact this was a Chrysalis band, the only way it could happen was at night. So, Tull would come down from the studio, and we'd slowly get it all together."

Eldridge is rightly proud of the finished product, and believes it has stood the test of time admirably.

"It was a great piece of packaging, and the fact that the paper almost took on a life of its own is a great testimony to Tull's creativity. But I still look back on some of the articles they wrote and wonder what on earth was going on in their heads. But the idea was to give it a real sense of humour, and the guys had that in spades." **MD**

"Its appreciation makes us immensely proud. It shows the sleeve as an art form in its own right." Ian Anderson

enough to be in the vicinity when we were shooting those pictures, then you'd have been coerced into being in the shots."

The paper was situated in the fictitious village of St Cleve and went under the august title of *The St Cleve Chronicle*. Did anyone ever try to hunt down St Cleve?

"I'd like to think there might have been an intrepid Japanese tourist who came over to England and spent time searching for it, yes. But, in reality I doubt that ever happened. I don't believe there were any Jethro Tull fans who believed there was a real *St Cleve Chronicle*."

It's almost Python-esque to reflect that Tull spent so much time on the music and the packaging to create the most elaborate joke in the history of prog, only to have it effectively backfire on them.

"Yes, we had a Number One album in the US – the only time we got to the top of the charts! And every time there's a poll for the greatest concept album ever you're sure to find *Thick As A Brick* close to the top of the list."

So, it could be said that the joke has ended up on Tull? That, in the end, *Thick As A Brick* became their worst nightmare? Is it, in Anderson's opinion, a failure?

"You could say that we set out with a goal in mind, and missed. By a long way. However, that's not to say we didn't put a huge amount of time and effort into every aspect of the album, so to have it appreciated is something we're very grateful for. I am also immensely proud of the artwork. It's a reflection of the fact that, in the 70s, the cover of an album wasn't regarded just as a sleeve into which you put the vinyl. No, it was an art form in its own right."

The newspaper that Tull pieced together with so much attention to detail remains a landmark in the history of prog rock artwork, taking it to another level.

"I suppose you could say we represented the best and worst excesses of the genre through that cover. Am I glad we did it? Yes – as long as I never have to do it again!"

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"It's like a rather disappointing grown-up child"

It was supposed to be the follow-up to *Thick As A Brick*, but homesickness, food poisoning and being "too clever by half" left a **Jethro Tull** album in the vaults in 1972. This is the story of the infamous *Château D'Isaster Tapes*...

Words: **Rob Hughes** Portrait: **Gijsbert Hanekroot/Getty**

For Jethro Tull, 1972 was a bumper harvest year. In June their fifth album *Thick As A Brick* compounded the success of the previous year's *Aqualung* by landing them their first US No.1. By November they were riding high again with *Living In The Past*, a hefty double compilation album that was another Top 10 hit on both sides of the Atlantic.

But the year hadn't quite been the hands-down triumph it seemed. The late summer had seen Ian Anderson and his band of artsy prog-folksters abandon a new studio album after a succession of setbacks. They'd repaired to the faded 18th-century splendour of the Château d'Hérouville outside Paris.

"It was a run-down, rambling old building," recalls Anderson. "And it had been the studio of choice of those availing themselves of the 'offshore' opportunities of tax-avoidance in the heady days of 83 per cent income tax. We assumed it must be a great studio, given the reputation and work of the artists who'd recorded there [Pink Floyd, T. Rex and Elton John were recent visitors]. But it was dirty, the equipment often didn't work and the accommodation was awful."

Undeterred, Tull set about working through a fresh batch of songs. These included instrumentals like *Tiger Toon* and *First Post*, alongside the lyrically driven *Look At The Animals*. "The plan was to rehearse and then record each song-section as it reached fruition and performance standard," he explains. "But it was a bad plan. Some of the material sounded a bit ponderous, and there were too many sections in the same tempo and with the same feel."

The overarching theme was the erosion of traditional culture in the face of modern 'progress' and new technology. All of which was examined through our kinship with the animal kingdom and the natural order of things. Anderson's songs, like *Law Of The Bungle* and *Look At The Animals*, suggested that, no matter how far we think we've evolved, the baser elements of our nature will always remain.

"The animal theme was a big part of it," he says, "but there were disparate sub-themes going on too. I was trying to be too clever by half. The 'theatre of life' metaphor sections were good bits. I should have stuck with that. And, of course, it went on to be the setting for *A Passion Play* [1973], at least in terms of the album cover art and text."

It wasn't just the tunes that refused to behave, a series of technical hitches disrupted the sessions. The band struggled on until they had approximately three sides of backing tracks for a proposed double album, but all was not well. The situation reached farcical levels when everyone contracted a nasty bout of food poisoning.

"Technical difficulties got the better of us," says Anderson, "together with a restlessness in the ranks of the band mainly on account of having to run for the loo at regular intervals courtesy of the dodgy, unpasteurised Camembert. The red wine had flies in it. The mystery meat caused musicians to head loo-wards at a fast gallop, quite in keeping with its equine origins. There were bedbugs. And one engineer even got a nasty scabies parasite infection."

The "restlessness" related to Tull's living situation at the time. The band had decamped to Montreux in Switzerland earlier in '72, primarily to make the most of their first flush of monetary success in the land of the tax exile. Yet by the time they were ensconced in the Château, the novelty of living in Montreux was wearing thin.

"A couple of the band – John Evan and Martin Barre – were happy to make Montreux home. But Barrie [Barlow] and Jeffrey [Hammond] wanted to go back to England. I was left in the middle, and directed my casting vote homeward in order to keep the band together, rather than have it fragment or put some of them through the torture of living abroad. So we remained UK taxpayers. It was the best thing for us all in the long run, but they were stressful and divisive moments."

It all came to a head when Anderson took a call one night from concert promoter and friend Claude Nobs, proudly informing the band that their Swiss residency cards had come through. "At this point, the band became instantly infected with a bad case of homesickness. We left for Blighty the next day."

On returning home, Anderson began writing material for what was to become *Thick As A Brick*'s follow-up proper – *A Passion Play*. Three of the Château songs – *Only Solitaire*, *Bungle In The Jungle* and *Skating Away On The Thin Ice Of A New Day* – made it onto 1974's *War Child*. Others remained on the shelf until 1988, when an 11-minute segment (*Scenario/Audition/No Rehearsal*) fetched up on the box set *20 Years Of Jethro Tull*.

By '93, a 50-minute portion of the *Château D'Isaster Tapes* appeared on another compilation, *Nightcap*. "There were some parts where I felt that the band had played really well and the words and music deserved an outing," Anderson says of the decision to issue them. "But a lot was just unfinished rough recordings – demos, really – and were a bit shaky, playing-wise. With little or no vocals and almost no flute."

Some of the instrumentals do sound shapeless. But the more cohesive songs, such as *Scenario* or the nine-minute *Critique Oblique*, Anderson's scathing riposte to Tull's detractors in the music press, are far more successful. A mixed bag, for sure, but hardly the all-out failure Anderson imagined.

2013 saw a comprehensive release of the *Château D'Isaster Tapes*, remixed and remastered by long-time Tull fan Steven Wilson. "He felt that the material should be available to the fans in a cleaned-up, more punchy way. And to reflect the unfinished work in a truthful statement.

Given the benefit of 40 years' distance, does he feel differently about those recordings now?

"Even the wobbliest moments have some fleeting elements of magnificence, especially in hindsight. So I'm happy to hear these flawed gems again, and invite them to take their place alongside the other work of which I'm more obviously proud. Alongside but slightly in the background. It's like a rather disappointing grown-up child. You don't exactly want it coming over for Sunday lunch each weekend, but when Christmas dawns you welcome the rotten fruit of your loins into the family bosom once again and try to conjure a swelling of paternal pride."

"Technical difficulties got the better of us, together with a restlessness on account of having to run for the loo courtesy of dodgy, unpasteurised Camembert."



With their flutes, cod-pieces and intricate folk-prog, **Jethro Tull** looked like unlikely contenders to conquer America. But against the odds, they became one of Britain's biggest stateside exports through the 70s – with a little help from 'Tull-O-Vision'...

Words: **Rob Hughes** ★★

It's not quite Beatlemania, but the parallels are obvious. Eleven years after the Fab Four had made history at Shea Stadium, another British band are on stage at the famous baseball mecca in Queens, home to the New York Mets. It's a damp Friday night in July 1976, but the crowd is in high spirits, launching firecrackers into the rainy sky. Under an enormous canopy upheld by two cranes, Jethro Tull are playing in front of 50,000 fans, flanked by giant screens relaying the action via their own unique video system, Tull-A-Vision.

Support acts Rory Gallagher and Robin Trower have done their best to warm up the audience, but Tull – led by the charismatic Ian Anderson – are the reason why everyone's here. Anderson himself isn't having a particularly great time of it. The noise of rush-hour jets at LaGuardia Airport, just two miles away, is making it hard for the band to hear themselves play. What's more, some joker had thrown a pint of urine over the frontman, from a great height, as he made his entrance from the tunnel. So now he's covered in piss. Despite these irritations, however, the significance of the moment isn't lost on him as he looks out into an endless sea of faces: Jethro Tull have become a massive stadium band.

This is just a relatively modest turnout compared to their West Coast visit three weeks later. 80,000 people will descend on LA's Memorial Coliseum that night in August, confirming Tull's status as superstars of Led Zep-style proportions. Back home, *Melody Maker*'s recent headline – "Jethro: Now The World's Biggest Band?" – didn't seem quite so fanciful as it first appeared.

So just how did a weirdo bunch of Limeys manage to crack America? The mainstream US market was notoriously difficult for foreign artists to penetrate in the '70s. Many bands who sold bucketloads back home couldn't manage it Stateside – T.Rex, Slade, The Kinks and Status Quo included. Even Bowie didn't hit megstardom until the '80s. All of which made Jethro Tull an anomaly. Their strange hybrid of folk, jazz and prog

FARM ON THE FREEWAY

was an unlikely hit in a land where the big stage was traditionally ruled by barnstorming rock'n'roll.

Yet it was no fluke. Jethro Tull made great records that succeeded in translation. They were also a band that instinctively grasped the value of rock as high theatre, sending themselves up – along with the whole ludicrous business – in a manner as flashy as it was knowingly preposterous. Above all though, they had a plan. Repetition, they decided, was the only way to conquer America.

Jethro Tull hardly stayed away. As a measure of the band's devotion to the task, they'd already toured the States 11 times by the end of 1971, despite being barely three years into their recording career.

"Jethro Tull is the best rock group to come along since The Who. The scene-stealer is Ian Anderson."

Detroit Free Press review

Their first trek across the ocean had been in late January 1969, just ahead of the US release of debut LP, *This Was*. They were supporting Blood, Sweat & Tears at the Fillmore East in New York City, under the auspices of promoter Bill Graham. "He was a guy without whom probably Jethro Tull would never have gotten started," Anderson told *Smashing Interviews* magazine in 2017. "We were there for 12 or 13 weeks on that first tour. A lot of the time we were sitting on our hands in very cheap accommodations, hoping there'd be somewhere for us to play tomorrow night."

Tull found themselves doing short residencies at venues like Boston's Tea Party (another Bill Graham stronghold) and the Stone Balloon in New Haven, Connecticut, playing to less than 30 people per night. During their downtime at the Stone Balloon, Anderson took the opportunity to write a new song.

"I remember being in a Holiday Inn somewhere," he told *Prog* in 2015. "I was in the lobby of the hotel and our manager Terry Ellis said 'Could you rustle up a three-minute hit single? Something we can release in the UK while we're away, to keep the pot boiling back home'." The resultant song, *Living In The Past*, made the top three in Britain on release in April '69.

It was a different approach in the States. Still unsure of Tull's commercial viability, Reprise chose to hold back *Living In The Past*. "Our American label didn't want to release it in the USA because people wouldn't get it and it was too complicated," recalled Anderson. "People couldn't tap their feet to it because it was in 5/4…I'm rather glad they didn't because we needed more time to evolve."

Allowing Tull to gradually develop an audience in the US was a crucial decision. *This Was* made its mark immediately in the UK, reaching the Top 10, whereas it hardly made a dent on the Billboard album charts. By the time *Stand Up* was issued as a follow-up in September '69, the band had been gigging around the States with Led Zeppelin and Creedence Clearwater Revival.

With the album already at number one back home, Tull's reputation was growing further afield too. Elvis Presley even invited them to join him backstage after a show in Las Vegas. Having sat through Presley's less-than-great gig that night, Anderson thought it best to politely decline the offer. ●●





The British are coming: Tull onstage in the US in the mid-70s.

GETTY X2

"We didn't come to this country and take it by storm. It was a steady kind of climbing up, a pleasant sort of thing." **Ian Anderson**

★★★

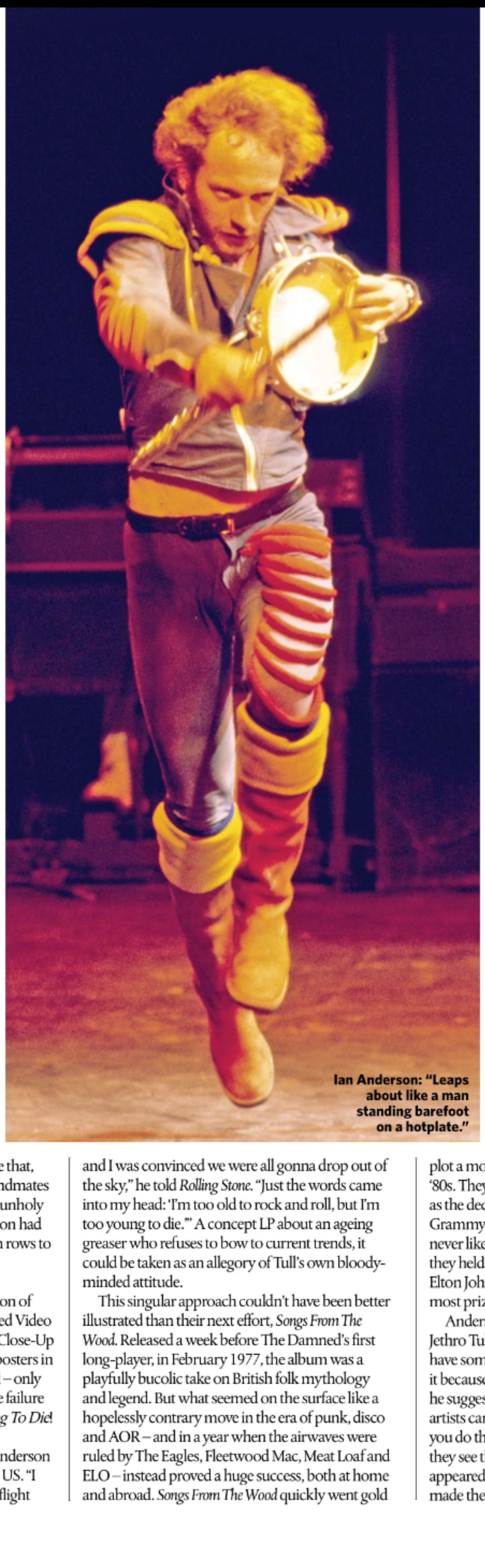
an audience of 23,000. The following summer saw the band hit the top spot in the US for the first time, with their satirical concept piece, *Thick As A Brick*. Crucially, it was their first release to perform better in America than in the UK, where it stalled at No.5. "I thought it might be a step too far for an American audience, but Monty Python had become a cult phenomenon there and *Saturday Night Live* and other things were starting to come along," Anderson told *Classic Rock* in 2011. "So I think *Thick As A Brick* arrived there just at the right time. It went fairly quickly to the top of the Billboard charts and did very well. It's Jethro Tull's second biggest-selling album in America."

The band's commercial status was compounded by a double-LP compilation, *Living In The Past*, issued later in 1972. It was a release tailored for the American market, with one side devoted to a live show from New York's Carnegie Hall. Chrysalis, now running Tull's US affairs, finally saw fit to issue the title track as a standalone single. By January '73 the song had become their first Top 20 hit Stateside.

The pattern had been set for the rest of the decade. As Tull's popularity back home started to wane in slow increments, the US held steady. "America is consistent for us but here it's trailed off as far as most people are concerned, in that we are not talked about so much," Anderson told *Melody Maker* during a stopover in the UK. "In the final analysis, we do all right. We were too fast coming up in England."

Despite mixed reviews, *A Passion Play* - another conceptual monster – gave the group their second consecutive chart-topper on Billboard. Anderson responded to the harsher critics of the music press with *Only Solitaire*, a caustic effort from 1974's *War Child*. The album fell away quickly in the UK, but did smart business in America, buoyed by the inclusion of another major chart hit, the breezily direct *Bungle In The Jungle*.

Minstrel In The Gallery, released in September 1975, followed suit, going gold in the States but losing traction in Britain. It was a year in which the band sold out five dates at the 20,000-seater Los Angeles Forum. Tull fever was so intense that, on opening night, Anderson ordered his bandmates to stop playing due to the crowd making an unholy din. *Melody Maker* observed that "Ian Anderson had only to raise an eyebrow to bring the first ten rows to their feet."



Ian Anderson: "Leaps about like a man standing barefoot on a hotplate."

These were heady days. The addition of Tull-A-Vision – "Large Multi-Sided Video Screen Projection In Colour For Close-Up Viewing From All Seats!" screamed the gig posters in an age when such technology was still novel – only boosted the live experience. Even the relative failure of 1976's *Too Old To Rock'n'Roll: Too Young To Die!* didn't dampen the party.

The idea for the album had occurred to Anderson during a turbulent flight between gigs in the US. "I hate flying anyway, but this was a really bad flight and I was convinced we were all gonna drop out of the sky," he told *Rolling Stone*. "Just the words came into my head: 'I'm too old to rock and roll, but I'm too young to die.'" A concept LP about an ageing greaser who refuses to bow to current trends, it could be taken as an allegory of Tull's own bloody-minded attitude.

This singular approach couldn't have been better illustrated than their next effort, *Songs From The Wood*. Released a week before The Damned's first long-player, in February 1977, the album was a playfully bucolic take on British folk mythology and legend. But what seemed on the surface like a hopelessly contrary move in the era of punk, disco and AOR – and in a year when the airwaves were ruled by The Eagles, Fleetwood Mac, Meat Loaf and ELO – instead proved a huge success, both at home and abroad. *Songs From The Wood* quickly went gold in the US and returned the band to the Billboard top ten.

The same went for its follow-up. On the surface, 1978's *Heavy Horses* couldn't have been less suited to the American market. Dedicated to the "indigenous working ponies and horses of Great Britain", adorned with a photo of Anderson leading two Shire horses across a field, the album was an extended hymn to the value of homegrown traditions and the perils of consumerism.

Nevertheless, the US still happily lapped it up. It proved another big international hit. When Tull fetched up in New York in October that year, for another sell-out show at Madison Square Garden, it was beamed live via satellite on BBC's *Old Grey Whistle Test*. In doing so, they became the first band to appear on a live simultaneous TV broadcast from America.

They continued to pack out arenas throughout 1979, culminating in a huge UNICEF benefit at Santa Monica's Civic Auditorium in November. Broadcast live by radio station KMET-FM, the show found Tull promoting their latest effort, the eco-themed *Stormwatch*. The album may have been another sizeable hit, but it also effectively signalled the end of the band's extraordinary run of success since *Stand Up*, ten years earlier.

This didn't have anything to do with shifts in popularity. Rather, it was the result of seismic changes within the band itself. As the *Stormwatch* tour drew to a close in early 1980, drummer Barrie Barlow, piano player John Evan and multi-instrumentalist Dee Palmer all quit. A major catalyst was the tragic demise of bassist John Glascock, who had died of congenital heart failure while Tull were away on tour.

"The '70s were very productive for us in terms of people and musicians together," Anderson reflected in 2013. "But elements within the band had been growing apart. It was just a sense of people heading in different directions. I got to the point where I thought: 'OK, probably best to put this on ice for a time and do something different.'

Tull would eventually regroup and plot a more synth-based course through the early '80s. They would revive their commercial fortunes as the decade wore on (culminating in 1987's Grammy-winning *Crest Of A Knave*), but they were never likely to repeat the successes of the '70s, when they held their own alongside Led Zeppelin, Queen, Elton John and The Rolling Stones as one of our most prized American exports.

Anderson was always at a loss to fully account for Jethro Tull's massive popularity in the US. But he did have some idea. "I think the Americans kind of liked it because we didn't look like we cared too much," he suggested to *Prog* in 2017. "Some other British artists cared too much about being loved. When you do that, the chances are audiences don't because they see through the mask…I think those of us who appeared to not give a damn were the ones who made the impression."

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OUT OF THE ORDINARY

When it came to recording what became their sprawling eighth album, **Jethro Tull** swapped their West London studio for glamorous Monaco. But it was Ian Anderson's 'loner' status and outsider observations that really shaped *Minstrel In The Gallery.*

Words: **Chris Roberts**

The first thing Ian Anderson did when he woke up this morning was stand in the window completely naked – "there's no one around at that time to see me" – and look out across the fields. "I saw the sheep gently moving a few hundred metres away, and got that wonderful feeling of, y'know, thanks for all the good fortune."

He's thinking like this because he's remembering *Grace*, the simple snippet which closes the far-from-simple album *Minstrel In The Gallery*, Jethro Tull's 1975 near-classic.

"That song was just paying homage to the world around," he says. "It was a musical afterthought, a postscript, just thanking whatever power or spirit for the blessings that have been bestowed upon you that day. Then it asks: '*May I buy you again tomorrow?*' Because in a way you pay through the nose for that good luck. So it's just saying grace, although… I tend not to have these thoughts about me when I sit down to gorge myself on King Prawn vindaloo, a saag aloo, pilau rice and a plate full of poppadoms. I'm not that spiritually minded all the time. But there are moments."

There are moments of spoken-word theatre, acoustic folk, heavy electric rock, string quartets and (of course) flute on the busy, bustling, bursting-at-the-banks *Minstrel In The Gallery*, one of the peak Tull statements. Some go as far as to call it the quintessential Tull album, but Anderson himself reckons it's not quite Premier League. "In terms of the Jethro Tull canon, *Aqualung* has to sit right at the top of the tree," he says, "not only regarding the quality of songs but as being 'iconic' to an audience the world over. Well, particularly back in the seventies. Then if you were to divide all the work including my solo stuff into three blocks of a) great, b) okay and c) perhaps not, then *Minstrel In The Gallery* would be in the second group and probably near the top of it. But, you know, it might be somebody else's favourite. For some that's even [the much-criticised] *A Passion Play*. Luckily everyone has different opinions, and that's what makes us all more interesting than otherwise we might be."



GETTY

'The themes of *Minstrel* whirl around an almost Dickensian or Hogarthian depiction of city life.'

Anderson is both interesting and opinionated. His articulate early-morning monologues are delivered in warm, witty, stentorian tones, often impossible for the interviewer to break into with anything so distracting as questions. Today he digresses on to Brexit, Zappa, Beefheart, Jimmy Page and Bowie, but can at times be guided gently back on to the topic at hand: the Tull album which arrived in a year when the band had played five sold-out nights at the LA Forum and were described as "the world's biggest band?" (albeit with a question mark) by *Melody Maker*.

"I'd learned long before to recognise that you can have everybody reckoning you're the Next Great Thing, then within a year or two get some poisonously negative stuff. And this was in the days before social media! Imagine the vitriol and condemnation and abuse now if I'd come out with *A Passion Play*. But yes, it was up and down, up and down, all the time."

Even your lyrics (on *Minstrel* track *Baker St. Muse*) – '*I have no time for Time Magazine or Rolling Stone*' – note the impact of the press in that era.

"Having been on the cover of both, these were hugely important back then. As was being fortunate enough to get the attention of John Peel. But of course they'd fall out of love with you as quickly as they'd fallen in. *Rolling Stone* swiftly decided we were the spawn of the devil because we weren't Americana. And eventually John Peel decreed we were off his Christmas card list and never spoke to me again. I was mortified, really. It was painful to feel suddenly cut off."

Punk wasn't quite gobbing at the rock gods just yet, but you were in the firing line when the new orthodoxy declared progressive rock to be out of fashion and infra dig.

"And I'm well aware of the pomposity and arrogance that some see in a progressive approach, in a concept album", says 71-year-old Anderson, still recording and touring (a new album is in the making) and now an MBE, erstwhile salmon farmer and director of four companies who hasn't worn a codpiece or dirty raincoat in many years. "I fully understand all that, I get it. On the other hand, to constrain myself to only working within the bounds of obvious, conventional, catchy music would frustrate and thwart me. You have to let loose. For some that might be just turning it up to eleven, one louder. A bit more welly. For others it might be a change of direction. Or it could be an escape into the destructive world of alcohol and drugs. For me I suppose it's an unapologetic and occasionally slightly intellectual urge to push beyond the accepted norms of rock music. I'm well aware how it might come over, the reputation you might get, but you just have to bear that particular cross."

Tull's eighth album, *Minstrel* was recorded in Monte Carlo in the Maison Rouge studio, not long after Anderson's divorce from his first wife, photographer and actress Jennie Franks, who'd written half the lyrics for *Aqualung*. While some of the songs on this album reference break-ups and lost love, more of them catalogue the observations of an outsider, holding up an unreliable mirror to society's freaks and misfits. The minstrel, Anderson sings, '*brewed a song of love and hatred*'.

"I suppose I was feeling a little isolated," he says. "I felt you were in the public domain, but cut off, like entertainers, minstrels, in the gallery. Separated from the people you were performing to. You were ➢

“To constrain myself to only working within the bounds of conventional, catchy music would frustrate and thwart me.” Ian Anderson



Ian Anderson, the man who put codpieces, flutes and men in tights into rock'n'roll.

GETTY

travelling salesmen, carnival people. So they found you seductive and interesting, and wanted to receive your entertainment, but you didn't belong with them. Some enjoyed living in the rock'n'roll world, whatever that meant, having their own separate identity. But for me it was…not lonely, exactly, but… I belonged nowhere. You had Mick Jagger trying to move among the good and the great back then, liking being fêted by royalty and the intelligentsia of the time. He flirted with that world, wanted to be accepted as an equal. I think his bandmates found it quite absurd and laughed and joked about it. The rest of us just thought he was a bit of a ponce for trying to rise above his social station. And that had an impact on me. I didn't want to mix in circles like that. At the same time, I wasn't particularly drawn to the circles of my musical peers; I didn't do the clubs and the drugs and the booze, that just wasn't in me. I had great respect for fellow musicians, I just wasn't into the social side. So I felt dislocated."

The themes of *Minstrel* whirl around an almost Dickensian or Hogarthian depiction of city life and the Halloween parade of its inhabitants; the ne'er-do-wells and wannabes, including sleazy office workers, dodgy coppers, homeless strugglers, prostitutes and randy pygmies. Somehow the music, while occasionally getting too frantic, full, overambitious and overlapping for its own good, evokes these mean streets of seventies London, as perceived through the eyes of a young man who may have been pissed-off but wasn't too jaded to see the jewels therein.

"Feeling cut off isn't necessarily a bad thing. Because it makes you resilient. It gives you a point of difference. Your goods, on the shelf, are not the same as everybody else's. And in terms of both material and musical styles, we dipped our toes in folk, classical, jazz etcetera.

"It's an unholy mess of clashes if you get it wrong, but if you get it right it's a delicate broth, a heady brew of flavours and tastes. You've got to believe you're getting it right. Because when you think you've got it right, you probably have".

It's on the second side's 'prog suite' *Baker St. Muse* that the singer casts his coldest eye over the urban sprawl, leaping between misanthropy and a sense of wonder at all the colourful characters he witnesses. Anderson was at the time staying in a rented mews (geddit?) cottage just off Baker Street in central London.

"Oh, look, sometimes you look back over your old lyrics and some of it is just toe-curlingly awful!" Anderson says. "But there are other little moments where you think: 'Oh wow. Did I write that? It's quite simple, but … perceptive. For a twenty-something!' I never feel smug satisfaction, I just go: 'Phew, that was a lucky idea that came to me!' Sometimes you sit there scratching your head and not a lot comes."

It comes in floods on *Baker St. Muse*, of which Anderson admits he is fond. On many days at that time, he'd walk down the famed thoroughfare to Oxford Street where the record companies were at the time, and at night stroll in the opposite direction to the Indian restaurant. "I'd go and pick up a takeaway while reading some Cold War spy thriller. This was a little ritual I had after returning from a long tour to London, then writing songs for a new album. Much of it was written in that little rented cottage and on my meanderings and wanderings. Again I suppose ➢

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Wandering minstrels Jethro Tull in '75: (l-r) John Evan, Jeffrey Hammond, Martin Barre, Ian Anderson, Barrie Barlow.

GETTY INSET: FUTURE

some of the characters are not unlike some of those on *Aqualung*. You have to remember that I, like many of my peers, went to art school. So my background was in the painterly arts more than the musical ones. And the way I enjoyed pictorial art was not portraiture, and not landscapes, but people *in* a landscape. Almost like the cast of a play on a stage. And here the stage is a cityscape; think of LS Lowry, or the underrated, misunderstood Sir William Russell Flint. I'd have these characters where you leave a slight sense of incompleteness so that the audience can use their own creative powers to elaborate on your sketch. They can join the dots, put the colours in. That's what I find attractive about music: people can listen and introduce their own exploration or amplification."

The album is a classic of Anderson's people-watching period. As a morning person, he felt equally detached, at times, within the band set-up. "[Guitarist] Martin Barre and I were the loners, really, within the social infrastructure. He liked to get up early and go for a run; I liked to get up early and strum my guitar and watch the news. After a show, both of us would be tucked up and fast asleep within forty-five minutes of coming off stage! The world would be boring if *everybody* lived in the stereotypical rock'n'roll way we're encouraged to believe they do. I'm sure even Jimmy Page woke up early sometimes and had a creative moment. Or it could have been a procreative moment, remembering the Polaroid photos that Jimmy used to show us the morning after the night before."

"Sometimes you look back over your old lyrics and some of it is just toe-curlingly awful!"

Ian Anderson

Didn't you upset Led Zeppelin by saying words to the effect that your song *Black Satin Dancer* was like Zeppelin but with better lyrics?

"Ah. That was the kind of thing I unfortunately used to say. Opening my mouth without stopping to think. Of course it was offensive. In that moment I forgot that Robert [Plant] wrote the lyrics. He was probably hurt. It sounded like I was claiming some kind of superiority. I was probably trying to pay a compliment to Zeppelin but it ended up not as I intended."

What part was played by the location for the recording? The luxuriance of Monte Carlo seems not to have filtered into this album one iota. And is it true that the other band members mostly lazed around while you did the work?

"Oh, it wasn't a bad atmosphere," he replies, "it was just odd being away from the UK, where we'd made previous records. The idea was to cut ourselves off from the distractions of home and family and friends, of day-to-day life. Being in a residential context. It would be more of a dedicated, concentrated effort. But in some ways the reverse occurred. I'd written much of the material beforehand, so many sessions didn't require the others' input, at least in the early stages. So they ended up with time on their hands, doing day trips into Switzerland or Italy. John Evan and Martin had cars and would visit ski resorts. They were the playboys of Monaco. It was okay, but Monte Carlo is a soulless, meaningless place. We were resident while we were there, for tax purposes, but what had seemed like a good idea wasn't a great one.

In fact our first time there coincided with the Monaco Grand Prix, so that was tortuous – all the roads were closed off, which meant getting to the studio was tricky. I'm a fast worker, I like to get things done while I'm consumed by the energy and emotion. I don't want to hang about, I like to crack on. So while I wouldn't over-egg it, because it is still a band record, this one has a bit more of me being private, reflective, whimsical."

And so he raced on to the next project, an idea for a musical, but he couldn't hang around waiting for the practicalities of the theatre world to catch up with his imagination, and remodelled *Too Old To Rock'n'Roll: Too Young To Die* as a Jethro Tull album.

Today Anderson is flush with tangential anecdotes, spinning off on to his admiration for Peter Green, his enjoyment of ZZ Top and Motörhead "in small doses" ("though I'm probably more likely to find solace in Handel"), his touring days with Captain Beefheart, and his regret at not phoning the terminally ill Frank Zappa, who he'd never met, when told Zappa would like him to. "Three times I dialled the number then hung up before he answered…" he says.

"I didn't know what to say to a dying man. I didn't have the balls. What a shit story. Who knows what he wanted to say to me? Perhaps he wanted to say: 'I just wanted you to know I hated all your albums – *especially Minstrel In The Gallery*!' Ha ha ha…"

With all due respect to the late American avant-gardist, he would have been wrong on that one.

THE JOY OF SAX

How Ian Anderson produced a Bowie sax solo.



There's a flash of dialogue at the end of *Baker St. Muse* where Anderson the minstrel, having finished the song, finds he's locked in the studio and shouts: "I can't get out!" Are we daft to read profundity into that?

"It did seem to have some implication. The embarrassing thing is I did more than one take of it, added a bit of echo. I'd done a similar thing with David Bowie on a Steeleye Span track I produced for them on the 1974 album *Now We Are Six*. They wanted me to procure him as a saxophone player for a remake of some awful fifties rock'n'roll thing they absurdly wanted to do… *To Know Him Is To Love Him*, that's it.

So he turned up at the studio in Willesden with an entourage of acolytes, since he didn't know me or Steeleye Span. And he went out there and nailed the saxophone solo in double-quick time. As he was leaving, I said: "David, it'd be great if we just do some little theatrical set-up where you walk in off the street, you don't know who we are, you get your saxophone out of the case, you stand there and do one take and nail it, and you walk back out again, with no fuss or fanfare. It'd be great to capture that moment." So we staged a little scene with us talking over the intercom. Not sure it made the final master, though."

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Let's Party Like It's 1399

In 1977, when punk was starting to wash away the old and bring in the new, **Jethro Tull** released an album of songs that could have come from the Middle Ages. Living in the past? Ian Anderson recalls making *Songs From The Wood.*

Words: **Paul Rees**

There is a generally accepted history of British music for 1977. In this narrative, it was not just the year that punk broke out, but also a true pop-culture watershed; a Year Zero in which rock's so-called old guard were swept away by a revolutionising horde of angry upstarts. Certainly, at the outset of that year, The Buzzcocks and The Damned fired off opening salvos with their debut records, respectively the *Spiral Scratch* EP and *Damned Damned Damned*. By the spring, The Clash with *The Clash* and The Stranglers with *Rattus Norvegicus* had joined the fray. And that summer, Silver Jubilee street parties across the country had for an alternative soundtrack the three bile-filled minutes of the Sex Pistols' *God Save The Queen*. Come October, the Pistols' *Never Mind The Bollocks* album stormed straight to No.1.

However, the long-held notion that '77 belonged to the punks alone, that so much else was rendered instantly obsolete, or else irrelevant, is facile and plain wrong. Among the bestselling records by far that year were three that were entirely at odds with punk's amateurish ethos: Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*, Meat Loaf's *Bat Out Of Hell* and ELO's *Out Of The Blue*. One of the most questing was the first solo album from former Genesis singer Peter Gabriel, who at 27 was seven months younger than The Stranglers' Hugh Cornwell. Bleakest by far was Pink Floyd's *Animals*, in which Roger Waters imagined a Britain sunk in a cesspit of social and moral decay.

Yet even Waters's tar-black dystopian vision was not the most extreme alternative to punk to appear, and sell by the truckload, that year. That was a record released in February, a week before *Damned Damned Damned*, and which was rooted in old English folklore. Indeed, listening to its mostly acoustic-based songs, with their antiquated lyrics and colourings of mandolin, glockenspiel, pipe organ and flute, one could imagine nothing so much as sprites, goblins, elves and faeries frolicking about a mystical Neverland. Further, it was a record crafted largely by a bearded, unruly haired, boggle-eyed man who habitually dressed as a medieval minstrel. The album was *Songs From The Wood* by Jethro Tull.

Songs From The Wood was Tull's tenth studio album, and both commercially and creatively, one of their most successful. It was the first they made after singer and bandleader Ian Anderson had quit London and gone to live in a rural idyll. Holed up in his 16th-century Buckinghamshire farmhouse with his new wife, Shona Learoyd, a former ballet dancer, Anderson conjured a vanished England steeped in myth and legend. He then set it to music that was all at once archaic, playful and plangent. To welcome the listener into this world, there was Anderson on the album's cover, pictured as a kind of Middle Ages poacher, like a character from picaresque fiction. He seemed to care not a jot about the encroaching, marauding menace of punk.

> **"*Songs From The Wood* was stuff that would have made Johnny Rotten projectile vomit."**
>
> Ian Anderson

"Quite frankly, I didn't," Anderson says today, delightedly. "It would have been ludicrous to try to ingratiate oneself with the audience of that changing time. And remember, the punk thing was something that began back with the MC5 and '*Kick out the jams, motherfuckers.*' I know, because I was on stage supporting them in Seattle in 1969."

Seventy this year, Anderson is just as you might hope he would be. Which is to say he is every inch the urbane, gentleman rock star: articulate, expansive and self-deprecating. "We had kind of been there with punk anyway," he continues, warming to his subject. "I mean in the sense that some of Tull's earlier music was brash and untutored. Famously, Johnny Rotten was quite a fan of *Aqualung*, the track. But given the mood of the times, *Songs From The Wood* was not street cred music. This was stuff that would have made Johnny projectile vomit."





Tull's *Wood*-men: (clockwise from below left) David Palmer, Barriemore Barlow, Martin Barre, John Evan and John Glascock.



Ian Anderson founded Jethro Tull in 1967 along with two grammar-school mates in his adopted home town of Blackpool. He was born in Dunfermline in 1947, and moved south to Lancashire with his Scottish father and English mother in 1959. The nascent Tull had sounded so raw, so primal, that Tony Iommi was briefly their guitarist, before hot-footing it back to Birmingham to spark up Black Sabbath. By the mid-70s, though, Tull were so well-established that a feature in *Melody Maker* posed the question: "Jethro Tull – Now the biggest band in the world?"

Anderson, a uniquely captivating frontman who played the flute while spinning and pirouetting on one leg, emerged as their driving creative force and visionary. It was his high-flung ideas that shaped two pivotal albums: *Aqualung* in 1971 and the next year's *Thick As A Brick*, a sprawling concept double that made Tull stars. A further concept piece, 1976's *Too Old Too Rock 'N' Roll: Too Young To Die*, had been the springboard for their most elaborate tour to date, taking them into stadiums in the US where they performed in front of giant projection screens, which was at the time a groundbreaking initiative.

Returning from this extravaganza to England that summer, Anderson removed himself to his farm and began to pore over a book on English lore and legend he had been gifted by Tull's de facto manager, a brash New Yorker by the name of Jo Lustig ("The best way to describe him," Anderson says, "would be as a full-on Neanderthal presence. He used to infuriate me, but his heart was in the right place."). As Anderson read, the landscape of *Songs From The Wood* took shape in his mind, coalescing as a pastoral song cycle that was just as anachronistic in the mid-70s as one of the codpieces he often wore on stage.

"That book was a very useful gift," Anderson says now. "But it wasn't the only one that I read back then on the general topic of Britain's history of folklore. The countryside too provided me with some influence. Our countryside is quite rich in different traditions and cultures, and elements of fantasy and fable. *Songs From The Wood* also drew on my background of listening to other kinds of music than rock. I've never really been a fan of rock music. I was trying to stick to musical references that arose when classical composers fooled around with the vulgar folk music forms. Beethoven, for one, knew a good folk tune when he heard it."

Anderson's connections to the British folk-rock scene were well established. In 1974 he had produced leading lights Steeleye Span's *Now We Are Six* album, and had even persuaded David Bowie to blow saxophone on one track, *To Know Him Is To Love Him*. He was, though, at best ambivalent about many aspects of the British folk tradition. As he set to the task of writing Tull's new album, he resolved to fashion music that would not, as he once put it, "be a wet kind of folk".

"Perhaps I might have said that," he defers. "But I think British, and more particularly, English folk music is always better when it doesn't get caught up in its own very stylised past. I was a fan of the more modern English, Scottish and Irish folk music. People like Bert Jansch and Roy Harper were top of the list for me at the time.

"No disrespect whatsoever to Steeleye Span, who I always enjoyed, but there were one or two members of the band who were rather infatuated with the idea of gathering in barley by hand. That was something I found difficult to grasp, because I was driving a big old tractor and combine harvester. My world in terms of the rural English tradition was about smoking diesels."

When it came to his lyrics, Anderson had no such qualms about delving back into a bygone, or even never-was, age. The songs he wrote for the album were peppered with fantastical-

"For me, it's an important album, but it's a little bit too tights-and-codpiece for most people."

Ian Anderson





sounding characters such as Jack-In The-Green, the Whistler and the Green Man, and with pagan festivals and other ancient rites. He established this other-worldly air in the very first verse of the opening title track, gleefully trilling like a storyteller straight out of Tolkien: *'Let me bring you songs from the wood; to make you feel much better than you could know. Dust you down from tip to toe; show you how the garden grows.'* Never mind being out of touch with Johnny Rotten sneering *'Anarchy in the UK'*, this was removed from it by centuries.

"That word you used for it, 'playful', is a good choice, I think," says Anderson. "It really sums up what the mood of the album was designed to be. It was me having a little fun with traditions and myths and legends, all of which could be very twee and, oh well, yes, seriously wet."

At this point, Jethro Tull's cycle of making and touring an album each year was well set, and *Songs From The Wood* was recorded in less than four weeks in August 1976. Anderson arrived at the sessions with the bones of the record already laid out. He was, he says, mindful of how much time could be lost in the studio with trying to wrestle ideas out of thin air.

"And," he adds archly, "I was a penny-pinching Scot. Also, I hated having to go back into the same room day after day to work. I liked to be on the first stagecoach out of Dodge."

Incongruously, he gathered together the band – guitarist Martin Barre, bassist John Glascock, pianist John Evan, drummer Barriemore Barlow and a new addition, organist David Palmer – not in a candlelit hay loft, but at the much less fanciful environs of Morgan Studios in Willesden Green, north-west London. There the grimmest realities of the times could not help but intrude upon them.

"I can remember coming out of Morgan each night and checking under Martin's car for bombs," Anderson recalls. "These were the days when the IRA's terrorism had extended itself and politicians, the military and police were targets. There was a certain concern that people in the public eye, such as rock and pop stars, might be next on the list for a showcase act."

As he had done on every Tull album since their second, 1969's *Stand Up*, Anderson also assumed the producer's role. By his own admission, he had often enforced his will to such a degree that he "steamrollered" the others into compliance. On this occasion he strived for a more benevolent form of dictatorship, encouraging his bandmates to occupy the spaces within, and to dress the scenery of his songs. In particular, Palmer's ornate organ and keyboard fills became a feature of the finished record. And on the epic *Pibroch (Cap In Hand)*, Barre's guitar approximated the sound of bagpipes a good six years before Big Country burst onto the scene.

"As a producer you're always trying to find elements to make things work in a different way," Anderson considers. "Obviously, coming from Scotland, I already knew that actual bagpipes are tricky things. The way they're pitched makes them entirely unsuitable for accompaniment with other instruments. Afterwards I did work with a single piper on another record. I might even have found him busking in Leicester Square Tube station.

"In general, for *Songs From The Wood*, I left gaps between sections of vocal or chorus where there was an opportunity for other members to come up with bits of their own. Quite often I would leave the room to let them discuss ideas. Mostly, David Palmer would come up with additional music and passages. That helped to make the album what it was, because David's background was in classical music and composition and he could do something I was not able to."



"It felt as if I was in charge of a juggernaut that could very easily run off the road."

Ian Anderson

Nevertheless, Anderson was ever likely to be gripped by a spontaneous urge of his own. Relaxing at home one weekend in the middle of recording, the words and music to *Jack-In-The-Green* popped fully formed into his head. He sat down to Sunday lunch and afterwards summoned his engineer, Robin Black, to Morgan, where he put down the basic track in a matter of hours, playing guitar and drums unaccompanied.

By the time it was completed, *Songs From The Wood* was perhaps Tull's most coherent and fully realised statement. Not a concept album in the strictest sense, it was nevertheless a very singular body of work. Each of its nine songs was linked by imagery and a shared musical language. This was folk rock with one foot in the past and the other tapping out a wilder, more audacious beat, Anderson's flute doing a jester's dance across the middle ground.

"*Songs From The Wood* is a collection of songs, nothing more, except for the most part they seem to belong together on the same record," Anderson opines. "The Beatles did that admirably with *Sgt Pepper's*, and the same with Pink Floyd's first album, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*. Those records were intact, whole, and served as examples to me when I started to write music. That would be evident in what I've done from *Aqualung* onwards."

The initial portents for the album were not good. Tull's label, Chrysalis, wanted a high-profile Christmas hit to precede it and badgered Anderson into having one of the album's signature tracks, *Ring Out, Solstice Bells*, redecorated for the job, regardless of the song itself being a celebration ▷





of a pagan festival. Anderson accordingly handed it over to Mike Batt, of *The Wombles* fame, but his Yule-friendly garnish was to no one's taste. In a panic by now, Chrysalis chucked out Anderson's original *Solstice Bells* on December 6, 1976, whereupon it entered the UK charts at No.28 with an anchor attached, and slipped from sight the very next week, blown away by Johnny Mathis's easy-listening behemoth *When A Child Is Born*.

"That was somewhat sad for me," Anderson says. "It would have been rather nice to have had a Top Ten hit and been on the Christmas edition of *Top Of The Pops*. Also, though the band at that time was probably at its best, the seeds were being sown of musical discontent and personal differences between certain people. Within a year or two it began to feel to me as if that cohesiveness we had was getting lost. That was partly, I guess, because of the pressures and frequency of our touring. Things were quite stressful back then. It felt as if I was in charge of a juggernaut that could very easily run off the road."

"My suspicion, though she flatly denies it, is that my wife put my codpiece on the bonfire."

Ian Anderson

Yet the *Songs From The Wood* album was a roaring success. Released on February 11, 1977, it garnered Tull some of their most glowing notices since the halcyon days of *Thick As A Brick*. The *NME*, still not then entirely given over to cheerleading punk, hailed it "one hell of a fine record and an undisputed joy". Over in the US, *Rolling Stone* went further, proclaiming it to be "maybe the group's best ever record". Tull's fans concurred. It was a Top 20 hit in the UK and sailed to No.7 across the Atlantic, the last of the band's albums to fly quite so high.

And if there were any lingering doubts as to Tull's utter indifference to the zeitgeist, they surely would have been extinguished by the clip shot to accompany the release of their next single from the record, *The Whistler*. Filmed in a studio setting, it showed Anderson perched on a stool, resplendent in a "frivolous pantomime cossie" and leering like a loon, while about him stood Palmer at his keyboard, puffing on an enormous antique pipe, and Barre with a monocle clamped in his left eye.

"Well, it was kind of a lighthearted album," Anderson offers, chuckling. "It didn't have any terribly dark or brooding references, or the torture and aggression of certain other things we had done earlier and maybe also did later on. From that point of view, at least, it was inoffensive."

Songs From The Wood ushered in a second, if short-lived, golden era for Jethro Tull. They toured it around arenas in the UK, Europe and America that year, and in 1978 followed it up with another excellent folk-rock confection, *Heavy Horses*. But bassist John Glascock fell ill and was unable to participate in the following year's *Stormwatch*. That album ploughed the same rustic furrow, but sounded tired and lacked inspiration.

On November 17, 1979, barely two months after it was released, Glascock died from a congenital heart valve defect, aged just 28. Crushed at the loss of his close friend, Barriemore Barlow quit the band soon after, and the line-up that had made *Songs From The Wood* was no more.

The Tull that carried on the through the 80s and beyond was a very different beast. Specifically, Anderson now raced to catch up with the drift of the times, and added synths and an electronic gloss to the band's sound. There were high points, notably 1987's revitalising *Crest Of A Knave* album, but for the most part, these later versions of Tull were somewhat less endearingly eccentric than the one that had gone immediately before, and the band were never again so seeking and adventuresome.

These days, Anderson continues to fly the flag for Jethro Tull's legacy and is still touring their music around the world. He has also found a new and yet also ages-old way of reinterpreting it, with the release this month of *Jethro Tull: The String Quartets* album. Recorded in part in the crypt of Worcester Cathedral, on it he plays his flute in the company of the violins, viola and cello of internationally regarded chamber musicians the Carducci Quartet.

Together they have transformed Tull standards such as *Living In The Past*, *Aqualung* and *Ring Out, Solstice Bells* into jaunty chamber pieces. Affectionately, Anderson passes off the venture as "something that might get played at weddings, funerals and on Christmas mornings". However, *Songs From The Wood*'s doomed Christmas single in particular sounds as if it was meant all along to be plucked out at the court of an



early Tudor monarch.

Later this year, there will also be an anniversary edition of *Songs From The Wood*. As with the previous deluxe reissues of *Aqualung* and *Thick As A Brick*, the original tracks have been remixed by Steven Wilson. Even though they've been buffed and boosted by Wilson for this digital age, this 'new' version will doubtless sound just like the old in one respect at least: as uncompromising as it is ageless, like something beamed in from another time.

"*Songs From The Wood* was a landmark for me," Anderson concludes. "But I see it as a quaint anachronism in today's terms. For me, it's an important album as a writer and musician, and in terms of giving the band a good few songs to play live, but it's a little bit too tights-and-codpiece for most people."

Anderson then catches himself, as though he's just recalled something important that up to this precise moment has lain buried and forgotten for these last 40 years.

"Actually," he continues, "by the time we did *Songs From The Wood*, the codpiece had mysteriously disappeared, never to be found again. My suspicion, though she flatly denies it, is that my wife put it on the bonfire with the autumn leaves.

"From time to time, and in vain hope, I still look to see if it has turned up on eBay. Who knows, one day I may yet end up paying through the nose, if not through any other orifice, for the return of it. Wouldn't that be nice?"

Spirit Of '77

The alternative playlist to Britain's so-called Year Of Punk.

Pink Floyd
Pigs (Three Different Ones)
An epic and terrifying descent into Roger Waters's nightmarish near-future world, with David Gilmour's stunning guitar playing stirring up hellfire. (From *Animals*.)



Fleetwood Mac
The Chain
The only Mac song credited to the entire band – Brits Mick Fleetwood, John McVie and Christine McVie; Americans Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham – and awesome from the moment John McVie's bass rumbles with intent. (From *Rumours*.)

Yes
Wonderous Stories
Jon Anderson goes off with the faeries, while Steve Howe and Rick Wakeman scamper around and about him. Collectively, just as defiant in the face of punk's anarchy as Jethro Tull were. (From *Going For The One*.)

Foreigner
Cold As Ice
Expat Brit Mick Jones brought in lung-busting American singer Lou Gramm straight from the building site where he was humping bricks. In tandem they defined the sound of FM rock for the next decade. (From *Foreigner*.)

Status Quo
Roll Over Lay Down
Recorded at Glasgow's Apollo Theatre in October 1976, this was the ultimate rendering of the Quo's brand of no-nonsense, heads-down boogie. (From *Quo Live!*.)

Judas Priest
Sinner
Heavy metal thunder was unleashed in the West Midlands through Glenn Tipton and KK Downing's sawing, switchblade riffs and the still-remarkable voice of Rob Halford. (From *Sin After Sin*.)

Jethro Tull
The Whistler
Songs From The Wood's most effusive track is driven by the whip-crack of Barriemore Barlow's snare and Ian Anderson's goggling wordplay. (From *Songs From The Wood*.)

Peter Gabriel
Solsbury Hill
Fresh out of Genesis, Gabriel teamed up with producer Bob Ezrin (Alice Cooper, Lou Reed) for his solo debut, which peaked with this celestial folk masterpiece. (From *Peter Gabriel*.)

UFO
Too Hot To Handle
The sound of classic British hard rock: Pete Way's caveman bassline, Phil Mogg's urgent vocals and guitarist Michael Schenker's magic touches. (From *Lights Out*.)

Motörhead
Motörhead
Lemmy's speed-fuelled calling card, originally written for Hawkwind and here given extra thrust by 'Fast' Eddie Clarke and Philthy Animal Taylor. (From *Motörhead*.)

ELO
Sweet Talkin' Woman
The high point of 1977's most unashamedly overblown collection, as Jeff Lynne and his symphonic-rock overlords squeeze lost love, astral harmonies and the kitchen sink into a dazzling three minutes and forty-five seconds. (From *Out Of The Blue*.)



Queen
We Will Rock You
Queen recorded *News Of The World* at the same studio where the Sex Pistols were making *Never Mind The Bollocks*. Encountering Freddie Mercury one day, Sid Vicious sneered: "Still doing opera for the masses, Freddie?" "Oh yes, Mr Ferocious, we're trying," Mercury shot back. This was the exclamation point on that last laugh. (From *News Of The World*.)

FLEETWOOD MAC + QUEEN: GETTY

"We were ostensibly a blues group, gradually replacing the well-worn blues that everyone was playing with songs of our own, for better or worse."

Ian Anderson

The Pied Piper

In 1977, punk exploded and prog's future looked uncertain. That year, *Sounds* magazine journalist Peter Makowski sat down with Ian Anderson to ask him about **Jethro Tull**'s future as outsiders in a dramatically shifting musical landscape.

Jethro Tull appeared early enough on the music scene to witness the birth of progressive rock. It was the late 60s and psychedelia had laid the foundations for a group of more serious musicians who were hell bent on separating themselves from the pop culture. Some of these exciting innovative new bands were even releasing singles with abstract lyrics and equally complex timings which although flying in the face of all commercial logic managed to hit the higher reaches of the charts leading to some highly bizarre appearances on *Top Of The Pops*. There was King Crimson with *Cat Food*, Family's *Burlesque* and even Fleetwood Mac decided to explore the outer realms of blues/rock under the guidance of the now lysergically enlightened Peter Green as they unleashed *The Green Manalishi (With The Two Pronged Crown)*. And let us, of course, not forget Jethro Tull and the joyously eccentric *Living In The Past*, which still sounds as box fresh today and induces a spring in your step with each new hearing.

What made Tull stand out from the crowd and even more mesmerizing was their frontman, Ian Anderson. The polar opposite of a popstar with his stage stance a la flamingo foot, he conjured up visions of a 17th century poacher/rapscallion. Sweaty browed'n'beady eyed, saliva drooling down his unkempt chops which he feverishly licked with a manically jubilant glee. His hand-me-down meths drinker attire and general outsider attitude was far more aligned with the punk generation which made it interesting that my first and only meeting with the man should take place in 1977. This was, of course, when Johnny Rotten and co were exploding onto the scene setting the calendar for year zero, virtually writing off all those prog rock innovators who a few years previously were in their own ways tearing up the rule books and setting new boundaries but had since become corpulent parodies of their formers selves saturated in the excesses of showbiz and stardom.

GETTY

Somehow Anderson and co remained impervious to this sad demise of a one potentially great genre and at the height of the filth'n'fury he managed to ignore outside influences and give the industry the finger in his own gentle way by releasing *Songs From The Wood*, an album initially viewed with suspicion by a media that was totally confused by its unique and rustic charm.

I cannot take full credit for my late conversion to the magic of Tull. It all happened when I was doing a story on Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow who were recording *Long Live Rock'n'Roll* at the legendary Honky Château on the outskirts of Paris. Jethro Tull were in town due to play a few concerts and in the meantime various members of the band would make their way to the studio for impromptu games of football on the lawn. Everyone was feeling a little stir crazy and tiring of the endless séances and bottles of Johnny Walker Black Label and up for any opportunity to get down to cosmopolitan capital. Blackmore had always sung the praises of Tull, was a huge admirer of guitarist Martin Barre (as was Hendrix) and totally in awe of Anderson as a songwriter and performer. I couldn't really see it, the albums seemed to lack the sparkle and edge I craved at the time. It was only when I saw them perform in France that I realised what a phenomenally talented and adventurous band they were. Fearless and focused, a consummate showman, at one point in the show Anderson leapt offstage, and sang a whole song sitting on a highly amused Mr Blackmore's knee. Their friendship carries on to this very day and Anderson has recently guested on a Blackmore's Night album, revealing that today themaninblack's musical direction has more in common with Tull than Purple.

When I interviewed Anderson before the show he proved to be one of the most intelligent, witty and incisive subjects I ever encountered. This was done during a revolutionary time in music that has affected every style and genre to this very day. The fact that Tull have outlasted many of their peers and are thriving today says it all.

I sometimes fantasize how a meeting of Lydon and Anderson would have turned out – I have a sneaking suspicion they would have got on famously.



Ian Anderson in Copenhagen, 1972.

GETTY X2

To be quite honest I don't really know how to start an interview with you.
Ian Anderson: "Why me in particular?"
Well the previous interviews I've seen usually concentrate on the 'social comments' you make; you seem more opinionated about current aspects than a lot of other artistes.
IA: "Well, perhaps that's because so few people seem willing to offer opinions and seem, y'know more concerned with self-seeking publicity. Be that as it may, I'm opinionated only because I'd rather have an opinion about something, even if it's wrong, than just drift through life, in and out of tuning rooms."

Although you have strong views about life, etc, in general it doesn't seem to have rubbed off on your music.
IA: "Well, I would suggest that that's probably a good thing, in as much that if you are single-minded or narrow-minded enough to have beliefs and opinions and then manifest them in terms of music and nothing else at all, it is likely to be a narrow sort of existence. I'm interested in writing songs about everything, whatever it might be; I'm interested in a lot of things outside of music, but I don't feel obligated to write about them. I think it's healthy for me, let alone anybody else, to have a variety of interests. If I mix both it would probably confuse people… say if I started singing about blood sports."

Musically the band is almost unlimited but Tull's general outlook seems to be welded by one concept, which revolves around you.
IA: "I think that every album has a feel to it and obviously, depending where the emphasis lies, music or lyrics have to have some cohesive style, mood, emotional wholeness. That's what newspaper jargon often misconstrues as 'a concept'. I don't think that Jethro Tull has made a 'concept' album from square one. I suppose the nearest one would be *Too Old To Rock'n'Roll*, which I guess stemmed from something, which was a concept. I probably made it too difficult for people to think of the songs as individual pieces."

And how about *Songs From The Wood*?
IA: "Even the title of the album was quite openly saying, Look, here's a bunch of songs, and the only thing they have in common is that most of them were written on a train from High Wycombe to Marylebone. If that's a concept, then it's a concept album again. Most of the songs on …*Wood* were written for once when I was living in England as opposed to a hotel room."

With so much touring I'm surprised to see that your lyrics don't seem to reflect your rock'n'roll existence on the road.
IA: "Well most people travel, if only on a tube from A to B, or perhaps they're lucky enough to go holiday to Ibiza or wherever. When you're on a plane your mind isn't on… well maybe it's on free booze or the person sitting next to you, but in my case I just sit there and daydream. Likewise in hotel rooms, I'm not considering the wallpaper or the texture of the room or the waiter's skin. What I'm trying to say is that the restricted atmosphere of a hotel room, whatever, offers you a womb-like protection where you can actually let your mind wander. Certainly I don't think my songs would ever reflect… uh… the so-called and often written about 'frustrations' of life on the road, which I don't find particularly frustrating, I never have. It's a little bit boring, because of the routine. But it's up to you to make of it what you can."

There's no doubt that the quality of your output relies on the strength of your line-ups, I recently read an article stating that you were imposing restrictions on group members. Response?
IA: "It's very unfair that people lay the criticism of the musical merit of any records at my door, because it's down to the guys what they play. I mean if they're playing the wrong notes, or something, which is not really tasteful, or I know I can do better, then I'll step in and try to help. But most of what they do is their own contribution. It's not a question of my not allowing them to do something; it's far from that. I think they know they have a role to play, but with each different song/album the role will change, a little bit. They take it as it comes."

You seem insular yet you observe changes around you, from a similar standpoint to, say, The Who?
IA: "I think probably Pink Floyd and Jethro Tull have more in common, in terms of career aspect. In both cases there was an original flash of identity. The Floyd being sort of… I don't know what it was called then… hippy kind of light shows, all that sort of thing. Remarkably, they managed to become a part of a movement and still produce some startlingly original material. But then obviously after that first success, they struggled for about after-wotsisname-Syd Barrett left, and it took a while for them to come back and assert their continuing presence on both business and public."

If I recall correctly you were one of the first people to see through and question the validity of the whole so-called 'underground' movement.
IA: "It was always a bit of a joke because at that time our relationship with the 'underground' thing was really quite tenuous. We were ostensibly a blues group, gradually replacing the well-worn blues that everyone was playing with songs of our own, for better or worse. I never felt a part of that 'underground' thing, although we were at the open air Hyde Park event. That was Floyd, Tull and Roy Harper. Quite an odd combination of people to appear together. A blues group, the arch-folky "England's answer to Bob Dylan on ice" – he'll love that when he reads it – and the Floyd were suddenly out there with no light show. Quite an odd thing.
I don't think I saw through it. There was nothing to see through.

"Pink Floyd and Jethro Tull have much in common, in terms of career aspect. In both cases there was an original flash of identity."
Ian Anderson

Except for the business elements of promotion that lurk behind the scenes of what the public see – just like punk rock. Those who are in the best position to observe it and deal with it and not let it become unmanageable are the musicians themselves. They have to be aware to what extent they're being exploited, and perhaps inadvertently exploit other people in pushing a kind of business movement. It's not being overly cynical on my part. People should be made aware that a free concert isn't free, someone's paying for it. It's never free, music isn't free; it costs blood, sweat and money.

I think that once you label something, underground, punk, progressive, or whatever, it becomes classified into a mould that the quick money merchants can exploit and then the whole thing becomes contrived.

IA: "One thing I find difficult to come to grips with regarding my own viewpoint at the moment is whether or not I was a 'punk' musician. I use the term very loosely. I mean if I was 18 or 19-years-old starting a group up, singing aggressive, naive but hard-hitting, socially significant material, would I actually perceive the giant business machine that's behind it now?

"Maybe it was as bad as that when I was part of that 'underground' thing; maybe the money was being spent then. I suspect that it was, not as much, but certainly there was a definite feeling you were a part of something being pushed by a record company. The only saving grace being that the record companies were so young, everybody felt part of it. Now I find its difficult to see whether or there is a new kind of business movement or whether it's a high-powered record company, journalist, management company, newspaper-whatever-pushing a so-called new phenomenon. I fail to see that it's new. Seems to be second-hand rock'n'roll."

Tull: taste *and* style.

You find that things like 'punk' occur in cycles, when there's a lapse in creativity, and usually a few good bands come out of it, but unfortunately it seems they're being overshadowed by the nerds who have jumped on the proverbial bandwagon.

IA: "Absolutely, though they find themselves stifled by the fact that they become part of a promotional campaign to represent them only as a part of a sort of pseudo trend, musically."

A lot of kids who are into raw energy unleashed by the music probably feel intimidated by the almost stringent fashion rules laid down to become 'one of the clan'.

IA: "Which is a bit sad. You mentioned earlier about when there's lapse of creativity there comes along an attempt to manufacture a new movement, but the punk thing isn't parallel to back then because following hard on the heels of The Beatles there was The Stones and the best

Anderson: a law unto himself.





GETTY

Jethro Tull, Copenhagen, 1972 (left to right): John Evan, Ian Anderson, Martin Barre, Barrimore Barlow, Jeffrey Hammond.

of their early work. Very quickly after that there was Hendrix and The Cream and after that there was the so-called 'new wave' British groups, Jethro Tull, Yes and Genesis in sort of chronological order.

"Once a year came out a new powerful group that went to America to become internationally acceptable and the rest of it, Ever since the days of The Beatles there's been a continuing flow of creativity musically on different levels up until… I dunno, I hate to suggest that nobody's any good today, but it doesn't seem that music has continued to be innovative and original. Lots of new groups have come along and been good musicians, but nothing as different as the music of Hendrix was different it its day.

"Rock music seems to have gone as far as it can go; I mean it couldn't go any further without leaving its audience behind. I dunno, it's rather sad that it's gone back to its roots rather than continuing on perhaps a more simple level but still be original. But it just doesn't happen that way, it's gone back to the rock'n'roll riffs where people parade an endless variety of Keith Moon drum breaks and 'scorching guitar chords'. They may do them very well, but they have been done before as well as could ever be done, which negates doing them again, in my mind. Perhaps it's me getting old.

"I heard a Sex Pistols song on the radio the other day and what little I could make out of the lyrics, at least I heard some aggressive, nasty sounding English voices and I thought 'That's refreshing,' at least they're not listening to that mind-boggling Top 40 pseudo-American Epsom that you hear all the time on British radio. I'll give the Sex Pistols a listen, if they're singing in their own natural street voices. Just for that alone I would definitely listen to them.

"People laugh at me because I go on about people singing in American accents or wearing blue denims, but it's such an upfront thing, it's so difficult to see how conditioned actually people are. Clothes are like music: they're a memo of who you are or how you feel that particular day. If there's variety, then for heavens sake use it!

"It's also really worth the effort to sing in your own voice because it's the voice you use on the streets when you shout, it's that voice you use and you should damn well sing with it in a rock/punk/blues group, whatever, instead of copying the Americans. I'm tired of copying the Americans; I grew up with the musical heritage of copying the Americans, and I'm fed up with copying them.

"I've actually made it, been successful, made money, sold a lot of records, by NOT copying the Americans. By going there and doing something they see as peculiarly quaint and English… they probably laugh at me. I mean, I'm not even English; I'm Scottish, but anything for a laugh.

"If they pay their money to see me because they think I'm quaint, then great, but I'm making them happy on my level and the same thing applies to playing in Britain, I refuse to go on and try to pretend that there's something glamorous about the West Coast of America by doing an English tour wearing buckskins and cowboy boots.

"I remember Ten Years After coming back from doing an American tour, all wearing leather clothes, cowboy hats and all this sort of business (laughter, snickering). English people don't want to see that! They don't want to be reminded of the fact that Joe Popstar has been off to America and been seduced into a pair of leather trousers because it's a fashion over there. It's like coming back from Spain with a sombrero and going into work the next morning.

"So maybe this could explain a part of the success of the new wave, where they perpetuate a self-created identity that everyone can emulate and call their own?

"It would seem that the trend is not to have super-flash equipment, to make do with dirty old amps and to make do with whatever clothes you have on, although obviously a little more care is taken; the carefully placed tears on the t-shirt, it's still nonetheless an attempt to defy the attitude of mind where you HAVE to be specially dressed and specially prepared to go on stage. And it works if you're working on that level of playing clubs, but as soon as you're sitting in First Class and being picked up in limos to do a gig to a few thousand people then it seems a little two faced, a little bit hypocritical to pretend to suffer in your t-shirts and your baseball boots. There's a point where you have to go along with the lifestyle you've created for yourself and you have to start to move with it. I mean, I have clean underwear every day, instead of every week!"

But what if the band maintains their aggression?

IA: "I think that aggressiveness is probably overstated. It's all very well for a Sex Pistol to be aggressive for 45 minute sets; supposing you become very popular and a lot of people want to come and see you, you're Johnny Rotten and you jump on stage at Madison Square Gardens and try and be aggressive for two hours, non-stop… you would water down your physical aggression, or you've got to be in better shape than I am. It can't be non-stop nastiness all the time, because life isn't like that. I mean, goodness me, even Johnny Rotten loves his mum! I'm sure great moments of naïve tenderness sweep over Johnny Rotten as he plucks a Kleenex from the box and mops a shedded tear; even Johnny Rottens have moments of tenderness and they ought to sing about these too."

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Flat At The Fetlock

Where *Songs From The Wood* saw **Jethro Tull** claim back their crown as kings of folk rock, the follow-up, 1978's *Heavy Horses*, found them getting down and dirty in the earth. **Ian Anderson** looks back on the album's creation...

Words: **Philip Wilding** Album portraits: **James Cotier**

From up here you can see the morning mist rising up off the freshly turned earth. The threads of sunshine are turning into beams of light. It's cool, but the day's going to swelter long before midday. In the distance the valley comes slowly into relief, the hill's black edges stark against the blueing sky.

At this time of day, it's deserted except for a figure leading two giant shire horses, hat pulled down hard on his head, doing his best to keep the two beasts with him, traversing the land in straight, parallel lines. A slow half-circle turn and off they go again, this strange trio: mute, two of them hugely muscular, one sinewy and determined, working together.

In the distance, on the far edge of the field, a photographer cradling a camera with a telephoto lens shouts an instruction and the man between the horses jerks his head up, nods a silent affirmation, pulls at the heavy horses and goes again.

"I was holding on – they were very big!" Ian Anderson laughs as he remembers the day-long photo session for what would become the cover of Jethro Tull's 1978 album *Heavy Horses*.

"They were actually pussycats, those two horses – they were very good. The absurdity was that the shots that were taken were from a very long way away. It could have been so much easier. They wanted to get the valley in the background and the brow of the hill to give it some context, so I was a long way off. I had to walk an awful long way with these animals!

"The photographer was way over there somewhere – there was a lot of hollering and shouting. And you had to walk, and then it would be, 'Let's do that again, sorry!' But they were very well behaved. They were the best part of the day – they were nice animals."

The band's 11th studio album came as the decade was ending, a beautiful paean to a time that was fading as quickly as the 70s in which it was created. It's framed, albeit loosely, as the spine of the band's classic folk rock triumvirate, which began with 1977's *Songs From The Wood* and ended with 1979's *Stormwatch*. That's to underplay its elegance and vivacity though.

It could be argued that *Heavy Horses* often gets overlooked simply for not being *Songs From The Wood*, an album that helped define Jethro Tull's elongated musical and creative evolution. But that's to miss the point. In the yearning and sometimes playful *Heavy Horses*, Anderson and his band might have been continuing with some of the familiar tropes of its predecessor, but the record's hankering for a nearly bygone age – not least in the all-encompassing title track – gives it a timeless, magical feel, like finding a trove of old, forgotten photographs.

"It was fairly hot on the heels of the *Songs From The Wood* album," says Anderson today.

It's early evening in London, but dark, the lights of passing cars rushing past the hotel bar's windows. "In my mind, *Heavy Horses* is a logical

Country Music: Ian Anderson on the photo shoot for the *Heavy Horses* cover, 1978.



"*Heavy Horses* is a logical successor to *Songs From The Wood* – not quite part two, but it follows on with that slightly more rural context of its predecessor for a lot of the songs."

successor – not quite part two, but it follows on with that slightly more rural context of its predecessor for a lot of the songs. I remember that *Songs...* was recorded in Morgan Studios, our last time there, and *Heavy Horses* was our first in the new Maison Rouge building, which we'd finished building in time to do the sessions.

"You have to remember, this was at the time punk's final embers were burning out and you had bands like The Police and The Stranglers, who were, collectively speaking, a bunch of old hippies. The brave new world of punk rock had perhaps become commercialised at that point. But bands like those two used punk as a means to get their foot in the door, just as I did with the blues in 1968.

"So from our perspective then, it wasn't that we were vindicated that this new, intrusive music form had somehow ousted us from the public eye and approval, it was just a parallel event. I don't really recall being moved as a music maker by any of those changes in music that were going on. I knew what it was about and I rather liked some of it, but it was entirely separate to what I was writing. I didn't want to try to catch up or be influenced by it. We were still making Jethro Tull albums at that point."

Anderson wrote, as he always did, in snatched moments, some of the album's songs created on the train between his studio in London and his then home in Buckinghamshire.

"I do remember writing on the train, yes," he says. "In most cases the songs for *Heavy Horses* were written before we went into the studio, but sometimes they were written the night before, which is the way I often tend to work: writing things based on yesterday's rehearsal. It will make me rethink something and come up with a new idea or even a new song. I wake up very early in the morning and I work quickly – that's my time to get things done."

The band worked in short, creative bursts in the Maison Rouge studio, Anderson laid low with a head cold for part of the sessions.



SHONA ANDERSON

Jethro Tull, L-R: Barriemore Barlow, Ian Anderson, John Evan, John Glascock, David Palmer, Martin Barre.

"I know some people have a lot of affection for the title track, but when I was recording that, I had a stinker of a cold and when I listen to the opening vocals in the quiet part of the song, I can hear the mucus and the congestion going on through my nose – it almost sounds like it was processed through something. Well, it was, in a way."

So in the midst of decongestants, express trains between the capital and the countryside, and the final, faint traces of punk rock's boom, how did Ian Anderson and Jethro Tull magic up the bucolic pastures of a green and pleasant land that was fast fading in the rear-view mirror of history?

"If I'm honest, I wrote the songs as they came," says Anderson. "It wasn't a concept album – I didn't really have an overall thematic approach. It really was a collection of songs, albeit with a certain sense of tone and mood, and at the end of it, *Heavy Horses* was the one that presented itself somehow. It had this significance and it was a visual reference for the album cover. And it was also, let's not pretend, quite a good title.

"That said, it's unashamedly about something that was lamenting the passing of an age. It's the equivalent of the end of the age of steam or when I do cathedral concerts at Christmas – it's celebrating what's possibly the end of our association with Christianity and the Anglican Church. Those things that you know aren't going to be around very much longer, they do exercise an attraction and an appeal, emotionally and intellectually, because you're having to chronicle something that you know other people are going to look back on and think, 'What on earth was all that about? I've no idea what they were.'

"And that was the kind of thing that was happening with those kinds of horses. Before we released the album, the band had a brush with some heavy horses in terms of pre-publicity, where we went to a brewery to see the dray horses there. They weren't using them as workhorses any more – it was more of a showbiz thing. They kept a few as draft horses for taking the beer, so it was still something they were keeping alive for the tourists and for tradition, but it wasn't there for the daily deliveries any more.

"So I'd met some heavy horses before, and though we [Anderson and his wife] didn't have heavy horses, we had a few horses around the place, so I was pretty comfortable being put in charge of those two monsters. That said, you have to remember that there had been various horses used in cultivation, but there were small, working horses, the pit ponies that pulled coal out of the ground. Working horses are not all necessarily of a larger stature, hence the album's dedication to 'indigenous working ponies and horses of Great Britain.'"

Even with its underpinning pastoral overtones, Anderson also found time to address the leaden travails of modern living in *Journey Man*, a song that surely must have been conjured up on the rattling rails leading from his country home into London.

The animal theme continues with nods to both Anderson's dog and another Jethro Tull song about cats in the shape of *...And The Mouse Police Never Sleep*. Meanwhile, *No Lullaby* is guitarist Martin Barre in full flight, while *Weathercock* marries folk and hard rock to dizzying effect.

That said it's still the title track that casts the longest shadow, and it's



The deluxe reissue of *Heavy Horses*, which comes with three CDs and two DVDs.



Workhorse: Ian Anderson with his equine cover stars.



"Punk was entirely separate to what I was writing – I didn't want to try to catch up or be influenced by it. We were still making Jethro Tull albums at that point."

a song that's endured in the band's live set, even with some minor tweaking.

"I changed it a few years ago," says Anderson, "to bring some other elements into it. I changed some of the lyrics, which is a brave and perhaps silly thing to do, but I wanted to give a little bit more emphasis to put in context that world – I guess, being over 30 years later, it's even less likely to encounter working horses. In fact, right at this moment, there's a lot of pressure on the gene pool for a lot of rare breeds of horses, so it's looking a bit rough for some of them as there are fewer people willing to look after them and so forth.

"The problem is that they're not riding horses – you can't hop on their back and go for a walk; they don't race. They're just an impediment, really, in terms of the fact that they need a lot of land to graze and need to be mucked out and looked after just like any other horse. It's not their fault, but they can't earn their living these days.

"So I thought it'd be nice just to bring in the context, so the second verse now starts with a reference to *'nothing runs like a Deere'*, which is the slogan for the famous John Deere tractors. I'm trying to make the more obvious comparison with today's world where we talk in terms of horsepower, but today's world is full of air-conditioned cabs and hydraulic seats and suspension. It's a very different world, which was just beginning to happen when I got into farming.

"You know, I think there's something to be said for people getting their hands dirty," Anderson continues. "And I think, in a way, there's something more romantic and, dare I say it, something more satisfying at the end of the day about humping bales of hay than humping Marshall cabinets into the back of a transit van. And you get cold and sore hands, but it's good for the soul and it's all tied in with that thing that along the way, and over the years, you've done something, be it farming or whatever.

"But the one thing is that you have to be prepared to get down and dirty and get wet and cold, get back to the earth, to a more traditional way of doing things."

The field looks different now. The earth's freshly turned, the sun high in the sky, but the figures are gone and a tractor idles in the distance, a thin plume of smoke, barely an outline, evaporating in the air.

At the farthest corner of the field stand a pair of heavy horses, indescribably tall, a towering monument to a time passed. Blink and the waves of heat from the earth make them into mirages out at the horizon and for a moment, you can't be sure. You strain to see, but they've gone.

JACK IN THE GRE

Ever contrary, **Jethro Tull**'s enigmatic leader Ian Anderson questions the band's role in the development of folk prog — despite albums like *Songs From The Wood, Heavy Horses* and *Broadsword and The Beast* — Before conceding: "Well, we're hardly Metallica..."

Words: **Malcolm Dome**



IAN ANDERSON LIKES to play mind games. At least, when it comes to the definition of Jethro Tull's style and sound. Ask Anderson whether he believes the band he's proudly led for over 40 years belong within the folk rock genre, and he leads you a merry dance, obviously on one leg.

"Are you asking me this because I'm known as the unplugged guy in a rock band?" he says, with a hint of a glint in his eye.

Anderson likes nothing better than the opportunity to develop themes, and to put his musical aspirations and affectations into context. And he warms to his task here.

"I suppose to most people, folk rock bands are those with lots of delicate acoustic instruments, and are therefore seen as being somewhat quiet. The reality is quite different. Any bands who play acoustically are probably more amped and mic'd up than the heavy acts you'd care to mention. In fact, the whole concept of an artist playing unplugged is a nonsense."

Still the question stands: are Jethro Tull a folk-related band at all?

The argument in favour of a positive response seems unassailable. Not only is there the question of Anderson being a renowned flautist, but over a period of at least three albums – *Songs From The Wood* (1977), *Heavy Horses* (1978) and *Stormwatch* (1979) – the folk influence was considerable. In addition, Steeleye Span singer Maddy Prior guests on the title-track of the 1976 album *Too Old To Rock 'N' Roll, Too Young To Die*! And Tull returned the favour, backing La Prior on her first solo album, *Woman In The Wings*, in 1978.

There's surely little doubt that this band have always hovered on the edges of the folk-related movement; even that name, Jethro Tull, comes from an 18th century agriculturist. An interesting change in musical emphasis, then, for a band who began as a blues-oriented outfit.

"These genre-specific tags have never meant much to me," shrugs Anderson. "They're for the convenience of us all, be it media, musicians or fans, as a way of identifying easily and readily where any artists sits in the contemporary scene. But what does it mean? If you think about it, we won a Grammy in 1989 for *Crest Of A Knave* in the heavy metal category (Best Hard Rock/Metal Performance Vocal or Instrumental). Does that mean Jethro Tull are a metal band? We've had our rocking moments, but…well, we are hardly Metallica."

A man not unknown for skirting the issue, the Tull leader wants to be clear that he's not distancing himself from folk rock, so much as the idea of allowing his band to be so readily bagged.

"If you think about it, then artists like Steeleye Span have got a connection to us. But I like to believe we are a little spikier and more edgy than bands like that. But what I appreciate about the folk idiom is that it implies a more organic approach to music. So, from that perspective I can understand why we are put into the category.

"However, from my viewpoint I have always seen this band as being outside of the box. Hopefully, we don't fit comfortably into any category because whatever others may think, I have never thought of Jethro Tull as being tied to doing anything through necessity."

While Anderson might protest about being too closely allied to folk rock, nonetheless there's a clear relationship between the way he sets about making music, and the historical view of folk as artistic expression.

Traditionally, folk artists have been prepared to use their music to make value judgements about society. Going back to the days before recorded music, these travelling talents were sometimes the only way people in outlying villages and towns could find out what was happening in the bigger world. Therefore, they became rather more than entertainers. They were social commentators and reporters. It's something Anderson has done throughout his career.

Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson on his Strathaird Estate, Isle Of Skye, 1979.

EN

"I've always believed that songwriters should never be afraid to tackle the big issues of the day. I like to think, for instance, that I was ahead of everyone when it came to warnings about the climate situation.

"I wrote *Skating Away On The Thin Ice Of The New Day* in 1974 (for the album *War Child*) about the way scientists feared the imminent onset of a new ice age. Of course, they got it the wrong way round. We weren't about to be enveloped in sheets of ice because, as we now know, the opposite is true. However, the principle remains unchanged. I was taking a classic folk route, using music to spread the word about an issue which will affect us all."

Anderson continues to do this even today, believing that there are significant messages to get across.

"Right now, we are facing a crisis over the growing global population which, if it goes unchecked, will use up our resources at a frightening rate. When I recorded *Songs* ➔➔

"I'VE ALWAYS SEEN TULL AS BEING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX, WE'VE NEVER BEEN TIED TO ANYTHING OUT OF NECESSITY."

IAN ANDERSON

MARTYN GODDARD/GETTY



Horslips: the reel deal.

Dancehall Sweethearts

Often billed as the Irish Tull, Horslips paved the way for Celtic rock.

It says much for the reputation of Horslips that, at the height of their popularity in the late 1970s, they could play shows in Northern Ireland and also south of the border, when the sectarian troubles were rife. No other Irish act could do this.

Originally called Horslypse, the band started in 1970 and over 10 years released nine studio albums, which drew heavily from Irish legends and folklore, meticulously researched by the band. Musically, they were the godfathers of Celtic rock, using Irish jigs and reels throughout their repertoire. With roots buried deeply in the folk music of Ireland Horslips were often compared to Jethro Tull, even if they never had quite the level of success enjoyed by Ian Anderson and his troupe.

Jim Lockhart, Eamon Carr, Charles O'Connor, Barry Devlin and Johnny Fean split in October 1980. The final song they played live was, aptly enough, the Rolling Stones' *The Last Time*.

The band got back together in 2004, to play acousticly at a Horslips exhibition in Derry. The same year they recorded *Roll Back*, a collection of past songs unplugged. Over the next couple of years the band made two TV appearances, but this was far from a full reunion. However, this has now happened.

With only Carr missing – for personal reasons – the band will appear at the Odyssey Arena in Belfast on December 3 and the O2 Arena in Dublin December 5. These are the first public shows Horslips have done in 29 years.

But that's not all. Talking Elephant Records have just reissued three of their albums – *The Táin* (1973) *The Book Of Invasions: A Celtic Symphony* (1976) and *The Man Who Built America* (1978) – with more releases on the horizon. **MD**

ANDERSON: BARRY PLUMMER; HORSLIPS: GETTY



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Anderson, backstage in 1982.

From The Wood, the population was about half what it is now. Anyone reading this should be shocked. But it's true.

"As an artist, I feel it my duty to be a voice for reason through my music. This allows me to inform and maybe educate. Not to hector or push people into a course of action, but to ensure that this subject becomes the focus of debate.

"Is this a folkish thing to do? I believe it should be. It's no good the older generation, of which I am part, simply saying, 'I'll be dead by the time this becomes a crisis'. No, we are the generation who created the problem, and we swept it under the carpet. We owe it to generations to come to help clear it up – if it hasn't already gone too far."

Anderson uses this device to explain how, perhaps, he is more of a folk purist than many who profess allegiance to the cause.

"For me, songs are of particular interest when they tell the stories of people in a situation. Sometimes that context is a little surprising; it's fascinating for me to see how these characters I've created react to variables. In all honesty, to give it a painting perspective, I like landscapes, not portraits. I am like the 20th century Scottish artist, Sir William Russell Flint. He painted nude models, and then put them into a pre-prepared landscape. It was an early form of Photoshop."

This is a man who, in a previous interview with this writer, proclaimed:

"I don't play it safe. Of course, I'm jaundiced. Anybody would be fed up with the airy-fairy people that rock collects. So much of it is style without content. Any taint of an Elton John or a John Denver situation is horrendous. Once you get the middle-of-the-road disease, you've lost that pure, rebellious, aggressive stance you once had."

He still has that same desire to keep on challenging himself and the perception of Jethro Tull.

"I believe my career has been defined by a series of small steps forward. One achieves a number of limited successes. But these aren't the sort that give you any feeling of achievement – or, at least they shouldn't. The period from the mid-to-late 1970s (when Tull were immersed in what is regarded as their most obvious folk regimen) I'd see as somewhat satisfying. We set out to make a certain type of album, and did exactly that.

"But the interesting thing in this respect is that, if you ask most people what sort of a band Jethro Tull are, would the answer be a folk rock one? I believe not. To those who've heard of us, we are probably a progressive band. Some might even suggest we are just a little too clever for our own good, and there would also be a few critics who would claim we just are way too bombastic and up our own arse. The folk thing… that would be way down the list."

Yet, there are young bands these days – Blood Ceremony come to mind – who are clearly inspired by the more folky leanings of Jethro Tull. Which, of itself, means that side of the band is perhaps more obvious to some than it may be to Anderson.

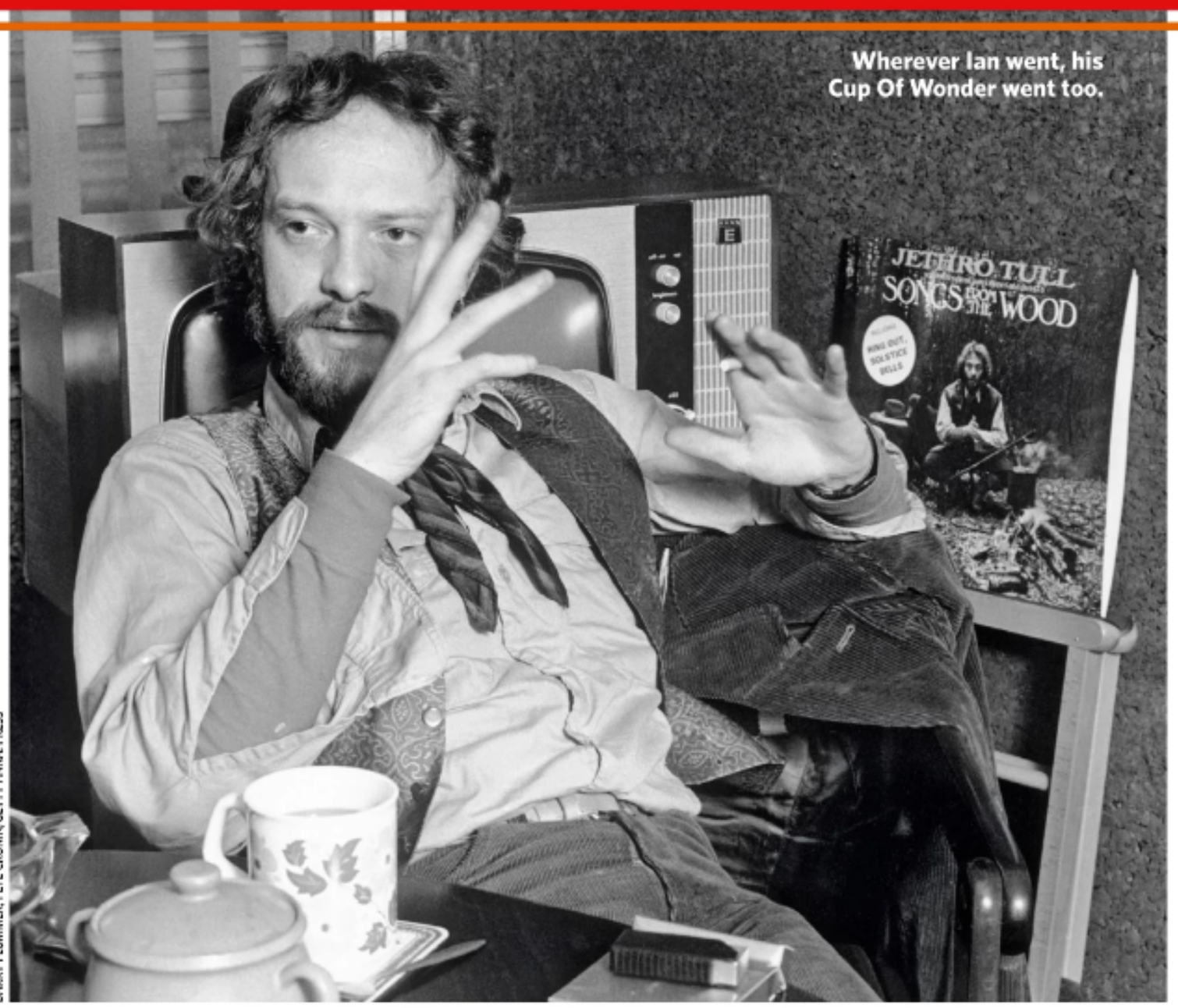
"Well, I do find it rather pleasing that a new generation of musicians is looking towards Jethro Tull for some sort of guidance. However, I'm none too certain this is down to our folk period. I believe there's another, altogether more important reason why we are looked upon so favourably."

For Anderson, the real triumph of Jethro Tull has been in achieving a career, with barely any compromise to industry mores and demands.

"We are perhaps the greatest proof that you can build a decent catalogue, and earn a reasonable living by carving out your own niche. We have never been trendy. We have never been cool.

"WE'RE A PROGRESSIVE BAND – BUT SOME CRITICS WOULD JUST CLAIM WE ARE TOO UP OUR OWN ARSE."

Ian Anderson



BARRY PLUMMER, PETE CRONIN/GETTY ANNA-PRESS



Broadsword-era Tull, 1983. From left, Martin Barre, Dave Pegg, Peter Vettese and Ian Anderson.

We have almost always ignored what our record labels, management and booking agents wanted.

"In fact, I'd go so far to admit that, on the odd occasions when I did try to deliberately write a commercial song, it failed. I know there are a lot of people, especially in America, who like *Bungle In The Jungle* (from *War Child*), but to me it didn't work. I'm at my best when left to create something without thinking about trends… just through being organic."

Anderson is a man with a keen sense of humour, and is prepared to play musical practical jokes on an unsuspecting media. Many of which are actually the cause of misconceptions that he finds diverting. None more so that the song *Too Old To Rock 'N' Roll, Too Young To Die*, which was released in 1976, just prior to Tull's folk-related era.

"I think there were more than a few journalists at the time who saw our move towards folk as an admission that we were taking to heart the title of that track! We were indeed too old for heavier music, and therefore had to find a more tranquil path – so they believed.

"However, I wrote that song as something of a parody on the media. The line came to me when I was on a particularly bad flight. I thought the plane was going to crash, and I would die. At that moment, it made me think that I'd become too old for this rock'n'roll game. When I survived, the idea for the song began to take shape. I threw it out as a morsel to those in the media who were keen to chew us up and spit us out. They saw this as an opportunity to rip into Jethro Tull. The reality was that, as I wrote it in an ironic fashion, they really had missed the point. Not for the first time, the joke was on them – and they weren't bright enough to realise. Of course when our next album was *Songs From The Wood*, they all felt we had succumbed to old age!

"The relationship between Jethro Tull and the media has always been an uneasy one. We don't play their game. We don't conform. The greatest legacy we have given to music is the hope that you can plough your own furrow and cultivate a decent crop, sufficient to keep the wolf from the door, and to keep yourself from starving."

Jethro Tull And Me

Violinist Anna Phoebe, best known for her work with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, reveals why she loves playing with Jethro Tull.



"Playing with Jethro Tull is definitely a musical highlight of my career so far. Ian Anderson has become a mentor and a bit of an icon for me – his whole approach to music (and the music business!) is inspirational. Classics like *Aqualung* and *Locomotive Breath* are a real honour to play – I love the intricate structures and arrangements and the fact that there is so much drama in the music and lyrics. Jethro Tull redefined how a classical instrument can be used, blending it with rock and other genres, and paving the way for countless bands to come – and 40 years later they are still touring and recording! Love it!"

But the question still hovers ever present: do Jethro Tull accept their definition as a progressive band with folk leanings? Or, are they a folk rock band with progressive tendencies? Or…

"None of that is relevant to me. When we went did *Aqualung* (1971), we were called a prog rock band, and that album is still seen as a concept piece. However many times I state in interviews that it was not conceptual, people still believe what they want to believe. So, when I insist that we are not, and never have been, a folk rock band, the same happens. Just because we've done records in that vein? Well, then, how about the albums A (1980), *The Broadsword And The Beast* (1982) and *Under Wraps* (1984)? They had an electronic influence, so were we therefore an electro-synth band by then? Of course not.

"It's a case of degrees. You take a direction, adapt a style to suit your palette and move on. But there are those who get hung up on the flute, and the fact that I am supporter of much to do with England. We are an open, inviting, liberal society, and I find that worth championing. So, for superficial purposes, it's easy: reedless wind instrument, a celebration of English values…they must be folk."

Ian Anderson still feels he is fighting a battle to preserve the integrity of his band and to correctly put his career into perspective. It appears to be a situation he actually relishes, even though he is now 62.

"I have always enjoyed characters in songs. I can't write something that has a beginning, middle and end, because what interests me is the middle part. That moment when someone is changed by, or reacts to, a situation. Yes, there is something whimsical about much of what I do, but it also has colour and theatricality.

"I have never understood why talented people shy away from being articulate and intelligent in their writing and communication. I express a lot through paintings. I am also ready to invoke a link between science and music. So, I have the traditional values, which might tie me somewhat to folk, but I am also very modern, which differentiates me."

Jethro Tull have, through a continuing willingness to evolve and reinvent themselves, successfully become a niche in their own right. Their appeal is diverse and wide; fans connect to selected parts of the whole. But the overall impression is of a band who have survived, because they cannot be tied down.

"If we had been a different type of group, then we'd have stayed where we were in the 1970s, and continued to make those sort of folk-related albums," says Anderson. "But I'd also say that if we were the sort of musicians who were happy to stand still, then we'd never have gotten that far. Jethro Tull would have remained a blues band, as we were in those very early days.

"You understand the dilemma? It's precisely our desire for growth that pushed us to making all these different types of records. So, anyone who is disappointed that we never stayed in one area should understand they want us to have been the sort of band who'd have denied them those albums anyway!"

Jethro Tull – perhaps the best example of a true folk band. In that they have embraced the environment, in musical, artistic and scientific senses. Let's face it, folk music itself has never stood still down the centuries. But Anderson will always argue with that statement.

ELECTRIC DREAMS

After a wobbly end to the 70s, **Jethro Tull** entered the new decade with a new line up and shiny new electronic sound. But rather than a brave new world, what followed would become the most controversial period in their history.

It was two weeks before Christmas 1984 when Ian Anderson finally lost the battle with his own throat. Jethro Tull were on tour in Australia in support of their most recent album, *Under Wraps*, a record that had caused widespread disgruntlement among fans due to its prevalence of synthesisers, sequencers and, most heretical of all, a drum machine.

The tour was better received than the record, thanks to a stage set that featured the band emerging, literally, from under wraps, along with moonwalking astronauts and women bursting out of large paper bags. For Anderson, though, the shows had been a trial for very different reasons. He had pushed his voice to the edge of its limits in the studio, not realising the toll performing these new songs every night would take on him. By the time Tull reached the US that autumn, his strained larynx was starting to give out, necessitating the cancellation of a handful of shows.

Rather than pull the subsequent Australian leg, the frontman elected to plough on regardless – a decision he would come to regret. He managed six shows Down Under before it became too difficult to sing. Reluctantly, the remaining gigs were scrapped, along with any further dates in support of the album.

"I absolutely wrecked my voice on that tour," says Anderson today. "That was really traumatic for me personally and expensive in terms of cancellation and reimbursements to promoters."

Doctors advised him to rest his voice for several months or risk ruining it completely. In his younger, more bullish days, he would probably have ignored them. But nearing 40, he knew better than to risk it. "I was scared into submission, and decided not to do any concerts for some time to come," he says. "I think it's true to say that I've never felt my voice was the same again. I'd gone beyond where I should have and really had to settle for second best."

Anderson's throat problems would precipitate a lengthy break that effectively sidelined Tull for three years. But it also marked the end of a period that had seen Tull's leader attempt to drag the band's sound into the technological age. Even with the benefit of hindsight, the early 80s remains the most controversial era of Jethro Tull's career - but also the most fascinating.

> **"You could be a Luddite and ignore these new instruments, or say 'Let's give it a spin.'"**
> Ian Anderson

The 1970s had ended on a downbeat note for Jethro Tull. While the band remained a big live draw, especially in the US, their album sales were slowly slipping – 1979's foreboding *Stormwatch* was first Tull record in a decade that failed to make the Top 20 on either side of the Atlantic. On a more personal level, they had been rocked by the death of bassist John Glascock, who died as a result of congenital heart problems at the age of 29, while Anderson's father had passed away around the same time.

"It was a slightly strange time," says Anderson now. "We had lost John Glascock, my father had died, there were a couple of guys in the band who were starting to get a little restless, the fact that we had come to the end of decade… So I made the decision to go and do something fresh."

That 'something fresh' was a solo album, one that would allow Anderson to experiment with sounds and styles far removed the prog-folk genre he had long been associated with. "It was really just a question of having played in Jethro Tull from the late 60s to that point and feeling the urge to try something different."

The new songs Anderson was writing pivoted away from Jethro Tull's traditional sound. He was increasingly enamoured by leaps in musical technology and the people utlising it – not least synth-pop star Gary Numan, who Anderson later described as "amazing… I saw him on 'Top Of The Pops' and wanted to hate him, but I realised how important he was."

"There was always something a little bit new in what Jethro Tull did," he insists today. "We had used an early AMS Synthesiser on *Thick As A Brick*. But suddenly at the threshold of the 80s, you had an array of keyboards that could be persuaded to do what you wanted – well, tortured into submission."

Not everyone was impressed with Anderson's new direction. "I was dissatisfied with the state of affairs, musically and morally, in Jethro

GETTY





Tull rebooted: with new keyboard player Peter-John Vetesse, right.

Tull," drummer Barriemore Barlow later said. "And I thought the new music Ian was writing was not very good." In truth, Barlow was already agitating to leave the band, telling Anderson that he was putting together a new project, though his departure would come sooner than either party expected.

Anderson's notional, if temporary, break with the band he had founded wasn't total. He retained the services of former Fairport Convention bassist Dave Pegg, recruited to replace John Glascock on the *Stormwatch* tour after the latter was deemed to ill to play. "Dave hadn't actually recorded with us, he was a Jethro Tull studio virgin, as it were, so I thought I'd ask him to play on these songs," he says.

> **"I was dissatisfied with the state of affairs in Tull. And I thought the music Ian was writing was not very good."**
>
> Barriemore Barlow

But initially his other collaborators were nothing to do with his regular band. The star signing was Eddie Jobson, the former Roxy Music keyboard player and violinist whose recent outfit, UK, had supported Tull on tour. "I asked if he fancied doing some work together," says Anderson. Jobson agreed, and brought along his friend, American drummer Mark Craney.

The singer and his new colleagues began work on the mooted solo album, titled *A* (for Anderson), in the summer of 1980 at the singer's own Maison Rouge studio in London.

As we started working, I thought, 'It would be good to have guitar on this song', so I called [Tull guitarist] Martin Barre, who's really the only guitarist I know, because I don't really move in musician circles," says Anderson. "So he came to work on a song, and then another, and he ended up being on the whole album."

The presence of Jobson and Craney in the studio alongside Anderson, Barre and Pegg was catnip for music papers looking for an explosive headline. In May 1980, the British weekly *Melody Maker* ran a front page story claiming that Barriemore Barlow, John Evans and David Palmer had been sacked from Jethro Tull. It was dubbed 'The Big Split' by the press.

Barlow, for one, was furious. "I went fucking mental," he later recalled. "Ian had sent a note of apology before it came out, but I thought, 'Hell it can't be that bad.' But of course it was."

Anderson refuted claims that the trio had been sacked, insisting that this new line-up was a one-off and that Jobson and Craney were purely guest musicians, to little avail. It didn't help that Chrysalis had pushed him into releasing *A* under the Jethro Tull name.

"At that point it was sounding less like a solo album and more like a band album. And technically it had three members of Jethro Tull on it. So when the record company heard the music they were reluctant to go down the route of it being a solo album. I allowed my arm to be twisted to release it as a Jethro Tull album, which was a mistake and a disservice to the other guys who had been in the band because they suddenly felt they were now no longer members."

The decision to record with outsiders had hastened the departure of Barlow. John Evan and David Palmer followed him out of the door.

"I wrote to the other guys, saying, 'Listen, I'm afraid is this is coming out as a Jethro Tull album', and tried to apologise – badly," says Anderson. "But obviously they were upset and they never came back."

The state of confusion surrounding this latest incarnation of Jethro Tull was nothing compared to the reaction of longtime fans who heard *A* when it was released at the end of August 1980. The cover image – the band in lab coats, gazing out of the window of what could have been a spaceship – at least gave fair warning as to what to expect.

Gone was the elemental approach of the recent 'Folk Trilogy', while the grandstanding prog rock of *Thick Of A Brick* was nowhere to heard. Lyrically, Anderson was as scalpel-sharp as always, but



Ian Anderson and Martin Barre onstage in October 1980: note "absurd" white jumpsuit.

GETTY X3

plinking keyboards of *Crossfire* and *Batteries Not Included* were less Kraftwerk, more Kraft cheese. There were moments of brilliance, notably the twisting *Black Sunday*, although the folksy *The Pine Marten's Jig* felt like a sop to the devotees.

The subsequent tour was no less of a shock to the system. Anderson insisted that the band appear on stage in Devo-like white jumpsuits, looking like a bunch of befuddled lab technicians who had wandered into the wrong venue. "It was an absurd idea, made worse by the fact that these things instantly became transparent as soon as you sweated in them," says Anderson now.

The exception was Eddie Jobson. "Eddie had made it very clear that he was a guest musician, that he wasn't a member of the band, and he was billed as such. He insisted on having a jumpsuit in a different colour so he stood out from everybody else."

While band were well drilled, fans were less than convinced. It was Jobson who was the but of their ire, at least according to Anderson.

"They didn't much like Eddie," the singer says today. "He was a little bit too preening. He had that Brian Eno thing about him, and our crowd had totally hated Roxy Music when they opened for us at Madison Square Garden years before. There was definitely a change in temperature from the audience, but it wasn't aimed at the band as a whole – they just didn't like Eddie."

In truth, they didn't much like what Jethro Tull had become either. If this was the sound of the future, Ian Anderson could keep it.

If the singer hoped people saw *A* the same way as he did – as a bold, experimental one-off – he would be disappointed. His next move would be to edge slightly back towards safer ground.

To replace Evan and Palmer, Anderson recruited a young keyboard player who would help give focus to his new musical explorations. The 26-year-old Peter-John Vetesse was a former member of jazz-fusion band Solaris who joined Jethro Tull after spotting a classic 'musician wanted' advertisement in *Melody Maker*.

"Peter was energetic, full of life. And he hailed from my part of the world, which was Scotland," says Anderson now.

Vetesse's attributes were more than just geographical. He was musically astute and knowledgeable in the new technologies that Anderson was interested in. Vetesse signed up for Tull in time to work on the band's 14th album, *The Broadsword And The Beast*, and his impact was immediate.

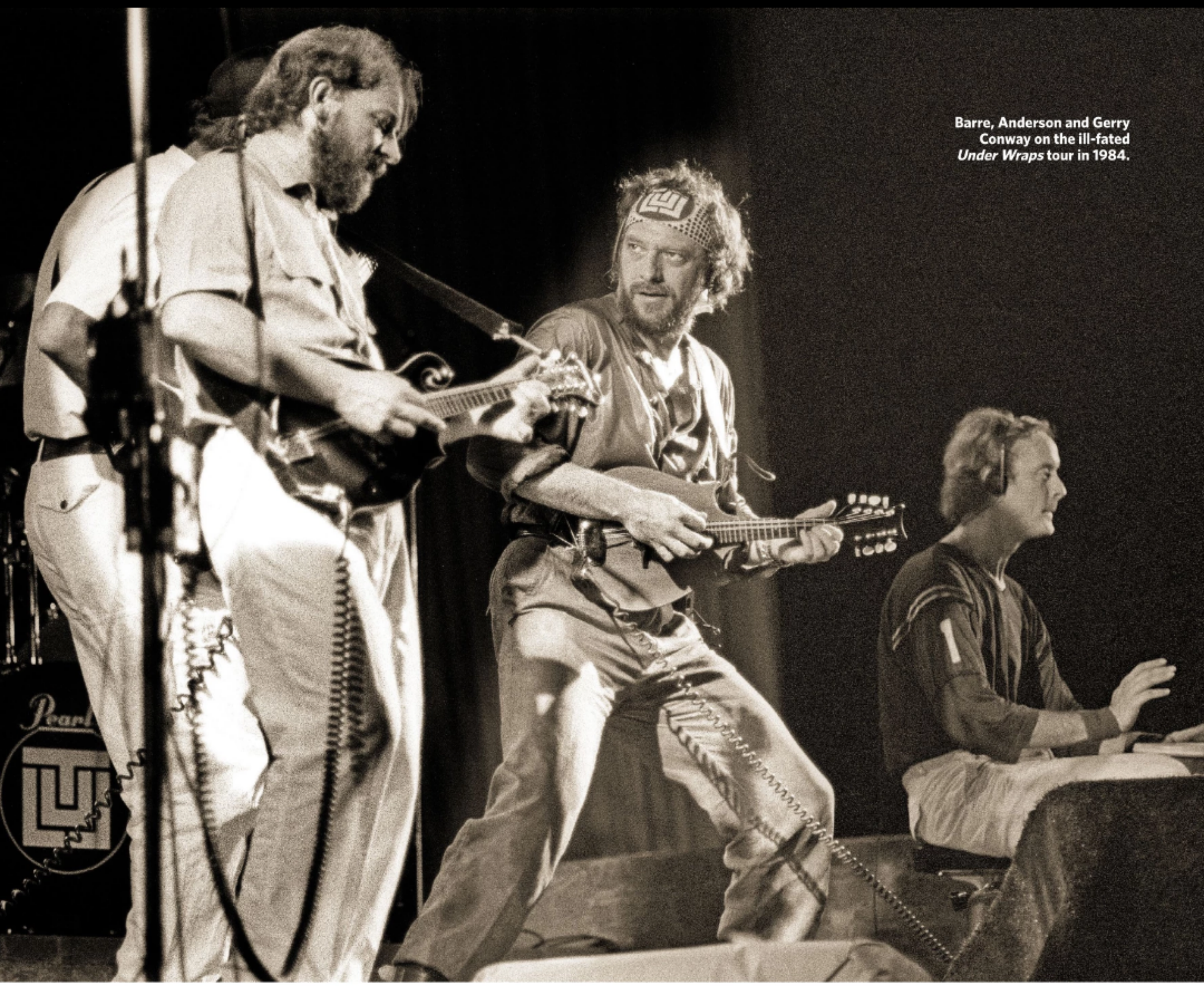
"He was very quick to grasp a musical idea and try to get to the nub of it. And he didn't waffle around noodling with different sounds. He always had an idea as to how we would get to a certain point fairly quickly where we settled on a particular musical line."

If *A* was the sound of Ian Anderson stepping out of his comfort zone, then the follow-up found him rowing at least partially back. The electronic flourishes of *A* were still there, augmented on some tracks by a drum

>

"I allowed my arm to be twisted to release *A* as a Tull album, which was a disservice to the other guys who had been in the band."

Ian Anderson



Barre, Anderson and Gerry Conway on the ill-fated *Under Wraps* tour in 1984.

machine (though flesh and blood new recruit Gerry Conway did most of the heavy lifting drum-wise), but it was offset by a windswept Celtic atmosphere, exemplified by the epic sweep of the track *Broadsword*.

"At the time I was living some of the year on the Isle Of Skye, in the wilds off the west coast of Scotland, facing the sea," said Anderson of the song in 1982. "In times gone by, the Viking longships came up the sea lochs of Scotland to pillage and plunder and generally have their wicked way with the locals. And so it was just this notion of sometimes standing on a headland and imagining this longship coming up the loch."

The Broadsword And The Beast got a better reception from fans than its predecessor when it was released in April 1982. Certainly, it was a more confident record. Songs like *Beastie*, *Pussywillow* and *Slow Marching Band* – the latter of which could be read as a dig at the departed Barriemore Barlow – bridged old and new Tull, though the band's more intractable followers were still having none of this new-fangled technology (a pair of outtakes from the album, *Jack Frost And The Hooded Crow* and *Jack A Lynn*, were much more in tune with the band's 70s sound, though they were conspicuously kept in the vaults for another decade).

> **"*Under Wraps* has great songs on it. It was just that wretched drum machine relentlessly boring a hole in your skull."**
>
> Ian Anderson

Still, any affinity for the album was strengthened by the subsequent tour, which found Anderson cheekily playing out his Viking fantasies. A mock-longship was part of the stage set, while the singer wielded an eight-foot broadsword with impressive deftness. It wasn't all ninth century theatrics, though – during *Watching Me Watching You*, a group of roadies in white coats trooped onstage, eventually joined by a man in a giant rabbit suit.

If the job of *The Broadsword And The Beast* was to restore fans' faith in Jethro Tull, it worked, But its commercial impact was mixed.

"The Broadsword And The Beast was our most successful selling record in Germany ever, yet it was a it was a dead duck in the USA," says Anderson. "It's not like it was just as simple as the fact that Americans didn't like the sound of those songs. It had to do with a lot of the realities of the music business: the change in American radio, even the move from radio into MTV, which didn't work terribly well for Jethro Tull."

If the album's reception in America had been disappointing, at least Anderson's newfound musical partnership Peter-John Vetesse was proving fruitful. Such was the pair's rapport that Anderson elected to take another run at a solo album, this time with the keyboard player's help.

"The expectation was for it to be the solo record that *A* turned out not to be," he says. "I wanted it to be a bit more sparse and the idea of just doing it between the two of us seemed like a more attractive thing. And that's the way we made the album, really – just the two of us."

Released in 1982 and credited to Anderson, *Walk Into Light* was more radical than anything the singer had put his name too before, including *A*. The cover – a newly-shorn Anderson framed by stark, Test Card-style imagery – gave some indication of its musical direction. This was



The wheel thing: Anderson at home in Scotland during Tull's hiatus.

GETTY X2

more Ultravox than Jethro Tull, an album of stark, largely electronic songs. Putting aside the provenance of the man whose name is on the cover, it's a surprisingly assured record, the likes of *Fly By Night* and *Made In England* pointing forward to a brave new future.

"I could have made an album of me singing and playing the flute, but that seemed too obvious," Anderson later recalled. "I wanted to get away from what I was known for."

That certainly worked – perhaps too well. Jethro Tull fans ignored *Walk Into Light* in their droves. Anderson had finally scratched the solo itch, though if anyone thought he had got his fascination with new technology out of his system, they would be mistaken.

The singer reconvened Jethro Tull in the Spring of 1984. "Suddenly becoming a band again was nice after having done an album that was rather more sparse and down in feel, as the solo album had been," he says.

But there was one notable absence. For the first time in their career, Jethro Tull were recording an album without a drummer. Instead, Anderson had elected to use a new LinnDrum drum machine, then at the cutting edge of digital tech. "It was a regular session, except for the fact there wasn't a drummer present," says Anderson.

Where *The Broadsword And The Beast* had felt like a welcome compromise towards fans, there was no such effort made with *Under Wraps*. It might have been a Jethro Tull album in the way that *A* wasn't, but it's synthetic approach marked it out as a logical successor to *Walk Into Light* rather than *TBATB*.

"To most Tull fans the idea of us sounding like a cross between The Police and Thomas Dolby was a little bit of a stretch in credibility," says Anderson. "The fact was, we did it rather well, Not as well as The Police and Thomas Dolby, perhaps, but you know, rather well."

Today, *Under Wraps* is widely regarded as the worst Jethro Tull album, a reputation that's not entirely deserved. While its sound and production date-stamp it to the mid-80s, the songs and themes running through it – "spies, secrecy and subterfuge," according to Anderson, inspired by his love of writers such as John le Carré and Ted Allbeury – were classic Tull. An acoustic version of the title track, featuring Dave Pegg on stand-up bass, and released on a 2005 reissue of, pulls back the synthetic curtain to reveal the beating heart of Anderson's music.

> **"I wrecked my voice. That was really traumatic for me personally and expensive in terms of reimbursements."**
>
> Ian Anderson

"The one regrettable thing about that album is that wretched drum machine relentlessly boring a hole in your skull, because it's got some great songs on it," says Ian Anderson. "And it was one of Martin Barre's most inspired moments of guitar playing. I think in a way he felt that he didn't have to worry about keeping time with a drummer who was never perfect. All he had to worry about was playing the right notes. If Steven Wilson ever has a passion for wanting to remix *Under Wraps*, I would agree on one condition: that he finds a drummer."

Predictably, *Under Wraps* didn't go down well among the Tull faithful. For Anderson, a more worrying matter was the loss of his voice on the subsequent tour. After the cancelled Australian tour, he returned to the UK to focus not on the band but on his trout farms in Scotland, and "recharging his spiritual batteries."

It would be almost three years before Jethro Tull fully returned to the fray. When they did, with 1987's *Crest Of A Knave*, it was in much altered form – or at least a form that was more recognisable to longtime fans of the band. The album largely dialled back the electronic diversions of the 80s, replacing it with a warm, earthy sound that echoed contemporary giants Dire Straits, not least on the album's highlight, the slow-burning 10-minute epic *Budapest*.

Crest Of A Knave was an unexpected success, selling more than a million copies in the US and, infamously, beating Metallica to a Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Grammy Award. More importantly, for Tull fans it successfully wiped away the memories of what many saw as an aberrant dalliance with technology Jethro Tull had no right to be using. Today, Anderson remains aware of the flaws of the albums he put out in the early 80s. But there's also a stubborn pride to the way he views them.

You could be a Luddite and ignore these new instruments, or you could say, 'Well, let's give it a spin, let's see what it'll do.' And so I chose the latter course," says Anderson. "You have to push the boundaries sometimes."

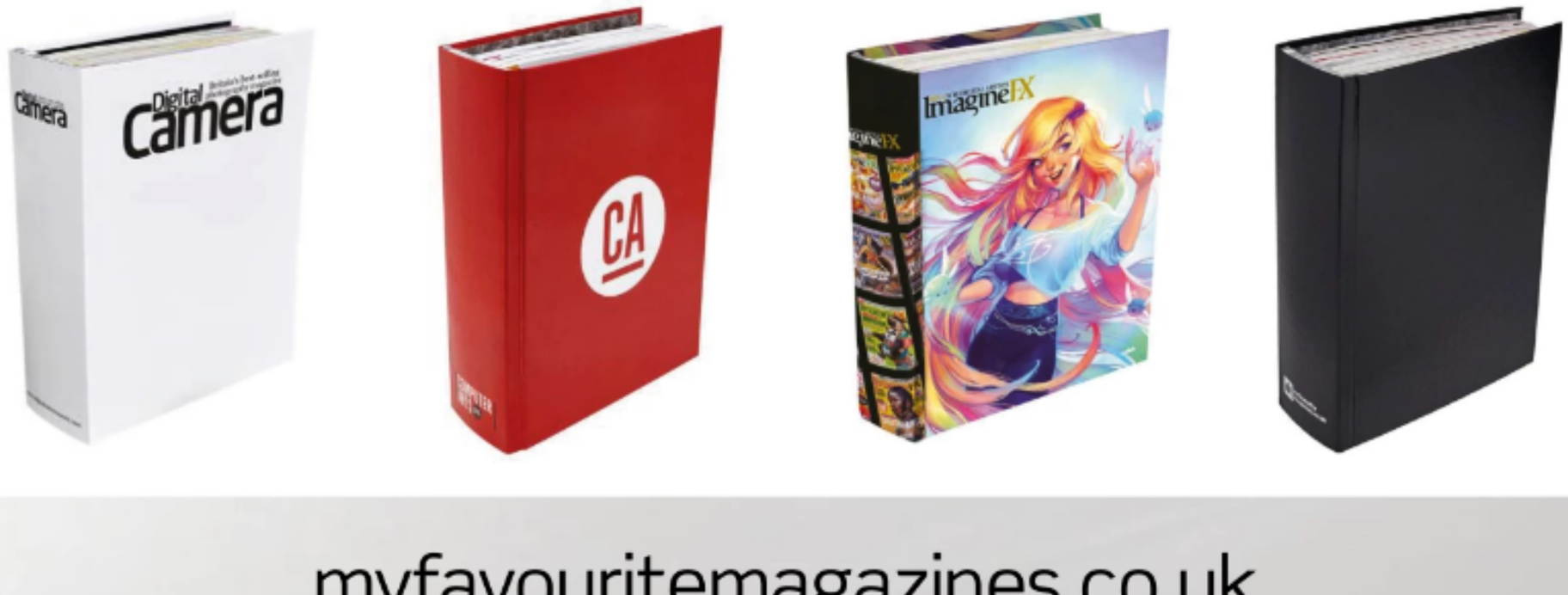
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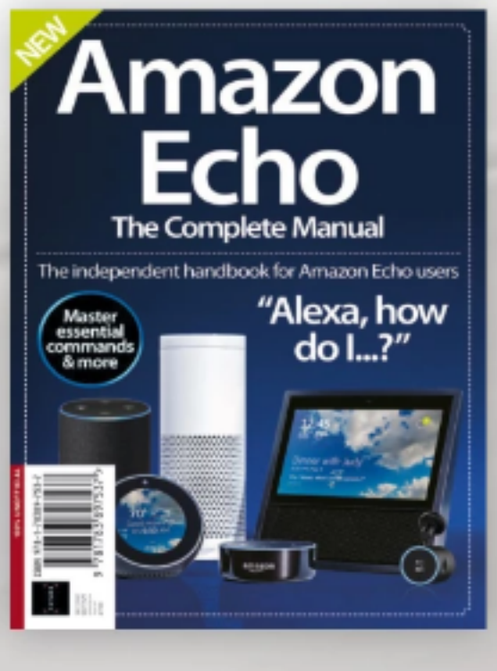




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Ian Anderson in the late 80s: emphatically not a heavy metal singer.

The Gong Show

On February 22, 1989, **Jethro Tull** beat hot favourites Metallica to the inaugural Best Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Grammy. Cue one of the most infamous nights in both bands' careers.

Words: **Johnny Black**

The Grammy Awards have often been criticised for some of their less-inspired choices of winners, and certainly for not having their finger anywhere near the pulse when it comes to rock music.

In 1989, in an attempt to show they were at least attempting to be 'down with the kids', the Grammys introduced a new category: Best Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Recording. All good so far.

However, on February 22, when Metallica, Iggy Pop, Jane's Addiction and the year's other major contenders in the new category showed up for the Grammy Awards ceremony at The Shrine in Los Angeles, none of them could possibly have expected that, when award presenter Alice Cooper opened the envelope and began "And the winner is…" the award for Best Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Recording of 1989 would go to a folksy, flute-fronted prog rock band: the decidedly non-metal, far from hard-rocking Jethro Tull.

Yes, you can laugh. Many there on the night certainly did.

Chris Wright (founder, Chrysalis Records, Tull's label): 1989 was the first year of the Heavy Metal Grammy. Chrysalis Records in America was based in Los Angeles at that time, but I don't think there was one single person in the company who thought, hang on a minute, Jethro Tull might win the Heavy Metal award. I don't think we were even expecting it to be awarded live on the show.

Ian Anderson (leader, Jethro Tull): Perhaps because we were five nice men who had never won a Grammy before, the voting members of NARAS [National Academy of Recording Arts And Sciences] decided we should receive a nomination. It's a peer group award from people in the industry – producers, musicians, record company professionals – who give the award; it's not six panellists on *The X Factor*.

Lars Ulrich: Some three weeks before the awards, all those who are 'in touch' – the critics, the day-to-day involved people – assumed that Metallica would walk away with the award. It's easy for the in-touch people to think that, but remember that most of the academy, who vote for the nominees, are in the age group of 40 to 60, and are very much less in tune with what goes on in the music scene.

C Michael Greene (Then President, NARAS): Grammy bashing is one of the easiest sports in the world.

Ian Anderson: The hot ticket was Metallica, in this newly introduced category of Hard Rock/Metal. I was told by our record company, by the then-head of Chrysalis in the USA, not to bother going, which is a euphemism for: "We're not going to pay your air fare or get you a hotel, because we don't think you're going to win."

It was assumed that we would not win because we were up against Metallica and Iggy Pop and Jane's Addiction. So we were definitely the odd ones out, because we were more commonly thought of as a folk rock band, certainly not hard rock or heavy metal.

Alice Cooper (Grammy Awards presenter): We went to the Shrine Auditorium for rehearsals that day, and that involved opening an envelope with a dummy card inside, which has a name on it. But it's never the name of the real winner, it just gives you something to read out. I think, during rehearsal, the name on that card was Jethro Tull, so I read it out.

Later that night we're doing the real thing, and we come to this brand new category, Hard Rock/Heavy Metal. I knew that [Tull's album] *Crest Of A Knave* had been nominated, but everybody in that room was certain that Metallica would get the Grammy.

Lita Ford: I got to read out the nominations, and then it was Alice that opened the envelope. I remember he reached in his jacket pocket and, instead of pulling out the envelope, he pulled out a snake and handed it to me. Then I realised it was a rubber snake, so I threw it out into the audience while he was opening the envelope. Then they threw it back at me and I had to throw it out there again, which was really funny.

"Everybody thought I was doing a joke. I said: 'No, I'm not kidding. Jethro Tull.'"

Award presenter Alice Cooper

Alice Cooper: I opened the envelope, and when I saw the name, I thought they'd given me the envelope from the rehearsal. I looked at it again, and it did have a different seal on it and details like that. It was the real thing. So I said: "For the Best Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Grammy… Jethro Tull!"

Lita Ford: If you watch the video, you'll see my eyes get real big when Alice says: "Jethro Tull". I was trying not to show any emotion, but it was like, "What?!" It was a shock to everybody when Alice read out Jethro Tull's name.

Metallica were standing right there, all ready to go on, and they were sure in their heads that they'd got it.

Alice Cooper: There was a two-minute pause, then everybody broke out laughing. They thought I was doing a joke. I said: "No, I'm not kidding. Jethro Tull." There was this huge sort of *Springtime For Hitler* gasp from the audience. Because the contenders were really well-known metal acts like Metallica and AC/DC.

Chris Wright: *Crest Of A Knave*, obviously, wasn't a heavy metal record. There are very few Jethro Tull tracks that could ever even vaguely fit that description. ➔



Metallica collect their Grammy – but not until the following year.

GETTY x2; REX



Something like *Locomotive Breath* might be considered a heavy rock track, but you would never describe them as a heavy metal act.

Alice Cooper: Jethro Tull were not there, so I just accepted the award on their behalf.

Ian Anderson: As a result, the poor unfortunate Alice was hailed by a torrent of abuse and boos and whistles and cat-calls, because the audience was pissed off that their darlings, Metallica, hadn't won.

It made me a bit angry that Alice had had to face that negative and nasty reaction. Actually, if I had been there I'd have loved it. If they had been booing and screeching at me it would have been such a fantastic moment for a one-line put-down.

Lita Ford: There were people in the hall who were upset, and there were people complaining backstage, saying: "How did that happen?" "Metallica should have got it!" "How come Jethro Tull got it?" I just tried to stay out of that.

Alice Cooper: I think what happened was that the old guys in the Grammy organisation who were voting didn't really recognise any of the names except Jethro Tull. I don't think they'd ever heard of Metallica, who were a pretty new band. Everybody who was in touch with modern rock knew who they were, and everybody was sure that Metallica would be the winner.

All the other nominees [in the category] were, like, monster metal. It was just the weirdest thing in the world. I could not believe it was right. In fact, at that time, Jethro Tull wasn't really hard rock, they were prog rock.

C Michael Greene: We ended up with a pretty bizarre winner.



Alice Cooper and Lita Ford: "Tull? You can not be serious!"

Lars Ulrich: Let's face it, they really fucked up. Jethro Tull getting Best Hard Rock/ Heavy Metal Recording? I mean, come on!

Chris Wright: As far as I recall, it wasn't just Jethro Tull who didn't go. Nobody at all from Chrysalis went to the Grammys that year, and we were all completely shocked when they won. I wasn't personally consulted. In fact, if I had been, I might well have advised them to go. It became a real embarrassment for the company that it wasn't handled better.

Alice Cooper: Backstage afterwards, Lita said she thought I was pulling a gag. I had to show her the card.

Everybody backstage was laughing. It was the funniest thing that had happened all night. I said to the guys in Metallica: "You know, if you got a little heavier you could be up there with Jethro Tull."

It was felt back then – although nothing could ever be proved – that people traded votes: "If you vote for my artist as best female vocalist, I'll vote for your Best Heavy Metal Recording." That sort of thing. There was lobbying and deal-making. Nothing illegal, but trading blocks of votes.

Ian Anderson: There was a widespread rumour that Metallica had printed up several thousand T-shirts saying 'Metallica – Grammy Winners'. Which are now probably quite valuable if you can lay hands on one.

Lars Ulrich: I think the real victory was playing live and being part of the telecast. The visual and audio aspects of that will stick far longer than all the who won or lost business. People will remember the song and, in the end, who walks off with a gold-plated gramophone really isn't that important.

Ian Anderson: We were working in my home studio in Buckinghamshire when the phone call came in the middle of the night telling us we'd won. I said: "Oh, that's nice. I'll tell the others," and I put the phone down. I never really gave it too much thought. I don't think it really registered with any of us, because we were so busy recording. Obviously, we were pleased to have won, but we didn't really start thinking about it until a couple of days later when the news started to filter out about how badly the award had been received in Los Angeles. I think one New York paper even referred to us as "the now-defunct Jethro Tull".

Tongue in cheek, our record company placed an ad in *Billboard* magazine with the strapline: 'The flute is a heavy, metal instrument.'

When the Grammy trophies finally arrived, one of them, I think it was [Tull guitarist] Martin Barre's, had actually got broken in transit.



Metallica were odds-on to win the Grammy in 1989.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

In the media uproar which followed, *Entertainment Weekly* named the Jethro Tull award the biggest upset in Grammy history.

As a result of the criticism, NARAS separated the two genres in 1990 by creating categories for Best Hard Rock Performance and Best Metal Performance. Metallica immediately won in the latter with *One*.

Also in 1989, as if to banish any lingering doubts about the Grammy panel's ability to get it wrong, Milli Vanilli received the Best New Artist Grammy – only to have it taken away from them when it was discovered that they didn't actually sing on their records.

When Metallica's Black album won another Best Metal Performance Grammy in 1992, Lars Ulrich ironically thanked Jethro Tull for not releasing an album in that year.

GETTY x2

ON THIS DAY

The No.1 album in the UK is *The Raw And The Cooked* by **Fine Young Cannibals**.

Thrash pioneers **Metal Church** release their third studio album, *Blessing In Disguise* in the US.

Pepsi Cola is the product in the first ever Spanish-language commercial broadcast on US network TV.

The **Finnish Ministry of Health** puts forward proposals for government-organised sex holidays, during which citizens worn down by the stress of modern life can "concentrate on recuperating in an erotic atmosphere".

Two months after its release, *Twins*, starring **Arnold Schwarzenegger** and **Danny DeVito**, has earned $97,931,705 at the box office.



For the stories behind the best albums and the bands that produced them...

PROG

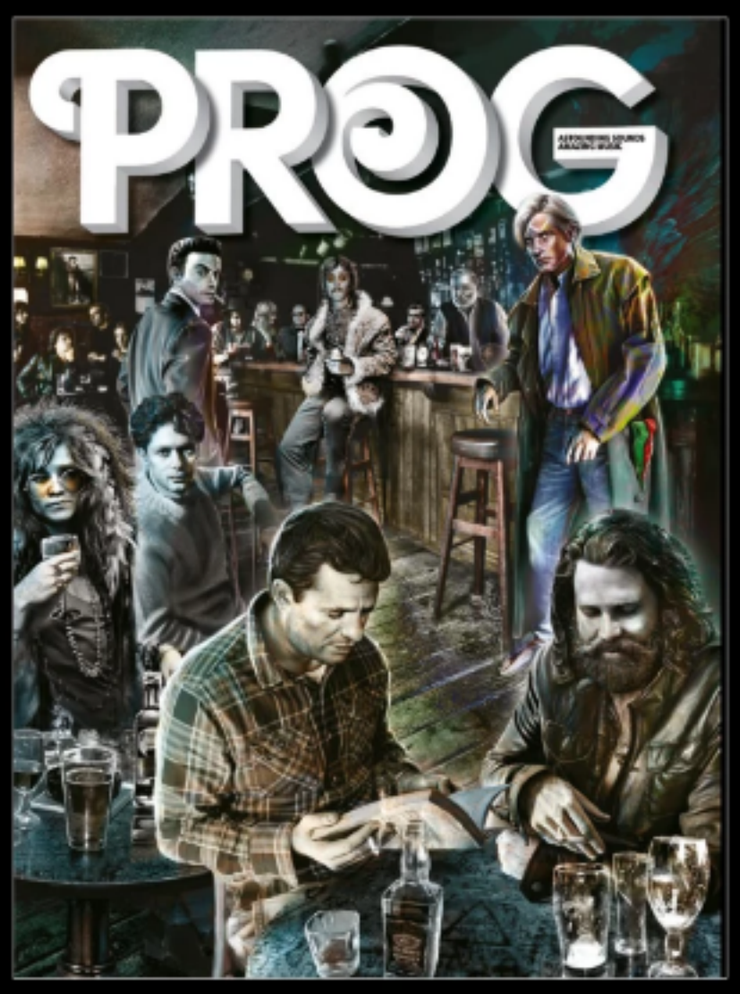
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LIVING IN THE PAST

From bulging codpieces to missing legs, **Jethro Tull**'s **Ian Anderson** opens his archives to *Prog*, and reveals the inside stories behind the snapshots and headlines.

Words: **Ian Anderson** Images: **Jethro Tull Archive**

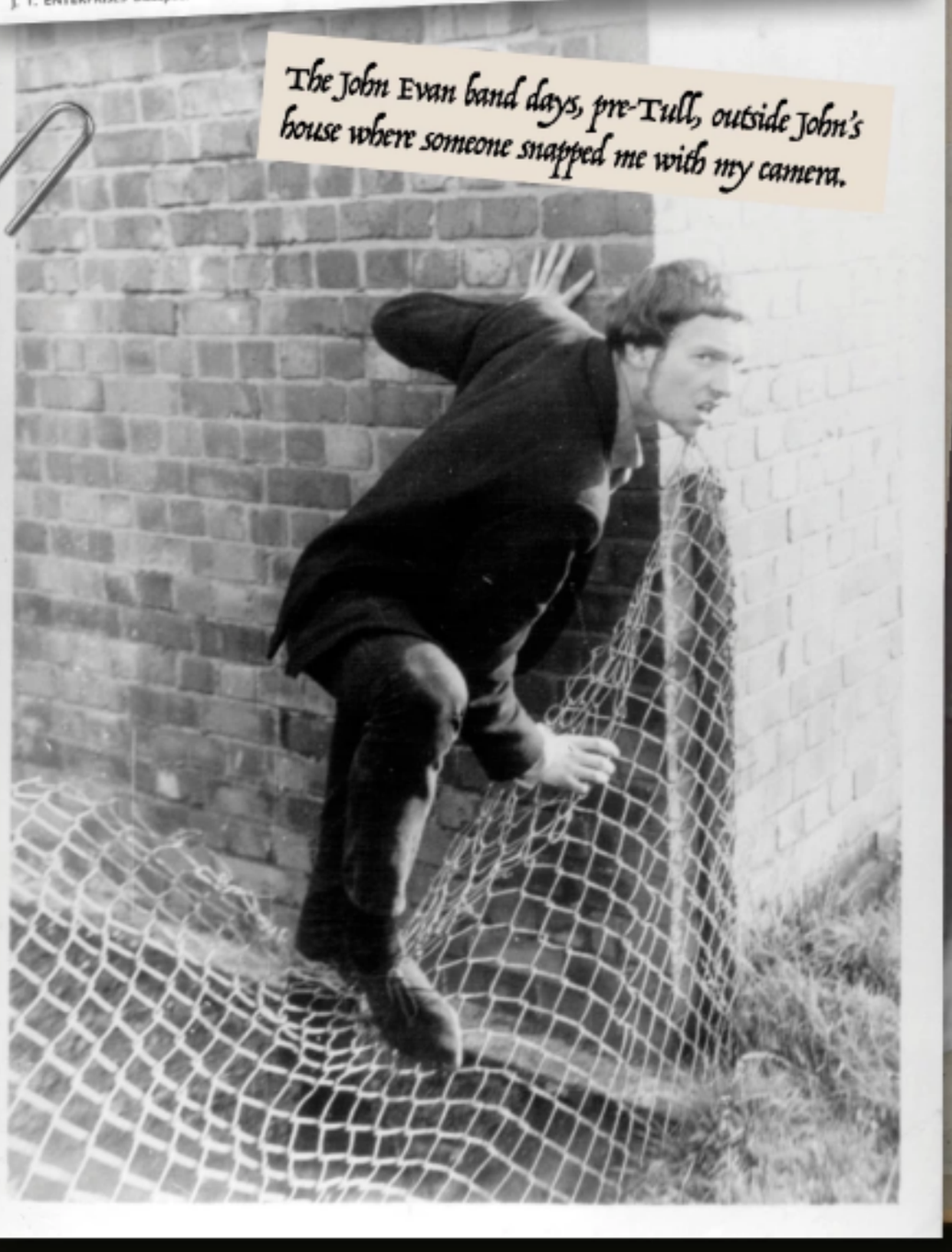
Our first publicity photo as the John Evans Band when, after adding guitarist Chris Riley to the line-up after the photo session, he was cut and pasted in — literally, as in the old technology. Count the heads, then count the legs. Mmmm...

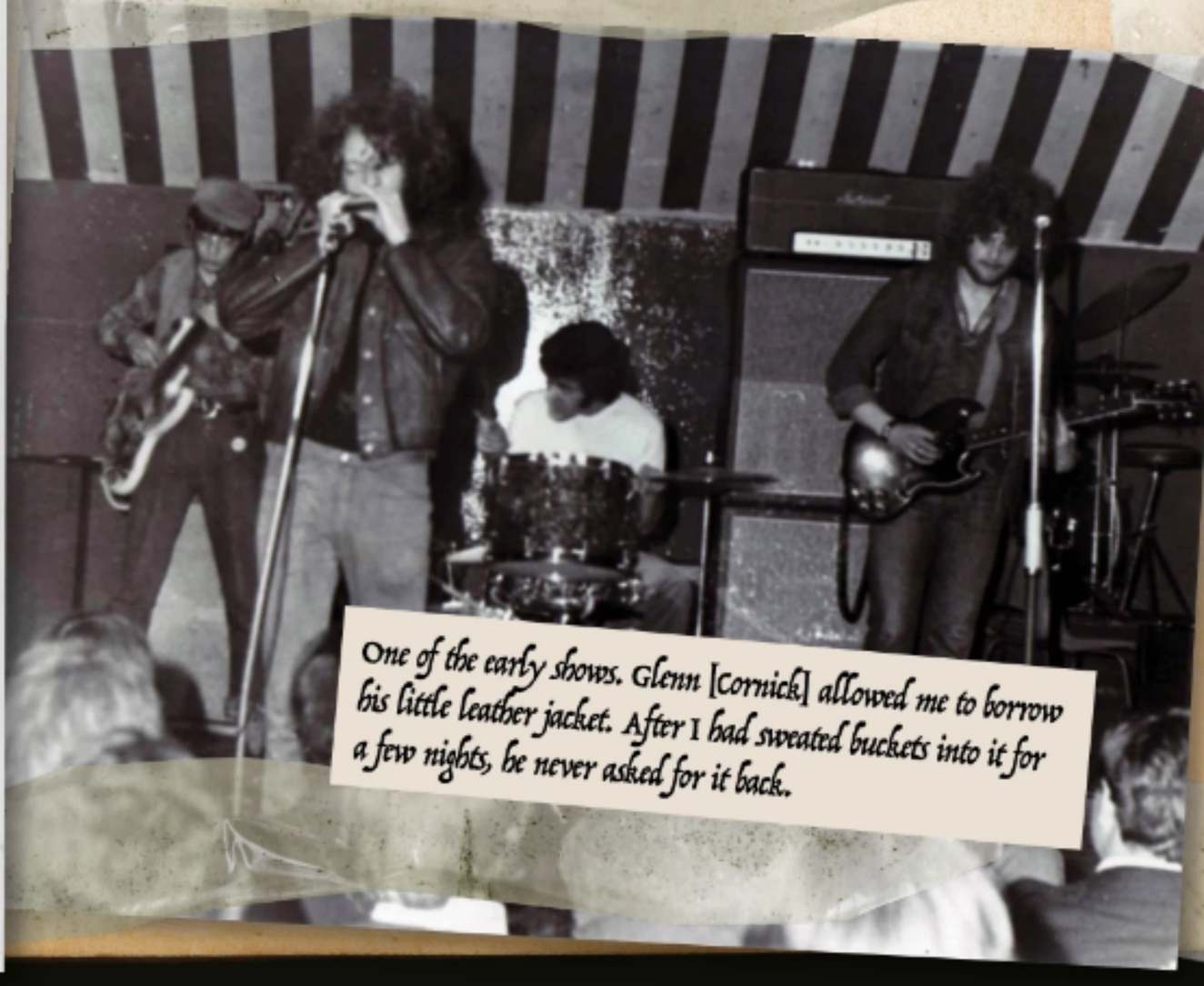


The band just after Barrie Barlow joined and John Evans switched to organ from drums. Yes, that really is a little plastic Farfisa organ. The only alternative to the equally inexpensive Vox Continental. But then John's mum bought him a real Hammond Organ. I preferred carrying the Farfisa...



The John Evan band days, pre-Tull, outside John's house where someone snapped me with my camera.





One of the early shows. Glenn [Cornick] allowed me to borrow his little leather jacket. After I had sweated buckets into it for a few nights, he never asked for it back..

Don't knock Jethro Tull – remember Jesus

JESUS CHRIST was similar in appearance to Jethro Tull, with his long hair, beard and gaily coloured clothes. He was looked upon as God's son, performing miracles. Everyone believed in him, but his clothes were never commented on.

In the music world Ian Anderson, Glen Cornick, Martin Barre and Clive Bunker are also performing miracles with their records and concert dates. Good luck Jethro Tull!—Robert Dobie, Lily Whitcher, Tom Donovan, 25 Harland Green, Speke, Liverpool 24.

HOW DARE Pat Shelley (Pop Post 22.11.69) say such atrocious things about Jethro Tull!

Ian Anderson is in a class of his own, and so are the other members of the best group on the scene. And we say they always will be.—Linda, Sandra, Malcolm, 14 Floyds Lane, Daw End, Rushall, nr. Walsall.

Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson: did Jesus look like t

Of course, we have no idea what the historical Jesus Of Nazareth looked like, or what clothes he wore. Certainly not expensive high-heeled zippered boots from Anello & Davide, tight velvet pants from Chelsea Market or a codpiece from the Royal Ballet.

WOULD YOU TAKE THIS MAN HOME TO MEET MUM? asks NICK LOGAN



Three studies of the virtuoso, showman IAN ANDERSON of the JETHRO TULL group, who have become Pop Musicians' favourite picture to hit Note, taken by Chris Walters. The cover picture is a portrait by Barry Plummer and above by Barry Plummer.

I am no nearer to that than wearing a pipe and slippers and living in a semi-detached.

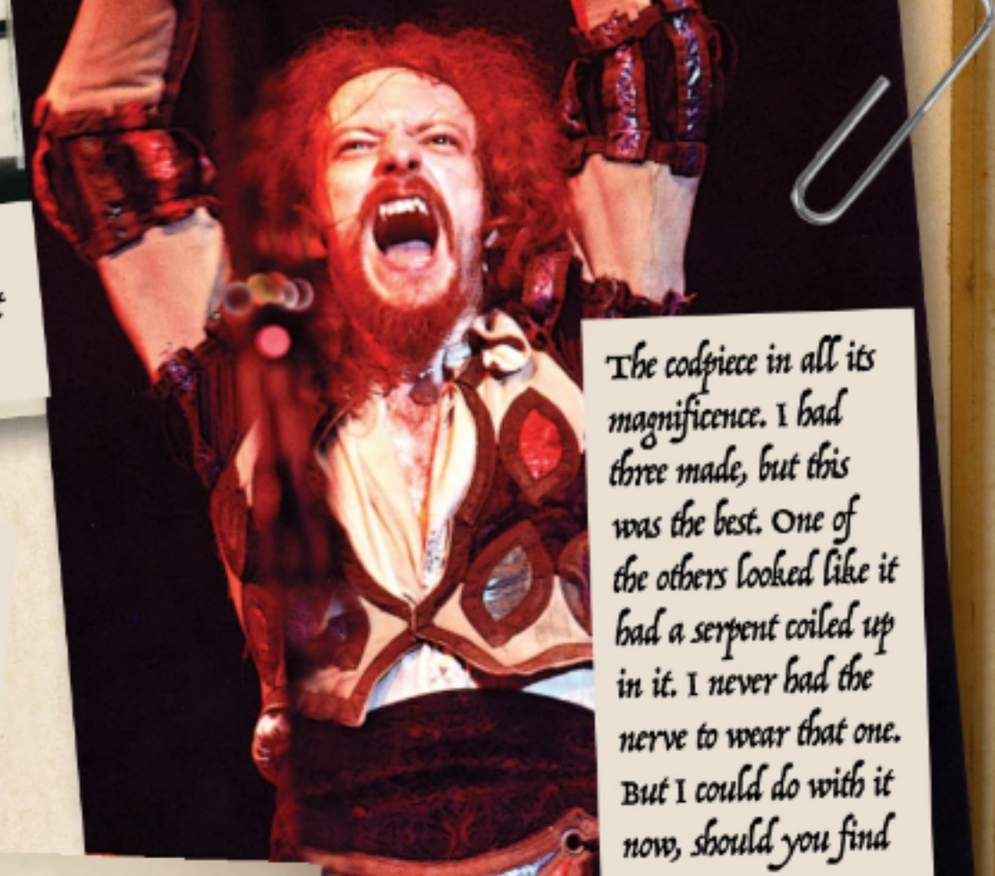
It's just as painful to be sucked in by either side. On one hand being clan and the other being embarrassed. I don't want to anyway. I just want to, and people say in enormous inverted commas, 'Do my thing.'

Does I had in my pocket and wearing it to his face and saying 'Look, where you can earn as much as that in a week we earn in a year and in a week, my wedding that's earn in a week, I will leave. It's a no again and I will leave. It's a silly thing to do because you end up saying nothing and hurting them with your silence. I'm not brave enough to just shut up and leave you alone. That rouses many feelings against me. I'm the flowers that grow in the dustbin.

Well, some girls did. I seem to remember being asked by my wife Shona to have a "little trim" before the inevitable meeting, and being advised to pretend to support the Conservative Party.

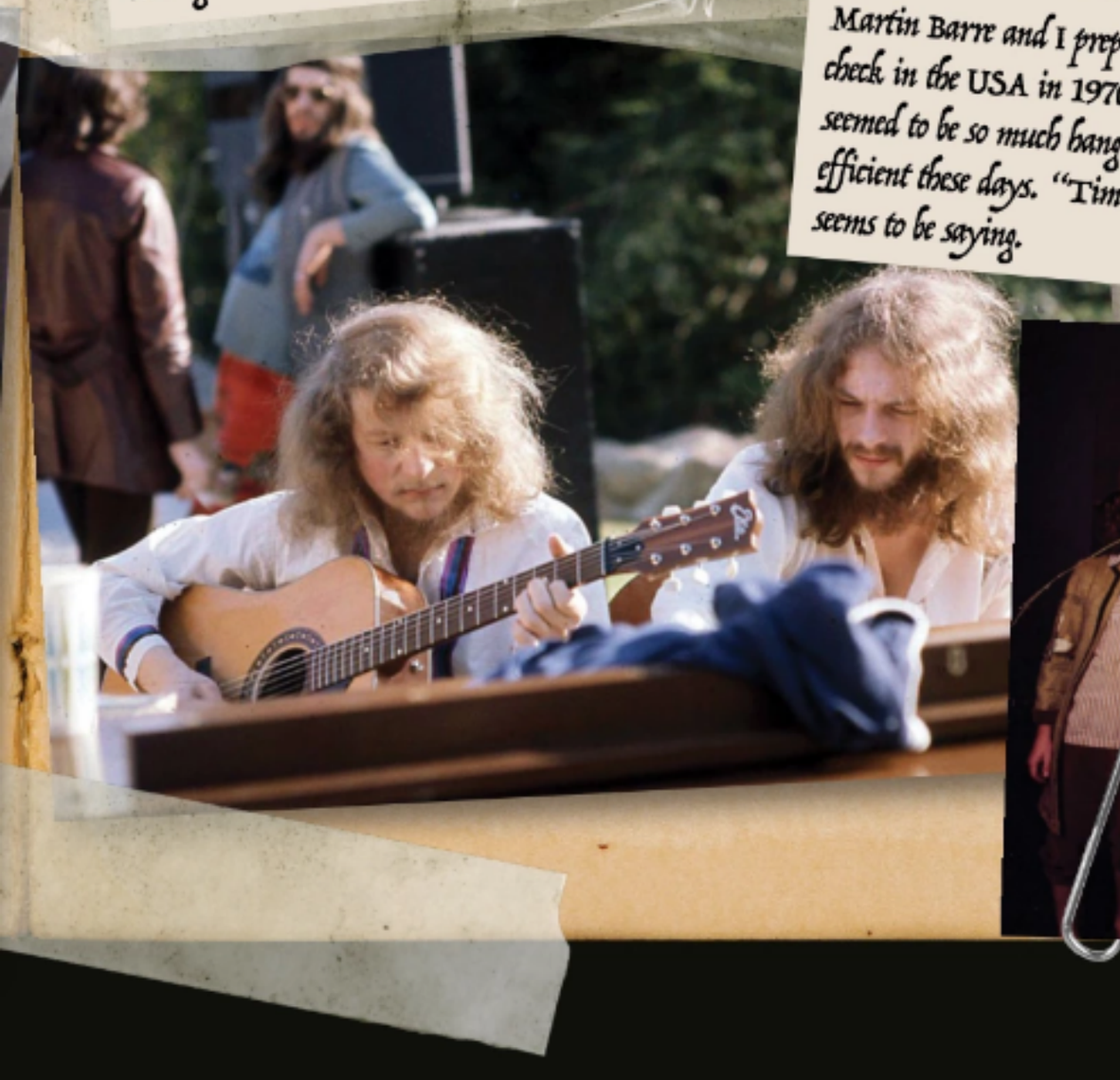


Going to see Elvis in 1969. I was somewhat coerced into going to see the show and upset everyone by not wanting to go backstage to meet him afterwards. I was too embarrassed to confront him as he seemed so out of it on stage and I couldn't bring myself to fib and say how great he was...



The codpiece in all its magnificence. I had three made, but this was the best. One of the others looked like it had a serpent coiled up in it. I never had the nerve to wear that one. But I could do with it now, should you find it on eBay.

Martin Barre and I preparing for a sound check in the USA in 1970 or so. There always seemed to be so much hanging about. Much more efficient these days. "Time is money," Glenn seems to be saying.





The classic mid-70s line-up when we actually all enjoyed dressing up in silly clothes. Of course, the clothes had nothing to do with the album War Child, which the photo was supposed to promote. Some musicians will do anything for a hot dinner.

Well, that's a relief to know! I can't think where some MM sub-editor got that headline from. But in many ways, the Melody Maker, as it grew in success, echoed the attention-grabbing pages of The Sun. Not sure if I ever made it to page three of the MM in my tights and codpiece, though.

IAN ANDERSON IS NO ROCK HITLER

THAT bearded prankster Ian Anderson is amongst us once more with his reshuffled ensemble now featuring Barrie-More Barlow on percussion in place of Clive Bunker (now co-operating with ex-Procol guitarist Robin Trower in a new group) on a maxi-single entitled aptly enough 'Life Is A Long Song' which he says, 'will probably bomb out and no one will like it as it does not have the familiar raving flute on it!"

Anderson is of course a pessimist and past master of the undersell in fact which he uses as a form of self-protection from critics.

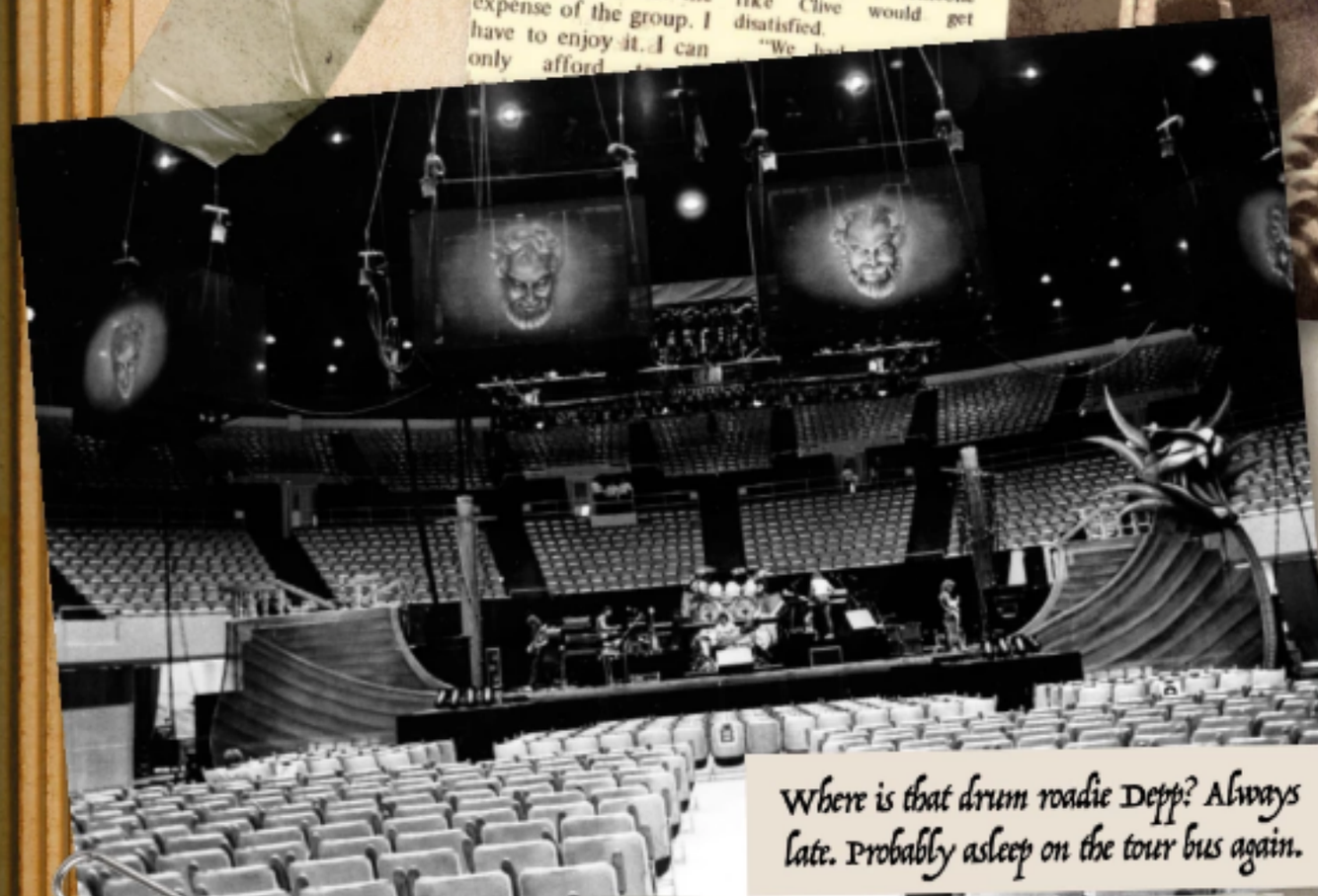
"If I appear to take my music as seriously as the critics then I completely lose out if they castigate my work. As a live performer I deliberately set out to entertain people sometimes even at the expense of the group. I have to enjoy it. I can only afford

by Keith Altham

He simply felt that he needed more room to express himself – God knows I can understnd that. I do tend to dominate the writing aspect of Tull and I can understand why someone like Clive would get disatisfied.

"We just





Where is that drum roadie Depp? Always late. Probably asleep on the tour bus again.



Desperation in the straw bales after a visit to a theatrical costumier. Probably picked that lot up for a song. No one else would wear it.



Not out of the woods yet... I think they all wanted to get home and get warm so it was a tense photo session. My dog, Lupus, wouldn't stay still, so he is a blurry mess. But Martin Barre makes a mean cup of tea.



Two gentle giants who were far more patient than I on this photo shoot where we had to walk up and down the steep field several times. I think they were so nice because they felt sorry for me.



Lots of familiar faces among the crew here, but many who just a did a tour or two. The Two Kennys – production manager Kenny Wylie [front centre, seated] and agent Kenny Bell [far right] were with us for 30 and 37 years respectively.



The A album line-up. Eddie Jobson is very dapper. Not really the outdoors type... Bless.



A slightly uncomfortable gathering of many of the worthies who graced our stages over the years. But everyone is smiling for the big moment. Four drummers, four bass players, two guitarists, two keyboard players, a flautist and a fiddler. No eyes were scratched out during the making of this photo.



Anna Phoebe when she toured with us in the UK and elsewhere for a year or so: Gavin Esler's skimpy-costumed 'Vixen Of The Violin', just before she met him, I think.. But she was always fully dressed at soundchecks.



Back in the days when the Habanero was king (the orange one). Nowadays, the cultivar Carolina Reaper outdoes it by nearly a million and half Scoville units. Scoville? Look it up: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scoville_scale.

In 2012, 40 years on from what could be prog's ultimate concept album, ***Thick As A Brick***, master builder Ian Anderson was at it again with a sequel. Read all about it here...

Words: **Dom Lawson** With thanks to: **The Landmark London Hotel**

"I was like the conductor with an orchestra, trying to realise my masterplan..."

GRAND DESIGNS

Pipe up, man! Ian Anderson, London, February 2012.

From their formation in Luton in 1967 onwards, Jethro Tull were never a band to rest on their laurels and deliver the expected. Although nominally a major force within the progressive rock explosion of the late 60s and early 70s, they proudly and purposefully stood apart from the pack, led by the ferociously focused and driven Ian Anderson; a multi-instrumentalist and inveterate mischief maker whose determination took this most British of bands to extraordinary heights of success on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond. It was, of course, the release of 1971's seminal masterwork *Aqualung* that sealed their reputation as a legendary band, as they casually conquered rock radio in the US and became bona fide arena-filling superstars. But these were still early days for Jethro Tull, and as Anderson explains to *Prog*, the steady progress achieved with *Aqualung* was never something he took for granted. Meanwhile, the way that record was widely perceived duly led to an aggressive and impish change of tack that would eventually produce another ageless masterpiece. "Well, we knew when we finished recording *Aqualung* that we had a bunch of good songs, but it wasn't an instant, out-

JETHRO TULL
FEATURE ON PAGE 7

The St. Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser
Friday January 7th 1972 — No. 1003 — Price 3p Weekly

THICK AS A BRICK

JUDGES DISQUALIFY "LITTLE MILTON" IN LAST MINUTE RUMPUS

THE SOCIETY FOR LITERARY ADVANCEMENT AND GESTATION, (SLAG), announced their decision late last night to disqualify eight year old prizewinner Gerald (Little Milton) Bostock following the hundreds of protests and threats received after the reading of his epic poem "Thick as a Brick" on B.B.C. Television last Monday night.

A hastily reconvened panel of Judges accepted the decision by four leading child psychiatrists that the boy's mind was seriously unbalanced and that his work was a product of an "extremely unwholesome attitude towards life, his God and Country". Bostock was recommended for psychiatric treatment following examination "without delay". The first prize will now be presented to runner up Mary Whityard (aged 12) for her essay on Christian ethics entitled, "He died to save the little Children".

Flashback to last week's presentation dinner held in Gerald's honour by the Committee of the St. Cleve District Art and Literary Society at the Parish Rooms. Left to right: Lord Cleve Petit Parrit, Mr. and Mrs. Bostock, Gerald Bostock, Lady Parrit, John Gerald's chum with whom he writes poems.

ART DEMO FORCES CLOSURE

THREE poets and five painters were arrested yesterday afternoon outside Lady Parrit House after repeatedly causing disturbance and harrassing members of the public visiting the museum and gallery throughout the day. They were demonstrating against gallery policy of showing only resident exhibition works, and resident exhibition works, and led by heavily bearded Ahab Gross demanded that the Gallery showed the "work of the people" and gave more attention to new and unknown local artists. Mr. Gross allegedly squirted a tube of Cadmium Yellow oil paint at a police constable and signed his name on the policeman's helmet. Aided by other unruly members of the action group, Gross tied up the policeman and attempted to auction off the "work of art" to passers by. Said the unfortunate Constable Grimpace later, "I was absolutely disgusted. No one even made even made an offer to help me".

Following the release of the policeman by a number of construction workers who were close at hand, the demonstration moved inside the Gallery where several works were damaged and obscene appendages were drawn on some fine old paintings of racehorses.

The Literary Competition, which was for children aged from 7 to 16 years of age, was sponsored by leading national newspapers and received thousands of entries from schools allover Britain. Mr. Humphrey Martin, the Headmaster of Moordale Primary School said Gerald, nicknamed "Little Milton" by his English master because of his poetic ability, was mentally advanced for his age, although inclined on occasions to obscure and verbose assertions which led him to being somewhat unpopular with his schoolmates. He went on to say that without doubt the child had a great future academically and that his progress was unsurpassed in the history of Moordale Primary. Gerald and his parents moved to St. Cleve four years ago from Manchester when Mr. Bostock decided for health reasons to live away from the City. David Bostock now does occasional freelance work while his wife Daphne is well known to the Congregation of St. Cleve Parish Church for her activities in social work and her wonderful buffet luncheon at the fete last Saturday. Well done, Daphne! Mr. Bostock said this morning of "Little Milton's" disqualification, "We are heartbroken at the way the Judges changed their minds, and the loss of the prize money and scholarship means we shall find difficulty in paying the instalments on Gerald's Encyclopaedia Britannica. I shall have to do Dr. Munson's roses next week after all." When he heard of the decision against him, Gerald went to his room and locked the door. "Mrs. Bostock and I are sorely vexed at the way this has turned out", said Mr. Bostock of No. 6 Pollit Close, St. Cleve.

Many local residents are also annoyed and hurt by the news and as some consolation to Gerald and his parents the St. Cleve Chronicle prints the full text of "the disqualified poem this week on page 7.



Early scenes as Constable Grimpace tries to calm the protesters.

Many of the viewers who heard Gerald read his work on the "Young Arts" programme on B.B.C. 2 felt that it was not one poem but a series of separ- [illegible] poems one together mostly to appear impressive. Many of the viewers' complaints were centred around "Little Milton's" use of a four-letter word during the interview which followed his reading. The Producer of "Young Arts" Michael Fenwick said later, "We have come to expect that sort of language from adults on television these days, but to hear it from a child of eight is particularly depressing. When I was his age I did not even know what the word g—— t meant."

U.F.O. SIGHTING SENSATION

A statement has been issued following last Tuesday's night' alleged spotting of an unidentified flying "Objoct".

The following was related to staff reporter, Nigel Turpin, by policy constable Grimpace of the local constabulary.

"I was proceeding towards [illegible] when I noticed a "saucer" like "Phenomenon" flew away at an "Amazing speed" in the direction of the public library.

Hasty Snap

Fortunately I was able to make a photographic testimonial of the "Ship in the sky" (Reproduced above)".

LITTLE MILTON IN SCHOOL – GIRL PREGNANCY ROW

A fourteen-year old schoolgirl this week blamed her pregnancy on Gerald Bostock, the eight-year old poet at the centre of this week's major St. Cleve controversy.

The girl, 14-year old Julia Feazey, a junior member of the St. Cleve District Art and Literary Society and a poet in her own right, is known to have been friendly with Gerald for some time and has often written poems with him.

The accusation was outrageous, said her family doctor, [illegible] week, told our reporter: "It's disgusting. She's always been jealous of [illegible]

DIRECTOR ACCUSED

John Bowden, 35, manag-

Mongrel dog soils actor's foot

The cameras were rolling [illegible] Robert F. [illegible] was filming "Biggles and the snake-women" when a mongrel dog soiled his foot. The dog belonged to Japanese make-up artist Tatu Teyu who recently became resident in St. Cleve.

ROB MONK/FUTURE



Blowin' up a storm, Anderson onstage in 1972.

JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY

"It had a definite onward and upward feel although it was more demanding to play..."

Whatever Did Happen To Gerald Bostock?

Brick star mystery solved!





One of the most intriguing questions relating to *Thick As A Brick 2*, indeed from where the album takes its secondary title, is whatever happened to Gerald Bostock? Well, now we can answer that question, because we've found him.

Gerald 'Little Milton' Bostock was the eight-year-old pictured on the front of the original *St. Cleve Chronicle*. His disqualification from a poetry competition is the focus of the main story in the paper. Having initially won the contest with the poem *Thick As A Brick*, he was then removed because of the poem's offensive nature and his own psychological instability.

Of course, all of this was fictional. It was child model Andre C Le Breton who played the role of Bostock 40 years ago. He went on to model for various clothes catalogues, before making a complete change in his choice of career. He ran his own recording studio, where he produced and engineered sessions for bands, most of which were demos. As he himself says: "Nothing too grand".

But the main thrust of his studio involvement came in working on his own music. But if you're hoping that his connection to Jethro Tull led him into progressive rock, then that's not the case.

"These days it's pretty weird underground German sounding trance, blends of light and dark electronic noise, really," he says.

London based, Le Breton works under the banner of Le chAos fActorY, and if you want to check out any of his work, then go to www.myspace.com/lechaosfactory.

We can also reveal that Ian Anderson tried to track down Le Breton, with the idea of having him on the front of the new *St Cleve Chronicle*. However, at the time he was in remission from cancer and wasn't well enough to get involved with *TAAB2*.

But at least we now know that Gerald Bostock is alive and well, albeit rather older! **MD**

of-the-box major hit," he states. "It was a pivotal album for us, and one that got favourable reviews. But it was, in my mind at least, unreasonably described as a concept album, which I maintain it was not.

"Some of the songs, like *My God*, they had some resonance in Italy and Spain and the Catholic countries where they were seen to be a little risqué and edgy, and then in the Bible Belt of the USA too, where copies of *Aqualung* were burnt for heresy. Obviously it was an overreaction and people got their knickers in a twist, but in the wake of that charge people thought that somehow we were guilty of making a concept album. So I thought: 'Okay, then we'll give them the mother of all concept albums next time!' So we did the completely over-the-top spoof concept album of *Thick As A Brick*."

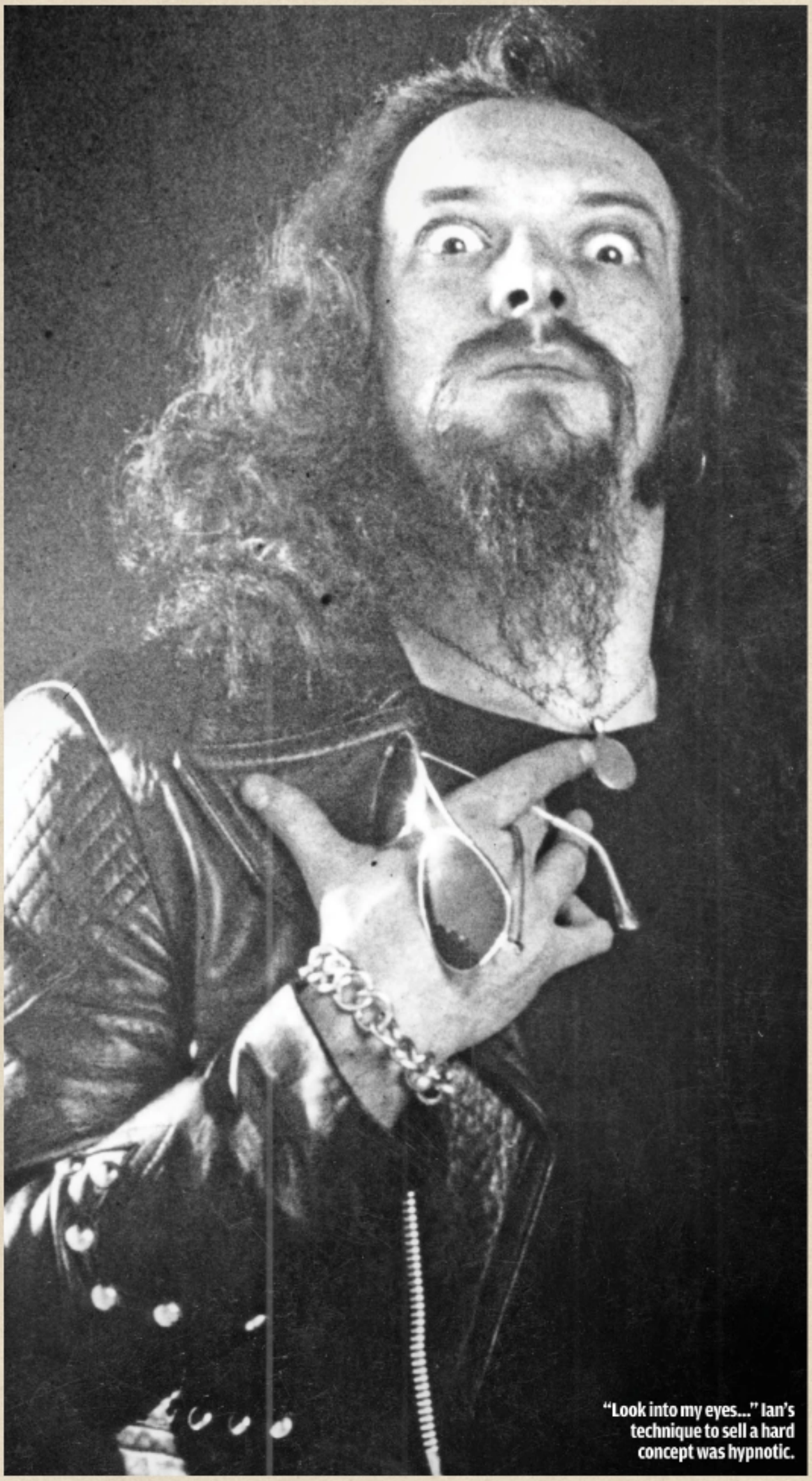
Released in the spring of 1972, *TAAB* was both very much a product of its time and a deliberate side-swipe against the idea that Jethro Tull could be slotted neatly into the progressive rock pigeonhole, with or without the willing acquiescence of the band themselves. A single continuous 44-minute piece of music, albeit necessarily divided into two parts due to the limitations (or, perhaps, benefits) of the then ubiquitous vinyl format, it sought to poke fun at the very notion of concept albums by offering the preposterous conceit that the lyrics had been penned by an eight-year-old child prodigy named Gerald Bostock as his winning entry in a poetry competition. Gerald's poem – all written by Anderson himself, of course - was presented as a preternaturally articulate diatribe about the trials and tribulations of growing up, which was then set to the most wilfully intricate and extravagant music that Jethro Tull had ever attempted. Housed in a much-celebrated mock newspaper sleeve, replete with numerous ridiculous stories ("Mongrel dog soils actor's foot", anyone?) and a deftly-executed whiff of authenticity that fitted perfectly with the album's overall air of gentle subversion, *Thick As A Brick* would become the second Tull album to reach the Top 10 of

the *Billboard* charts in America, and the first to hijack the Number One spot, despite the fact that its humorous overtones were almost certainly overlooked by the majority of non-UK fans.

"The concept itself was a hard thing to sell," recalls Anderson. "But the Brits entered into that willingly and knowingly because we all lived through the era of surreal British humour, with The Goons and *Around The Horne* and then Monty Python. The Americans found it more difficult because they found it hard to separate the fiction from reality, and in Japan they were just plain confounded and didn't have a clue what was going on. But in terms of success it had a definite onwards and upwards feel about it – although musically it was more demanding and *incessant* because it was continuous music without convenient places to stop and pause and reconsider. It involved lots of repetition, lots of reiteration, lots of variation, lots of development of themes in other guises."

The prog revolution was in full flight at this point, with the likes of Yes, ELP, Genesis and Pink Floyd all chalking up considerable successes with albums that dared to dream beyond conventional pop and rock formats, taking listeners on often highly convoluted and pretentious musical journeys that seemed to have no limits in terms of musical or conceptual ideas. As *Aqualung* had proved, however, Anderson was a writer with feet firmly planted on the ground, and with a strong sense of real world insight permeating his songs. Did *Thick As A Brick* indicate that he felt somehow detached from the rest of the progressive rock scene and wanted to puncture the pomposity of what some of those bands were doing?

"Well, it wasn't really puncturing pomposity, but we did see the slightly annoying spaghetti noodling of long, drawn-out instrumental passages, and we did kind of spoof that in parts of *Thick As A Brick*," he admits today. "There are some rather rambling, free jazz moments that were not really meant to have musical value and were more of a piss-take of some of the bands that were rapidly disappearing up their own arses. But having said that, we all knew that Yes were a great band and great musicians, and ELP and King Crimson and all the other great musicians that were around at the time. So although we could have a little dig at them, you had to extend the hats-off credit to them for being extremely inventive and pushing the boundaries of music. I wasn't really a fan of Genesis but I still feel that the world is a much



GUSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY

"Look into my eyes..." Ian's technique to sell a hard concept was hypnotic.

Tull's *TAAB* crew pipe up.

CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS

DAVID PALMER, arranger

"I wish I'd had more confidence in how to approach it. We could have taken it to a higher plane."



KEN TOWNER/EVENING STANDARD/REX FEATURES

For David Palmer (now Dee) there's no doubt that *Thick As A Brick* could have been so much better.

"I recall when I first heard the music that Ian had written. It was in demo form, and Terry Ellis, Tull's manager, played me the tape when I was at his house. I immediately thought just how much could be done if I was allowed to orchestrate the whole thing. But that's not what they wanted at all. Ian wanted me to add certain orchestral arrangements to some of what had been done, but not to go as far as I wanted."

Palmer now regrets not pushing his ideas further, and giving in to what Anderson wanted.

"It's a case of what Ian says goes in Jethro Tull. That was clearly the case back then. But now I wish I had more confidence in what I believed to be the right way to approach it. Given the symphonic treatment, I think we could have taken everything to a higher plane."

It was only when Palmer heard the finished album with the vocals in place did he feel that it suddenly all made sense.

"Nobody in the band was allowed to listen to what Ian was doing with the vocals until he'd finished. But once I heard what he'd done then it all fitted together so much better. Ian is a very erudite and gifted lyricist. And when you listen to what he'd written here, then it gave everything an extra dimension."

Palmer admits that not all of the album works musically in her opinion. But as an overall concept, she is full of praise for what was achieved.

"It succeeds where *A Passion Play* failed. There's a narrative simplicity about *Thick As A Brick* that brought it all so much better into focus." **MD**

better place for having those early Genesis albums. They were a hard act to follow in terms of construction and development of the musicality of a band."

Despite openly shrugging off the shackles that came with the progressive rock tag, Anderson and his bandmates' performances on *TAAB* remain some of the most vibrant and energised in the genre's history. Forty years on, there is still something thrilling about the fizzing chemistry between them, as they whip up a sumptuously dynamic storm of thunderous and complex folk-tinged rock, the indulgent, pause-free nature of the whole piece driven breathlessly forward by a band that was firing on all cylinders, arguably as a result of all the extensive touring they had undertaken over the preceding years. *Thick As A Brick* may have been conceived as an extended chuckle at the bombastic follies of prog, but it also sounds like the band were doing more than a little showboating of their own, as if to prove that they could genuinely compete with their more po-faced peers.

"I honestly don't think we were quite in that league," Anderson disagrees. "We were not quite up to the mark, musically speaking. When it came to constructing something that was essentially still a series of tunes, I rather feel that bits of *Thick As A Brick* still have the resonance of three-minute songs about them. There were sections of music that you can sing along to and sections that you can treat almost as if they are individual songs within the piece.



Copenhagen 1972: Tull rock the house.

Tull peers' *TAAB* memories and influence

HOT ROCKS

Pye Hastings, Caravan



GARRY MERRIN/PHOTOSHOT

Caravan's Pye Hastings readily admits that his first impression of *Thick As A Brick* was one of just how different Tull were from the rest of the prog bands at the time.

"When I first heard the album I was somewhat confused by the mediaeval gamekeeper image of the band and wondered what all this was about. The rest of us were wearing a sort of uniform - although I doubt if any of us would admit it - in that we sported denims or floral shirts and loons etcetera, so this was clearly something different.

"The same applied to the music. We were chasing more and more complicated ways of playing, whereas here was a band fronted by a seemingly off his trolley frontman prancing around playing really good, catchy folk/rock music. I thought someone has certainly spent some time working out the image and approach so as to stand out from the rest."

This initial confusion soon turned to one of admiration, as Hastings recognised how astute Ian Anderson was.

"What a clever boy Ian is. The songs, the sound and the image had to be treated as a whole package to achieve maximum success particularly for the American market. Boy, did he get it right."

All of which was a little different to the way that Caravan were approaching things on the *Waterloo Lily* album, which was released around the same time.

"When we did *Waterloo Lily* we certainly didn't have a marketing strategy, we left that to a succession of managers. But, despite both our albums coming out in the same year, we never thought of *Thick As A Brick* as competition because it was so different to what we were doing. Still we were very jealous of its success; but I know we were just young and confused then. Now so many years later, we are just old and confused (with bus passes)."

Hastings believes that the influence of *Thick As A Brick* resonates even today, and in a wider market than just prog.

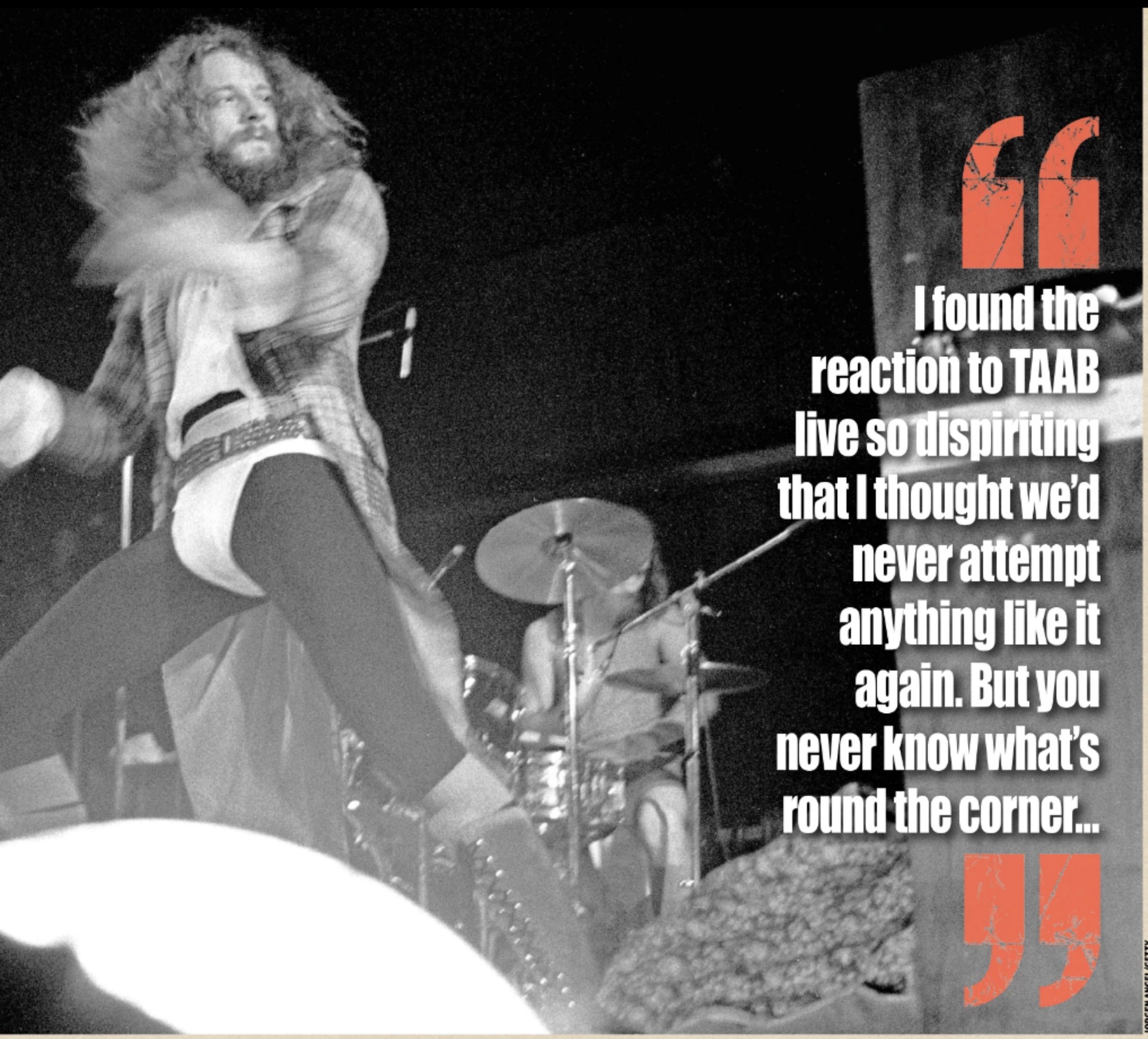
"You could say this approach has certainly been emulated by some of the current bands like Coldplay, who project a grungy image from their clothing to their beaten up instruments. I don't know if this was intentional but it definitely works." **MD**

> **It was the zenith of Tull's camaraderie, a social and band feeling that saw us through a few great years.**

Just as people listen to Beethoven's ninth symphony, there are parts that can stand alone and you can sing along with those parts and recognise them, even though they're part of a much greater work. I tried to draw upon some elements from a not very academic understanding of classical music, as well as the developments of jazz, rather more than I did the progressive rock of the time."

Was that the key to making the album such a distinctive piece of work, even given its knowing adherence to the code of fulsome exploration that was being widely followed at the time?

"Well, yes, I was more influenced by classical music and jazz, and that's always been the case because I don't really draw much inspiration from other rock music – mainly because it's a little bit too close to home to start picking up on. Mostly I get my musical ideas from either more ethnic sources of music, or more traditional classical forms, and not so much from blues or rock'n'roll – except right at the very beginning of my musical activities when I was a teenager. That's what I listened to and started off with, but I guess by 1968 I was moving on to draw more from other kinds of music, from the classics, jazz and folk music from different parts of the world. So I think those are the ingredients that were dragged into a so-called progressive rock album, rather than having a direct influence from my peers."



JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY

With guitarist Martin Barre, bass player Jeffrey Hammond, keyboard maestro John Evan and Anderson himself reprising their respective roles from the previous album, *Thick As A Brick* gave the distinct impression of being work made by a harmonious unit that were evolving in harmony and pushing collective boundaries with something approaching evangelical zeal. What really hits home if you listen to *Aqualung* and *TAAB* back to back is that Jethro Tull had taken a huge leap forward in terms of injecting precision, fluidity and sparkling efficacy into their leader's songs. From beginning to end, *TAAB* is an album that barrels along with a real sense of urgency and power, as if fresh flames were blazing deep in the band's creative engine. And, in fact, that is exactly what was happening.

"I think it's very much the case that the band, at the time of *Thick As A Brick*, was re-energised by the presence of Barrie Barlow, who'd just joined the band in the months preceding that," Anderson recalls. "His drumming, his detail and his energy – both technically speaking and in terms of feel – really did push things on, and I think that definitely raised the game for the other guys. I think we have to thank Barrie for bringing that extra little energy level and spirit into the band, technically speaking, because he had a lot of drum technique in his playing, unlike perhaps Clive [Bunker, drummer on the first four Tull albums] who was a powerhouse, straight ahead rock and blues drummer,

Tull peers' *TAAB* memories and influence

HOT ROCKS

Derek Shulman, Gentle Giant



KEVIN NIXON/GETTY

A member of Gentle Giant, Shulman has warm thoughts about *Thick As A Brick*. "I personally loved the album. But it was also a very important album for Gentle Giant."

The reason for the latter was because the band got the chance to open for Tull. "We were invited by Ian and Jethro Tull to tour Europe and North America with them while they were promoting this album. It helped the band enormously to break through in territories like Italy, Germany and America where we would return after this tour to headline our own shows."

Shulman also believes that onstage Tull were at a peak on this *Thick As A Brick* tour. "The band was an unbelievable live entity during this period. They combined brilliant musical concepts and theatre, and we were in awe of their shows; they were certainly influential in how we presented ourselves.

"I have to admit to being proud that Tull would watch our show during the tour, and congratulate us on what we presented. For us it was a wonderful match, personally, musically and professionally. We are still grateful to Ian and the band for giving Gentle Giant this opportunity." **MD**

Tull's *TAAB* crew pipe up.

CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS

JEFFREY HAMMOND, bass/vocals

"The conception was straightforward, but there were birth pangs..."



JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY

The bassist freely admits to an ignorance on *Aqualung* being touted by some as being a concept album, and that *Thick As A Brick* was a riposte.

"Being on the very fringe of all things musically and lyrically creative might explain some of that philistinism and misconception. Of course, I can now really appreciate how *Thick As A Brick* fits neatly into the concept album box, and as such deserves to be repackaged and reappraised.

"Yes, the album was the brainchild of Ian's rather than in any way a band visualisation. The finished article is a homogenous whole, though how much that reflects the original big idea, one hesitates to speculate."

Because of the way it was perceived, Hammond feels that recording *TAAB* was a lot easier than might seem to be the case from the outside.

"Perhaps a continuous flowing piece of music is easier to achieve than a three-minute tune which, by definition, has all the constraints that time brings to bear upon it.

"Possibly there is more freedom to manoeuvre on a larger stage, a bigger canvas. Although *Thick As A Brick* may have been recorded over a number of days or weeks, it retains the sense of a linear journey rather than roughly mortared-together brickwork."

For Hammond the recording process was relaxed and fun, despite initial problems. "While the conception might have been straightforward, perhaps there were one or two birth pangs. However I think it did very quickly become fun. Barrie had of course recently joined the band, which led to a certain degree of togetherness reflecting the camaraderie and very close friendships that had been formed during heady embryonic teenage days in Blackpool. None of this was contrived or artificial, rather the opposite, it being a natural and often spontaneous outpouring of the energy and excitement of the moment."

And he's still got a massive fondness for what *Thick As A Brick* stands for. "I find it difficult to listen to it without immediately being thrust back on stage and filled with many warm memories. At the same time I have to ask myself: 'Was that really me?' It's a piece of music one so strongly associates with a certain time and feeling. And the upcoming tour is a testament to Ian's continuing desire to reinterpret and reinvent his songwriting skills in bringing back to the stage music of such an idiosyncratic album." **MD**

> **We weren't exactly puncturing pomposity but we did spoof the annoying noodling of drawn-out instrumentals.**

and that was his forte. But Barrie could handle more complex issues, time signatures and detailed cross-rhythms and, perhaps having studied drums more when he was a teenager, he had a greater breadth of knowledge than Clive had in terms of technical stuff. That made a huge difference, I must say. Also, *Thick As A Brick* is kind of a zenith of Jethro Tull's earlier era of camaraderie. There was a real social and band kind of feeling at that point, and that saw us through a few great years together."

Hitting a new level of proficiency and verve, both in terms of writing and performance, the Jethro Tull we hear on *Thick As A Brick* are brimming with confidence and very much united as an interwoven unit. But there remains no doubt that Anderson was in charge and propelling the whole lofty project forward with his formidable willpower and unerring desire to create something that would excite himself, never mind his band's rapidly-expanding fan base. Remarkably, he remembers the process of composing the album as being a swift and intuitive one that picked up its own unstoppable momentum from the start and galloped to a satisfying conclusion as his band mates clicked into gear around him.

"I'd get up early in the morning and start writing, as I do to this day, and then in the afternoon I'd go into rehearsal with the other guys and tack whatever I'd written that morning onto what we'd been rehearsing the previous day," he says. "When I started all I had was the acoustic guitar part and *'Hope you don't mind if I sit this one out...'* [*Thick As A Brick*'s opening lyric]. That was day one of rehearsal, and so it went on, and within a period of about a week or 10 days we had written and rehearsed the whole album. It was a very speedy process, and because I was the only writer, it was like being a conductor with an orchestra, trying to get the other guys to realise this masterplan that I was evolving. They didn't have the foggiest clue what was going on, and they probably thought I was faintly barking mad when I'd come in with another bit of music that they were supposed to learn on the spot while recapping what we'd done the day before as well. But very quickly we had it complete and in a form that allowed us to go in and play a lot of it live in the studio."

Bearing in mind the fact that *TAAB* comprises one single piece of music and that there are virtually no gaps within which a crafty studio engineer could perform acts of seam-disguising trickery, it must have been one hell of a challenge to make it through individual takes without one element or another conspiring to send the musicians scurrying back to the beginning again for another go. In fact, having revisited the album in some detail to oversee the forthcoming remixed version and to prepare for its live resurrection this coming spring, even Anderson was surprised by the feats of instrumental derring-do that his band pulled off back in '72.

"When Steven Wilson did the stereo mixes and 5.1 surround mixes of *Thick As A Brick* during the latter part of last year, he sent me a rough mix, leaving off all the guitar solos and flute solos, just to demonstrate just how much of it had actually been played live," he explains. "I was *astonished* to realise that much of it was played live in the studio with very few overdubs, and even in some places, the guitar and the vocal were recorded live together because you can plainly hear the vocal leaking over into the guitar track and vice



Tartan barmy: Anderson checks in.

JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY



Ian with *TAAB* touring partners Scott Hammond, Dave Goodier, John O'Hara and Florian Opahle.

If You Build It...

"I didn't want to go back there!" said **Ian Anderson** on ***Thick As A Brick 2***. But he did. Even a new *St. Cleve Chronicle*.

As the observant among you will have noticed, Ian Anderson is poised to release their first studio album since 2003's *Rupi's Dance*, and it's a wholesale follow-up to the original *Thick As A Brick*. Like its predecessor, it's a single, continuous piece of music and a concept album; something, you suspect, that Anderson has been extremely reluctant to do, mindful of the muddled response first time round, and keen to keep his music moving forward. However, some things are just meant to be.

"The expectations of other people are the thing that probably kept me away from taking it seriously for a long time," he says. "It's been put to me a couple of times over the last 10 years or so, to do a follow-up, but it was Derek Shulman of Gentle Giant, who came to me as a record company executive rather than as a musician or a fan, saying it would be really great to do something new based on *TAAB*. I said: 'I don't want to go back there, Derek!' But he kept pressing me. I said I'd give it some thought for a couple of minutes and clearly I did!"

Written and recorded within a startlingly brief period of time during 2011, *Thick As A Brick 2: Whatever Happened To Gerald Bostock?* (pictured below right) is an album that will be impossible to listen to without the spectre of the original looming. But it's clear that Anderson has embraced the comparison and invested it in a suitably poignant theme – the passing of time, the forward trudge of mortal life, the limitless choices that we face at a young age and the unmistakable sense that, freewill be damned, what we become as adults is destiny.

"If there's one thing that makes it come alive for me as a project, it's the idea of what would happen to somebody 40 years on," says Anderson. "It's about my own expectations of life and what happens to me and what might have happened to me if I had followed a different path. It's an interesting, slightly intellectual proposition, that maybe there is that almost pre-ordained, Kismet-like future. I find that fascinating. It's essentially summed up on this album in a part that's entitled *What Ifs, Maybes And Might-Have-Beens*."

As its subtitle implies, *TAAB2* reintroduces us to the prodigious Gerald Bostock, 40 years on from his triumph and subsequent disqualification from that fateful poetry contest. If you're a stickler for detail, however, you may wish to take a deep breath. Anderson has tinkered with his creation, revealing that Bostock is older than previously advertised.

"I'm at pains to explain that at the time of the contest his parents lied about his age and he was actually nine years old when his poem won," he insists. "When he was disqualified he was 10. It's basically because I have to make Gerald Bostock 50 years old this year, not 48, because I like round numbers! But we now see Gerald Bostock as a defrocked evangelical priest, as a highly-paid investment banker that everyone hates, as mental and physical casualty of the recent desert conflicts, as an ordinary man who plays with his toy train set and has a wife who cooks him Fray Bentos pies, and we also see him on the album cover as an ex-MP. It's exploring life's endless possibilities."

> **"It's about my own expectations of life and what might have happened if I'd followed a different path..."**
> **Ian Anderson**

Although manifestly more serious in lyrical terms than the original *TAAB*, which Anderson now describes as "quite a lot of silliness, pretty much all the way through", the sequel does retain plenty of its forerunner's essence, not least through a return to that iconic mock newspaper artwork which has been painstakingly updated for the 21st century.

"Forty years on the *St Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser* is StCleve.com, an online parish magazine for St Cleve, Linwell and Little Cruddock," Anderson explains. "The original album cover was sitting on my desk during all the time that I was writing the sequel 40 years later, because I felt I had to have some of those elements moving on into the modern day.

Beyond the tongue-in-cheek side, it's about using social media to allow communities to interact with each other - quite a binding force, particularly for smaller communities where people are perhaps less likely to knock on each other's doors. I think that's a great thing."

For those of us who don't live in the fictional St Cleve, there'll soon be an opportunity to make direct contributions to the revamped newspaper, something that clearly delights Anderson.

"One of the things we'll be inviting our fans to do is to be local reporters for StCleve.com," he says with a chuckle. "They'll be able to send in their own spoof stories to go on the website. People will have fun with that!"

Once again mixed by Steven Wilson, *TAAB2* looks certain to be one of progressive rock's biggest talking points of the year. Following up such a revered and seminal record could be construed as a huge risk, but if there are two things that Ian Anderson does not lack, it's confidence in his own music and a refreshing disregard for how it may be received.

"I wanted to make something that appealed to me, on both musical and intellectual levels," he concludes. "I think there's some great stuff on there, and the band are brilliant. Some people will think it's great. Some people will say: 'Bloody hell! What is this old prat on about?' but frankly, in someone else's immortal words, I don't give a damn!" **DL**

See Ian's new parish magazine at StCleve.com, and our new eight-page print version (right) free with issue.



Tull's *TAAB* crew pipe up.

CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS

MARTIN BARRE, guitar/lute

"We didn't merely go along with 'Ian's demands'. We were all involved."



BARRY PLUMMER

The guitarist isn't fully convinced that *Thick As A Brick* was conceived as a concept album in response to the misguided fact that *Aqualung* was perceived in this manner.

"There were a few songs on *Aqualung* which were connected by a conceptual theme, if you want to use that term. But my recollection is that *Thick As A Brick* came together when we locked ourselves away in a basement and worked on the music for about two months. The only time we ever came up for air was when we went to the local café, which was full of builders, and had the plainest lunch you could possibly imagine. It was far removed from the sort of rock star image we should have been enjoying after *Aqualung*'s success!"

This intense period of composing and rehearsing stood the band in good stead when they finally went into the studio. Barre recalls that the recording sessions were long, but essentially smooth.

"We knew exactly what was expected of all of us, and worked long into the night to get the right sounds. To be fair, this was very much about Ian's idea of how everything should sound. Of course, he was the driving force. But to suggest the rest of us merely went along with his demands is to undervalue what we brought to the project. We were all involved in getting the right sounds."

Barre still isn't convinced that the album is genuinely conceptual in flavour, and argues that the term itself is a little misleading when used to describe *Thick As A Brick*.

"I'm never sure what people mean when they call it a concept album. What exactly is the concept? Yes, the music all hangs together, but for me there's no concept going on at all. And some of it works, while other bits plainly do not." **MD**

versa, so a lot of it was done in a live context."

In stark contrast to the somewhat thin and sonically-emaciated sound of *Aqualung* – flaws that, in fairness, had little impact on the record's success, and maybe even gave it a more idiosyncratic quality, increasing its charm as a result – *Thick As A Brick* is an exuberant, well-rounded effort in audio terms, and even prior to its Wilson makeover practically leapt from the speakers and decorated the walls with vivid aural brush strokes. Recorded in London's Morgan Studios at the end of 1971, it stood in great contrast to many of the multi-layered studio creations of that era because it never stopped sounding like a bona fide rock band feeding off each other's energy and enthusiasm. Anderson attributes that quality to the fact that, unlike many of his peers, he elected to present the music in its purest possible form, without shrouding everything in needlessly ornate decoration or thick swathes of disorientating reverb.

"Yeah, it was all done in Morgan Studio 2, the smaller of the studios there, which was more intimate and with a dryer, deader sound that was better for acoustic music, which is essentially what a lot of *Thick As A Brick* is," states Anderson. "We didn't want it to be awash with echoes and effects. There are effects and various treatments of vocals on there, but it's relatively speaking quite a dry sound. It's one of the things you can do to make things sound a little sweeter, whack a bit of echo on it. But the rather dry, in-your-face approach means that you can hear every nuance and every error or little smidgen of technical imperfection that mars it. It's a bit like when you wake up in the morning before you put your make-up on. You can't hide unless you add all those softening effects that cover the blemishes."

In-keeping with the pin-sharp focus of the music itself, *Thick As A Brick*'s artwork was also a million miles away from the surreal fantasies beloved of many of Tull's



MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

In spite of being Number One in the charts with *Thick As A Brick* the US audiences hooted and whistled for *Aqualung*.



It was expensive to put together packaging-wise as no-one had done it before. Then Lennon's *Some Time In New York City* came out – a pale imitation.

contemporaries. Anderson had been hugely dissatisfied with the cover art for *Aqualung*, and was enraged by the fact that his request that the hunched figure on the sleeve should not resemble his own image in any way had been studiously ignored. Consequently, when it came to presenting the follow-up, he insisted on a much more hands-on approach and, in collaboration with Jeffrey Hammond, John Evan and Roy Eldridge from Chrysalis Records, pieced together the spoof newspaper known as the *St Cleve Chronicle And Linwell Advertiser* himself, spending slightly longer on the project than he had on recording the actual album.

"The curious thing was that Terry Ellis, who at that point was still our manager, really didn't like the *Thick As A Brick* cover," he recalls, with obvious amusement. "He thought it was silly and had gone too far. He didn't even like the idea of it. I suppose it was a bit radical to do an album cover that was a newspaper, but Terry rather liked the idea that it was his job to do the album covers and he'd been the man behind commissioning the artists for *Stand Up* and *Benefit* and *Aqualung* – and then suddenly when it came to *Thick As A Brick* it was all taken out of his hands. I was doing it along with Jeffrey and John and Roy, who had a background in local small-town newspapers as a journalist, and so suddenly it wasn't Terry's baby anymore and he was a bit miffed, and didn't like it. But, of course, the album cover was very successful. It was a big part of it. In crude commercial terms it was a marketing dream, really."

As Anderson relates, with barely suppressed glee, another person who was probably not overly pleased when confronted

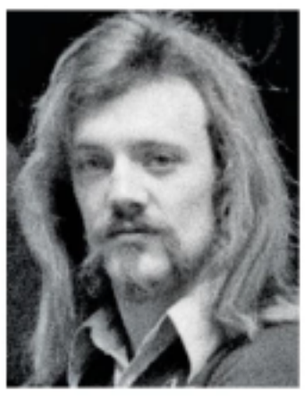
In America we met our match. We were Number One but the crowd were shouting 'play *Aqualung*!'

Tull's *TAAB* crew pipe up.

CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS

BARRIEMORE BARLOW, percussion

"The sum total was greater than the components. We had chemistry!"



JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY

The drummer feels that *Thick As A Brick* was much more of a band effort than is recognised these days.

"I remember vividly the process of making this album. *TAAB* was very much a collaborative piece of work, although latterly not necessarily recognised as such. I recall musical input other than Ian's on this particular album. That is not in any way to detract from Ian's absolute genius and role as very much the star and main man."

Barlow insists that each member of the band was given a chance to really come to the fore on this album.

"To a degree, a free reign was given which led to uniquely fresh and inspired creativity, with a mutual empathy between us all. The character and dynamics of the individual players shone through. Contributions to the musical arrangement also prevailed, all in keeping with this genre where the musicians' contributions counted and mattered. It was a joy! It was a family.

"I believe in this instance, the sum total to be greater than the component parts. A chemistry, again and with respect, latterly not necessarily appreciated."

But while he has fond memories of playing on the album, Barlow is disappointed with Anderson's plan to play the whole of the album on his upcoming tour, without his involvement, and also that of Martin Barre.

"I am aware, that my drum parts have been meticulously notated in preparation for Ian Anderson's Jethro Tull plays *Thick As A Brick* tour!

"On the one hand I'm flattered, on the other, I find this galling! Added to which, the mysterious absence of Martin Barre dumbfounds me.

"Surely this is a missed live opportunity for getting close to recapturing the original magic we once collectively had, and in so doing, appeal to a greater live audience? What a shame!

"All in all, I have very mixed feelings about the album now. There's a nostalgic love and joy, but now it's coupled with current disappointment." **MD**



It had been an extremely long night and some extremely strong coffee was needed...

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Tull's *TAAB* crew pipe up.

CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS

ROY ELDRIDGE, sleeve art

"It says so much about the record industry at the time that so much went into creating the art."



WAYNE TIPPETTS

At the time that *Thick As A Brick* was being put together, Eldridge was head of publicity at Chrysalis Records. But his background in working as a journalist on a local newspaper was to prove invaluable when it came to putting together the lavish packaging which was become part of the *Thick As A Brick* folklore.

"Ian had the idea of doing a mock local paper, which was to be called *The St Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser*. But it was to be done meticulously and properly. Given my experience in this field, I was asked to help put this together. There was as much work put into making the paper as convincing as possible as there was put into the music."

Eldridge and the band worked long hours to get everything as correct as possible. "We really did have fun doing it, but if it was to work at all then the whole paper had be authentic. So, we did copy everything you'd find in a local paper, even down to the local sports reports. I oversaw and edited everything, but it was the band that wrote most of what you see. We also has running gags throughout, and even a connect up the dots children's picture.

"We also got in everyone we knew to pose for the photos. So you can spot Terry Ellis, their manager, members of the road crew and also people from the label. If you were hanging around when a photo needed to be done, then you were roped in, simple as that."

The result was a 12-page paper of which any local town could be proud. Pride of place went to the *Thick As A Brick* lyrics, which were printed on page seven.

"I think it says so much about the record industry at the time that so much time and effort was put into creating this paper. It was a lavish idea. I'm just thankful I didn't have to work on a second edition. That might have killed me!" **MD**

"Performing *TAAB* today would be a huge test. It's not been a 10-day break, it's been 40 years."

with the *Thick As A Brick* sleeve, was a certain ex-Beatle...

"It was an expensive album to put together, packaging-wise, but it paid off because no one had done anything like that before," he states. "But, a week or two after *Thick As A Brick* was released, John Lennon came out with an album [1972's *Some Time In New York City*], the front cover of which was supposedly the *New York Times*. Unfortunately, by the time he found out about *Thick As A Brick*, his album had already gone to press and it was too late to change it, and he came out with a very pale imitation of a newspaper front page, right after our album. But poor guy! Two people had the same idea at around the same time, but didn't know about each other's respective efforts, and ours came out before his. I imagine that annoyed him quite a lot, to find that someone had beaten him to it with the same idea – but not only that, they'd done it in a far more elaborate, detailed way."

Returning to the big venues in the US that they had conquered amid post-*Aqualung* euphoria a year earlier, the Tull crew soon discovered that despite its commercial success, their new album was proving to be something of a bone of contention with large parts of their new-found audience. Particularly given that the band were routinely extending the album into a even more lavish and improvisational affair, famously pausing midway through to indulge in outrageously self-indulgent comic interludes that stood little chance of surviving the flight across the great divide between British and American notions of humour, *Thick As A Brick* was arguably destined to bewilder those who discovered its creators via the succinct likes of *Locomotive Breath*.

"It was okay in the UK, but it was a bit tough in other parts of Europe because they didn't understand the English and some of the nuances of the schoolboy-ish humour that went with the performance," Anderson admits. "But yes, it was in America where I met my match, because through radio play they just saw Jethro Tull as a rock band and the band

responsible for *Locomotive Breath* and *Aqualung* and stuff that was a bit more rabble-rousing, so waltzing into town with *Thick As A Brick*, even though it was a number one *Billboard* album at the time, people were shouting us down with hoots and whistles and 'play *Aqualung*!' and so on. At the end of the American tour I nearly hung my hat up. I said to our manager Terry Ellis: 'That's it, I'm done!' I don't want to do this anymore and I'm never coming back!' I felt a little bit, probably petulantly and childishly, like The Beatles after Shea Stadium. It was just such a depressing thought that people would just come and scream and shout and whistle and generally not listen to what you came to do. I found that so dispiriting and it took me quite a while to recover from it. It's one of the reasons that we've never really played lots of *Thick As A Brick*, because for a lot of the more rock-orientated fans it would be a step too far. I genuinely thought we'd never attempt anything like that again, but you never know what's around the corner..."

This coming April, Ian Anderson and his solo band will bite the bullet once again, taking *Thick As A Brick* out on the road in its florid, extravagant entirety for the first time since 1972. With so much distance between the vexed birth of the album as an onstage entity and this brave second attempt, the prospect of recreating the album with sufficient accuracy and authenticity to satisfy the die-hards, while still making it sound exciting and relevant for the ever-expanding modern prog audience, must be a thoroughly daunting one, especially for Anderson's current henchmen — most of whom were far too young or, in some cases, a mere twinkle in the eye of the future when *TAAB* was first released. Even for Anderson, who one suspects is seldom daunted by anything other than the rigorous demands he makes of himself, revisiting such a challenging piece of work and delivering it afresh in the live arena must have prompted a few deep breaths and careful preparation.

"The really big challenge with a lot of the music that's on it is that unfortunately, and rather stupidly, I'm doing too many things at the same time!" he laughs. "There are places when I'm playing guitar parts, and maybe there's an electric guitar part going on as well but I'm playing acoustic guitar, singing *and* playing flute at the same time! They're crossing over at certain points. You can do one of the three or two of three, but you certainly can't do three out of the three because I don't have enough hands or lungs to do that! There are choices that have to be made, and sometimes there might be an important flute part that is a key part, and it has to be inevitably played by another instrument. That's very unsatisfactory because it's very obviously something that should be played on the flute. Right at the beginning of *Thick As A Brick* there's a flute line that overlaps with the vocals and the acoustic guitar, so things have to give, and that can be irritating. But at the time of making the record you don't really think about that. You want to make it good, you find a line that works and you put it in anyway. But then when it comes to doing it live you have to make compromises. That's the way it goes sometimes, unfortunately."

At the age of 64, Ian Anderson may be one of prog's most illustrious veterans, but his sheer energy and enthusiasm have barely diminished one iota in the 40 years since *TAAB*'s creation. Even so, the physical demands of performing must take their toll, and it's a simple fact of life that no matter how fit, healthy and passionate you might be, time will catch you up and slow you down eventually. Perhaps the key to Anderson's remarkable ability to keep the accelerator floored is that he never stopped and never succumbed to the fatigue and disillusionment that has stopped many a great musician in their tracks.

"That may be true. Dear old Barrie Barlow gave up playing for a long time, but he came on stage a few years ago to join us on stage at the Royal Festival Hall and played *Heavy Horses* and an excerpt from *Thick As A Brick*. At the end of rehearsal



"I'll be ready should the time come." Martin Barre: has guitar, will travel.

JESSE WILD/GUITARIST MAGAZINE/GETTY IMAGES

All Barre One

Is Tull's shifting line-up a cause for concern? Martin Barre reveals all.

It would appear that, right now, the future for Jethro Tull is uncertain.

Barre himself will not be involved with the upcoming *Thick As A Brick* tour. This is solely an Ian Anderson series of dates, with Tull now on hiatus.

"There are no plans for any Jethro Tull activity this year or even next year," reveals the guitarist. "The earliest we shall get back together is 2014. Ian and I sat down and talked it over and decided that it was for the best to take this break..."

However when further quizzed on exactly how this decision was reached, Barre had to admit that it was actually out of his hands and down to Anderson alone: "Well, it was actually Ian who contacted me and suggested we go our separate ways for the moment. I thought it was a good idea anyway, because it gives me the chance to try other things."

Barre, though, is a little reticent to suggest a definite return for Jethro Tull, admitting that it's a decision that will almost certainly be made without any consultation with him.

"As far as I'm aware, Ian wants to do more with Tull in the future. I am under the impression that this would include both touring and recordings. But I just have to wait for the call from him, which won't be any time soon. However, I'm not sure when, or even whether, that will come."

In the meantime, Barre has put together his own band and has two dates lined up. The Martin Barre Band play The Borderline in London on April 21, and the following night are at The Wharf in Tavistock, with more planned for later in the year and stretching in 2013.

"I will be playing a lot of Jethro Tull material. Maybe the sort of thing we haven't done live for ages, but these are songs that I really love. With my own band I will be free to do them at last, and in my own way. I'd like to think that I can add my own interpretations to the material, and that there are a lot of people who will be interested in what I'm doing."

He's also not forgetting about *Thick As A Brick*.

"There will be passages from the album included in my live set. This is a chance to play the music the way I feel it should be played. I will focus on those parts of *TAAB* that I always felt worked."

Right now, there are no plans for Barre to record, although he won't fully rule this out.

"I have been thinking of possibly recording or even filming some of the shows for a release. And there's also talk of a studio album as well. Actually, it's nice for me to be in a position where I get to make decisions. It's breath of fresh air to know anything's possible. But one thing I'm not doing is turning my back on Tull. I will be ready should the call come." **MD**



It was the height of the band's cameraderie that would carry them through "a good few years" says Anderson.

JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY

CONSTRUCTION PARTNERS

Tull's *TAAB* crew pipe up.

TERRY ELLIS, ver management

"Following the success of *Aqualung* with *Thick As A Brick*? We weren't happy."



The man who managed Jethro Tull at the time has mixed emotions on the album.

"If you were to ask me as a businessman when I was happy that Ian had decided to follow up the success of *Aqualung* with something like *Thick As A Brick*, then the answer is plainly no. After all, we'd sold over three million copies of *Aqualung* in America alone. Now, that meant we weren't just appealing to the diehard Tull fans, but had picked up a new audience. Anyone looking at the business model for the band at the time would have wanted more of the same."

However, Ellis was – and is – sufficiently tuned into what the band were trying to do to appreciate the other side of the argument.

"Now, here I have to make it very clear that for me, and I believe anyone else involved with the band, Ian Anderson is Jethro Tull, and Jethro Tull is Ian Anderson. I'm sorry for someone like Martin Barre who's been there for so long, but that's the reality. And Ian has always put his artistic integrity and value far above a commercial price. He has always been less concerned about record sales than the next creative development. So, Ian was never going to come up with *Aqualung 2*, and as the band's manager I fully supported what he wanted to do. And as long as he could release a record that allowed him to play live then that's was his job done."

Ironically, and this wasn't lost on Ellis, the album achieved something the band had never had before in the States.

"It got to Number One, which was the first time we'd had that level of success in America. *Aqualung* only made it to Number seven. So there was a momentum we gained that helped sell *Thick As A Brick*." **MD**

"The big challenge with *TAAB2* is the music. Rather stupidly I'm doing too many things at the same time!"

I noticed he was sweating profusely and looking quite agitated," the tireless frontman recalls. "I said: 'Are you okay? You look a bit on the verge of cardiac arrest!' and he said: 'Yeah, I haven't played drums for 10 years and I'd forgotten how hard it was!' He was only playing very occasionally for fun at the time. So when musicians decide to put the tools of their trade aside, it's quite hard to get back there, to that point where you're really flying. And the older you get, the harder it is."

With that in mind, do you have to be very strict with yourself in terms of keeping your playing technique finely honed and match ready?

"Definitely. For example, it's been less than three weeks since I last played, and yet I picked up the flute last night to play some stuff and I thought: 'Bloody hell, only two weeks have gone by and I'm already feeling like I have a mountain to climb'. It's a couple of flights of stairs to get back to that physical and dextrous level again. You lose it so quickly if you don't play every day. I try to play every day. I don't *always* play every day, but most often, two out of three days I'll play guitar and flute for a little while to make sure that I'm mentally and physically keeping it up. Christmas and New Year's is a difficult time, because obviously everything changes for a while and you do family stuff and catch up with emails and visiting people and all of that. I was very lazy over Christmas and didn't keep up my guitar and flute playing, so I can imagine that the guys who played on *Thick As A Brick* in 1972, if they had to perform the album again now it would be a huge challenge. They haven't just had a 10-day break. We're talking almost 40 years since some of them performed. It's hard to expect people to be able to keep it up for their entire lives."

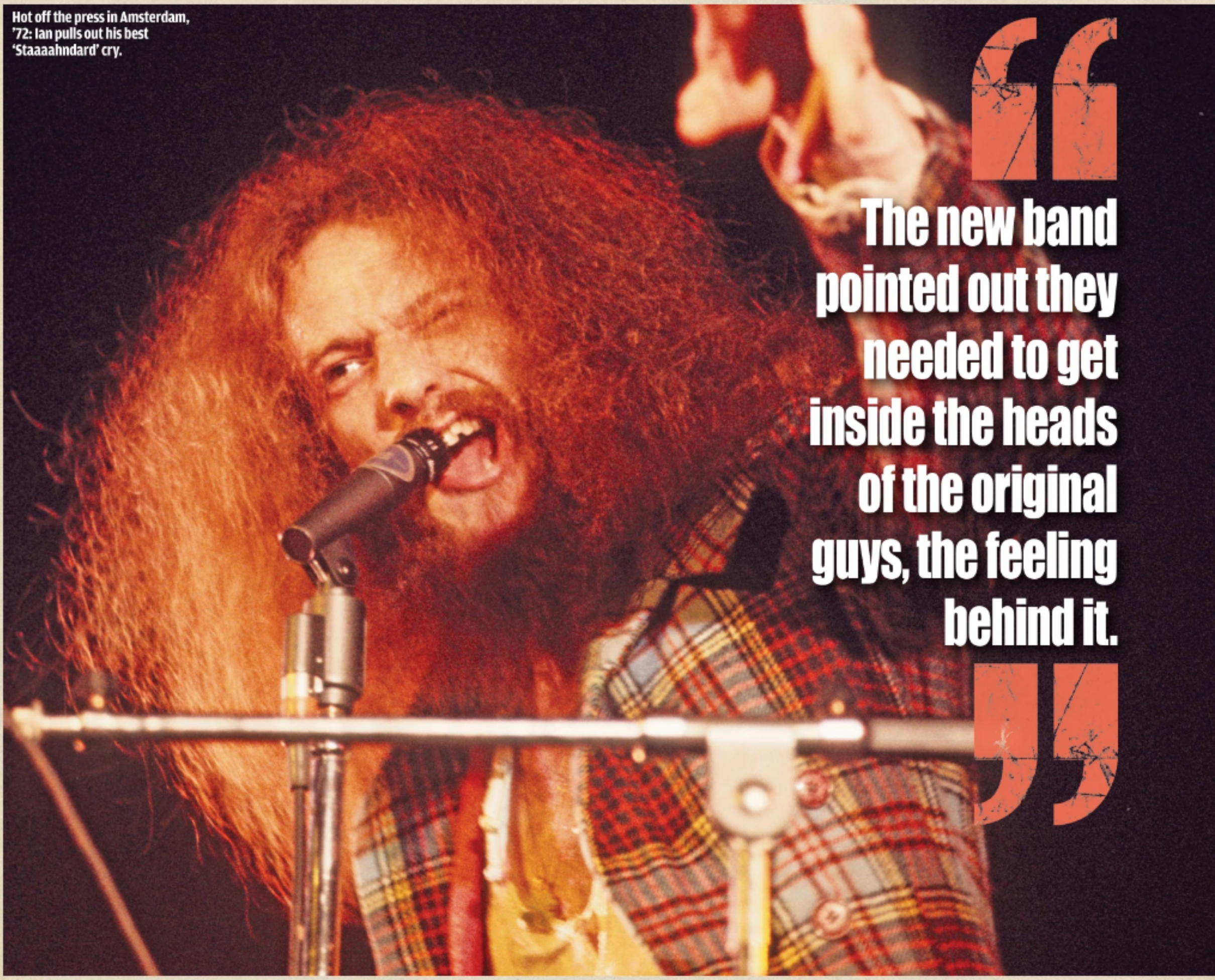
He talks very fondly about the line-up that recorded *Thick As A Brick* back in the winter that joined '71 to '72, and particularly about the chemistry between them and how the departure of bassist Jeffrey Hammond in 1976, in particular, irrevocably altered the nature of Tull as an artistic entity,

dissolving that one cherished feeling of a united creative team and band of brothers making music and travelling the world together once and for all. But since that time, Anderson has been steering the ship solo. These days, he recruits the musicians he needs to realise his vision, and seems perfectly happy with that way of working. But he does express a certain air of wistful regret that he was never able to recapture the one-for-all spirit of the old days. That said, the forthcoming tour promises to be a bonding experience, as the current incarnation of the band take on one of the great concept albums and endeavour to bring it back to life again.

"I was just editing some interviews that the band did for the DVD that comes with the new studio album we've just made [see sidebar for details!], and I was listening with interest to what they said," Anderson notes. "They talked about their relationship with *Thick As A Brick* as it *was*. Some of them weren't born at the time; some of them were in their early years and maybe heard it later on in life. Only one of the guys admits to or claims to have owned a copy, let alone to have known any of the music, so they all came to it later on and they've only played bits of it live on stage before. My guitar player, Florian Opahle, he's one of those younger people who has a great curiosity about the history of music and the technique of guitar playing. So like the other guys, he's had the opportunity to listen to the original multi-tracks of *Thick As A Brick* so that he can go and listen to individual instruments and get inside the music. Doing that, they can really take the album apart and listen to it in great detail, and more easily learn the part and understand the relationship between instruments, which is sometimes a little harder when you hear the whole mix and everything's playing at the same time. So they've had the benefit of getting *inside* the album, as well as having played 15 minutes of the album live over the last few years."

If anything marks *Thick As A Brick* out as a timeless and genuinely progressive work of art, it is that its composer's initial refusal to revisit its labyrinthine splendour has now given way to a very clear and obvious delight at the prospect of blowing away four decades' worth of cobwebs and, most importantly of all, that he has every confidence that an album he made with tongue planted firmly in cheek has somehow evolved into something that still has the spirit and substance to resonate today.

"The band were all quick to point out that they needed to get inside the heads of the guys playing that music, to try to find the right balance between imitation and inspiration," Anderson concludes. "Because you obviously want to put a bit of yourself into it too, but you've got to understand how the original musicians played it and the *feeling* behind it. There's so much *life* in *Thick As A Brick*, even now."



GUSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY

Hot off the press in Amsterdam, '72: Ian pulls out his best 'Staaaahndard' cry.

"The new band pointed out they needed to get inside the heads of the original guys, the feeling behind it."



PROG ROCKS!

In 2011, as the huge Prog Rocks! reissues campaign kicked off, *Prog* brought members of **Jethro Tull**, **Gentle Giant**, **Hawkwind**, **Marillion**, **Genesis** and **Flower Kings** together in a room to talk about the music they helped make famous.

Words: **Malcolm Dome**

As the world of progressive music continues to evolve and goes through a new golden era, so we are about to enter a tremendously exciting period of reissues from the extensive and acclaimed EMI back catalogue, under the banner of Prog Rocks!

Prog Rocks! features such celebrated names as Jethro Tull, Van der Graaf Generator, Supertramp, Genesis and Barclay James Harvest. It also highlights the artier side of the prog spectrum such as Gong, Roxy Music and Hatfield And The North, neo-prog in the shape of Marillion, Pallas and Queensrÿche and modern day movers and shakers like Pain Of Salvation, The Flower Kings, Transatlantic, Long Distance Calling and …Trail of Dead.

To launch what this historic campaign, we brought together some of those musicians responsible for a blaze of astonishing music on the labels through more than four decades. So, on a typically English summer's afternoon – a mix of heavy rain and hazy sunshine (somehow seeming so quintessentially prog), the following gathered for the ultimate prog summit: Ian Anderson (Jethro Tull),Steve Hackett (Genesis, solo artist), Mark Kelly (Marillion), Ray Shulman (Gentle Giant) and Roine Stolt (The Flower Kings, Transatlantic). Somewhat fittingly Hawkwind captain Dave Brock was a non-corporeal presence via a speaker phone from somewhere in outer space. Read on for the thoughts of this celebrated quorum.

Prog: Thank you all for taking part in our Prog Rocks! roundtable. This is a campaign that traces the genesis of a movement. It's about thought-provoking, intelligent music that now goes back over 40 years. What is it about this style of music that's proved to be so enduring?

Ian Anderson: I was always quite happy to be part of what's termed the progressive movement. For me, it grew out of the mid-60s, with artists like the Graham Bond Organisation, some of whom would go on to join Cream, and Jimi Hendrix. This was where progressive rock began – and the term itself was always nice and loose.

Mark Kelly: For me, it's always been about having good songs. There has to be a melody and interesting lyrics. The fact that Marillion's songs were a lot longer than three-minute pop songs didn't alter this basis. We had four or five minute songs, and sometimes tracks could stretch to 15 minutes. But that's because we had a lot to say and couldn't do it in just three minutes. But this was valid music, and also music where the melody and lyrics were the core. ➔

The Prog Rocks! pantheon, from left: Mark Kelly, Roine Stolt, Steve Hackett, Ray Shulman and Ian Anderson.

TINA KORHONEN

Isn't it one of the fallacies of the media to say progressive bands only wrote very long tracks? All the bands here had the ability to write short, beautifully melodic singles which often charted. Marillion obviously had *Kayleigh* and *Lavender*, Jethro Tull won a Grammy in 1989 for 1987's *Crest Of A Knave*. And Genesis were very at home with the singles format...

Steve Hackett: I think it was Richard Strauss who first used the term 'progressive' in music, and he was referring to Edward Elgar, in particular to *The Dream Of Gerontius*, which sounds like it could easily be the title of a prog rock album. That means the term itself has been around music for over 100 years.

Anderson: What I love most about the 'progressive' idea is that it implies a restlessness. It suggests the notion of moving on and being different, and a curiosity, as well as the idea of never being caught in the confines of one particular genre. The concept of being restless and always looking for fresh horizons is one that appeals to me.

Dave Brock: When I think about what 'progressive' means to me, it suggests constant change; that something which has certainly been true of Hawkwind throughout our career. I think it's true of every band that you're always looking to establish a style which is instantly recognised as being yours, and yours alone.

One of the things about us is that we've always been part of the alternative scene. We've done lots of free festivals, and still do, and we are viewed as an alternative band. But we're also progressive in the way that we've never stood still, but have constantly shifted musically. For instance, we've pushed the boundaries through use of electronics. It did get us a lot of criticism from some parts of the media who saw us as using only three chords, or even one. It never mattered to us if one of our singles were played on the radio or not. If a song needed to be 10 minutes long, then that's what it was. That was what was great about the prog scene – anything was possible.

"When punk arrived there was a lot of showbiz about prog. We disappeared up our own arses!"
Ian Anderson



"I was always interested in intelligent rock music." Roine Stolt talks musical roots.

TINA KORHONEN, GETTY IMAGES

It appears that every band in the early days had an individuality. Genesis brought a pastoral, classical feel to their music. For Jethro Tull, it was blues-based and also had jazz. Ray, I suppose Gentle Giant had a baroque, classical appeal married with rock.

Ray Shulman: Well, you have to appreciate the musical journey from the early days of rock'n'roll to what we know as progressive rock. What we had was pan-genre approach, in that everything was possible and could be brought into the music, which was different to the way rock'n'roll had started out. For me, I'd look back to the Beach Boys album *Pet Sounds* and say that could have been the birth of what we know as progressive rock...

"Prog to me means constant change – that's certainly true of Hawkwind's career."
Dave Brock

Kelly: I think you also have to look at the way that a movement like punk came along and affected everything. Because that certainly seemed to sweep a lot away.

Anderson: I think it's true to say that by the time punk arrived, there was a lot of showbiz about prog. You had people noodling away and heavily into complex techniques almost for their own sake. It was good to be part of the scene at the time, but there's no doubt that a lot of us were up our own arses. I include myself. And you can understand the appeal, it was rather warm up there! But something was needed come along and blow this attitude away.

Much is made of the impact of punk on prog, of the media trying to use it as a tool to do away with all that had gone before. Hindsight shows none of that ultimately happened. But what effect did it have on you guys at the time?

Hackett: I look at punk as the new broom that swept everything clean, But what we then had to deal with was ignorance being hailed as virtue.

Anderson: While that is true, let's not forget that out of punk we got The Stranglers, who were really just a bunch of old hippies playing quite intelligent music. They rode on its coattails in order to get noticed. And the same is also true of The Police...

Mark and Roine, you're a little younger than the others. What was it that drew you in about the music?



"Richard Strauss first used the term, it's been round for 100 years!" Steve Hackett holds court.

Kelly: I'm going to let Roine deal with that, as I'm hardly new kid on the block. I've been doing it for about 30 years now!

Roine Stolt: I grew up in Sweden, and I never even heard the term 'progressive music'. I was always interested in intelligent rock music. You could hear the start of it all with The Beatles, I suppose. Firstly on the *Revolver* album, and then with *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *The White Album*. Over in America, you had bands like The Doors and even the more psychedelic artists like Jefferson Airplane were part of this. Slowly, there was a style developing, although I didn't know it as prog back then. You also have to include Frank Zappa and The Mothers Of Invention.

> "I'm hardly the new kid on the block. I've only been doing this for 30 years now!"
> **Mark Kelly**

I suppose I liked a lot of what Gentle Giant were doing, and got into Genesis around the time of *Nursery Cryme*. As for Tull, for me they probably turned into a progressive band when they did *A Passion Play* in 1973, which was two years before I made my first record.

Anderson: The prog bit of Jethro Tull was *A Passion Play* and *Thick As A Brick*. Everything else we've done was just a collection of songs. Yes, there have been concept albums in our history. But just because you've done a concept record doesn't necessarily make it progressive. In the same way that not every progressive album is going to be conceptual.

To my way of thinking, both Gentle Giant and Marillion stand for the best that prog rock can offer. Where as someone like Zappa was more progressive than anything else – and there is a distinction between these terms. Zappa mined music in his own way. He forged forward and cut new furrows. The media, though, helped to create the buzz and passion for the category of prog.

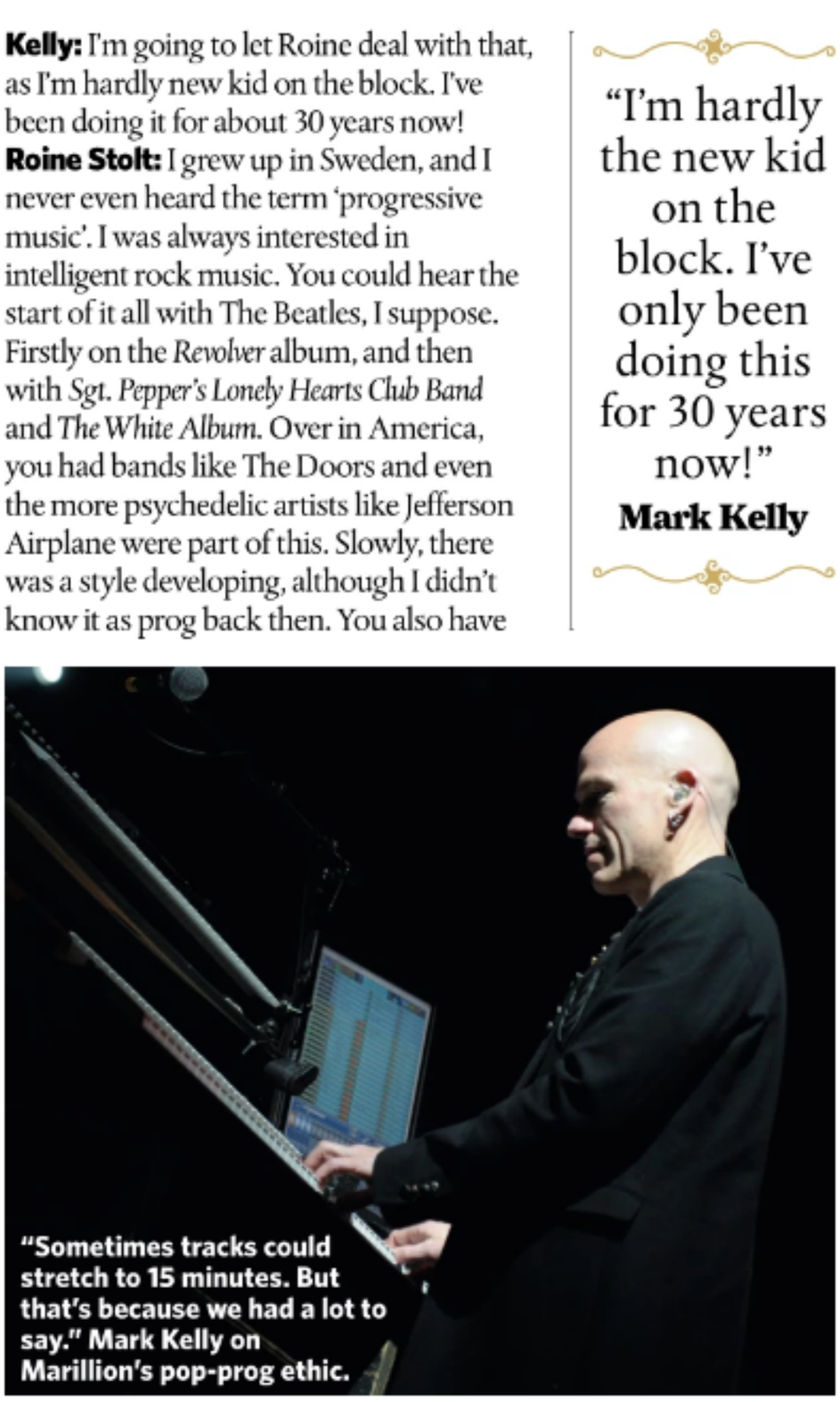
I feel punk was a cleaning out process, getting ready for the next generation to come along...

Shulman: But this wasn't the first time it had happened. For me, psychedelia did a similar job a decade earlier. And it happens with every generation. But you look back to why punk was inevitable, and the social climate tells its own story. We had a three-day week and all that sort of unrest. Bands singing about *The Hobbit* were never going to talk for the next generation.

Anderson: One of the most interesting things about punk was that a lot of the protagonists were actually into the sort of music we were all playing. I recall Johnny Rotten telling me not so long ago how much he liked *Aqualung*, and he was also a fan of early Genesis. These were among his great moments of revelation. He and Phil Collins had become cuddly mates. As I said I feel punk was a case of preparing for the next generation of musicians, not that I'm claiming that someone like Sid Vicious would have ended up making music like Gentle Giant – although who could tell!

Hackett: I recall Johnny Rotten saying when punk first happened that Genesis' music made him puke, but that could have been for public consumption; he might have been going home to listen to us. I actually bought the Sex Pistols' *Never Mind The Bollocks* when it first came out. I thought it was fun and obviously a joke, and very entertaining. Then suddenly it was the new standard by which everything else was judged.

Kelly: I think you saw when Marillion first got signed the way that a movement could almost be created. There was no progressive rock scene when we went to EMI. It was all about new romantics and new wave. So, what they did was invent a genre called the new era of prog. And there were about half-a-dozen other bands who fitted in with this term. They all ended up being signed as well, and some of them are still going.


"Sometimes tracks could stretch to 15 minutes. But that's because we had a lot to say." Mark Kelly on Marillion's pop-prog ethic.


"We had a pan-genre approach, everything was possible." Ray Shulman on Gentle Giant.

Anderson: What always amuses me is that people associate progressive music with long pieces of composition. The idea that somehow, while we love to fool around... well, you get on a roll, don't you? A good idea leads to another good idea And you develop that and reiterate that. It becomes very developmental in the songwriting process and you can't bear to miss something out. So you end up with a 10, 15 or 20-mimute song. But in reality was it just that we were stretching the moment out. It's kind of musical tantric sex – prolonging the moment, in the way that dear old Sting is supposed to practise.

Hackett: Does the term 'progressive' just have to be about this area of music, to be about rock, though? So much else has been put under the progressive or prog banner. Surely, it can just as easily apply to jazz, or many other music forms. Well, I think it's as much about the detail in songs. And the devil is in the detail. That's what turns me on about any kind of music I hear. It's the finessing of it. I'm a detail freak, and I can't help that…

One of the things a campaign like this does is highlight certain albums as being your classic ones, such as *Aqualung*, *Misplaced Childhood* or *Selling England By The Pound*. That's certainly the way a large part of your audience as well as the media tend to see it anyway. But do you, as the musicians who made the music, share those opinions? Or do you look at other work and wonder why it's not held up in the same light?

Ian Anderson: It's unreasonable to expect the average Joe to know each song on ➤



Poster boys: could this be the ultimate fantasy prog supergroup?

every album. So inevitably you're going to get certain albums regarded as being more classic than others.

Mark Kelly: It's amazing that when you talk to fans they can't believe you don't know all of your songs back to front!

Steve Hackett: I've had to go back and relearn a lot of the Genesis songs… because I can't remember how I played them in the first place.

Kelly: We all have songs that are incredibly popular. For us, it would obviously be *Kayleigh*, and you do get to the point where you can easily get fed up with it, But, you know what, I'm glad we do have that one, otherwise we wouldn't be here. But there are a lot of Marillion fans who know everything we've done, and their favourite moments from our career, the high points, usually coincide with how we think."

Hackett: It's the audience who own a catalogue, not the band or the record label, because they have an emotional connection to the music. It's the fans who've the strongest relationship with it.

Dave Brock: Don't you think that when we talk about classic albums, they're really millstones around our necks? They're the material that everyone expects you to play all the time.

> "Aren't classic albums like millstones?"
> **Dave Brock**
>
> "I quite enjoy playing millstones. In fact I'd love to play yours…"
> **Ian Anderson**

[At this point, Ian Anderson laughingly decides to flick V signs at the phone speaker from where emanates Dave Brock's disembodied voice, much to everyone's the amusement. Brock, of course, is totally oblivious to what's going on.]

Anderson: They're pretty good millstones to have. I quite enjoy playing my millstones. In fact, I'd love to play your millstones.

Dave, seeing Hawkwind live these days, you do perform a lot of new material. Is this to reinforce the idea that you are still a current and relevant band?

Brock: We're always trying to move forward. The fans expect us to play the old songs, and to do them exactly as they are on the albums. But we never do that. You have to move on as a musician.

Anderson: I'd be very happy to do *Kayleigh*. And I'm going to do *Nights In White Satin* at [forthcoming show] Canterbury Cathedral with Justin Hayward in December.

Talking of cathedrals, there does seem to be a strong connection between prog and church music. Especially when it comes to Christmas time. Jethro Tull, for example, are no strangers to the odd Yuletide tune, or a whole album of Christmas songs.

Anderson: Hymns and carols were the first music I performed. A little bit of that has stayed with me. Yes, it is a little cheesy to do a Christmas album. But I say we should revel in the cheesiness.

Steve, you've reinterpreted Genesis songs in a classical way, haven't you?

Hackett: I have, yes. And I sometimes wish that I'd worked with a real orchestra on the material, not just with a Mellotron. There's nothing wrong with the good old



Gentle Giants: Ray, Roine and Steve move into a different division on the roof of EMI.

Mell… Maybe it would be great to have the two side-by-side. Thinking about it, I love all types of music. Rock is only a part of it. Maybe the millstone is really rock itself.

Anderson: In the end any band is about the individuals who are in the line-up. They come and go. It's a bit like a football team...

Brock (*laughing mightily*): That's the way to look at it, as a football team! You've got a good striker, but he's a little over the top, and can't keep it together.

Anderson: That's exactly what makes all of our bands interesting, the characters of the individuals and what they bring in.

Hackett: Roine, what's it like for you when you're writing with a band?

Roine Stolt: With The Flower Kings, it's one guy who writes the music and then everyone gets involved with the arranging. With Transatlantic, we send each other music files by email. When we get together, we play bits and pieces, jamming really, and see where that goes.

Kelly: I remember Pete Trewavas, who plays bass for Transatlantic and Marillion, telling us that the writing process with the former was really quick. With Marillion, we can spend months coming up with ideas, and then do nothing about it until we're forced to record an album.

Hackett: When I joined Genesis, I advertised myself as being among other things a songwriter, But I didn't have the experience of writing that the other guys had. They were far more gifted in this area, and I learnt a lot from them. It also seems to me that however much you might try and write by committee, in the end it falls to the talented control freak in the band to superimpose his vision.

Brock: You're right, somebody has to be the captain, to be in charge.

Anderson: Much of what Jethro Tull have done has been down to me. I might come up with a riff, a few chords of a lyric and then throw it open to everyone else, to a degree. But even when you're inviting people's input, there has to be an editorial approach. 'Let me ask for your opinions – I'll ignore them anyway!'. Somebody has to sit alone in a room and come up with the songs, and that's always been me.

Kelly: Not having that sort of leader might explain why Marillion have only had one line-up change in 30 years...

Two, actually!

Kelly (*after very brief, slightly embarrassed pause*): You're right, two. But we don't have anyone who's imposed his vision on the rest of us.

Stolt: In The Flower Kings, I have the final say. But the others are always welcome to come up with ideas. Sometimes I'll listen, other times I won't. With Transatlantic, you'll come along with songs and there are bits you really like, but the rest of the band pick sections that you don't really care for. But you accept it.

Ray Shulman: With Gentle Giant, it was always me and Kerry Minnear who came up with most of the music, with my brother Phil responsible for the lyrics. But we never set out with an overall plan.

Anderson: I'd like to raise a spectre if I may, one Ray will recognise. Imagine being in your dressing room getting changed and ready to go onstage. The support band comes off and go into their dressing room, and through the walls you can hear them going fucking nuts at each other about certain musical mistakes! That happened every night when Gentle Giant supported us. It also happened with Curved Air. There are those bands who are so passionate about what they do that they're at each other's throats, and seem to hate each other. I suppose it's almost cathartic.

Shulman: That's partly because we had three brothers in the band! But most of the time we never took it beyond what you heard, Ian.

Hackett: But does it serve any purpose to give somebody a tongue lashing after a gig, when they've tried their best and just had an off night?

Shulman: (*laughing*) Keep them in their place, I say! That's what we did in Gentle Giant anyway.

Everyone here, even the comparatively younger musicians like Mark and Roine, have had lengthy careers. What do you put this longevity down to?

Hackett: We feel passionate about the music. In my case, I'm too incompetent to do anything else. Well, I might have been a third-rate cabbie! It's music that galvanises me. In the Genesis days, we'd have a great jam session and that could sometimes turn into a song. Personally, I've always been bad at writing face-to-face. But the others were more comfortable with it, maybe because they'd been to public school...

Anderson: Being in the showers together might have helped them!

Hackett: Ha ha, maybe!

Anderson: For me it's about having an unhealthy obsession and being driven. By most people's standards, I'm a workaholic, control freak kind of person, I like to think I'm a reasonably nice guy to my family and friends, but music is a passion. It's encouraging to know that, among our peers, there are those who've already died with their boots on. There's something rather glorious about going on to the end. Golf and fishing are not options. We should get a T-shirt made with that phrase!

Hackett: Do you think we'll all end up as classical musicians, or playing something like world music? Where do we go?

Kelly: We all have the desire to explore new things. Once you feel you've done everything in rock, perhaps you will turn to world music or classical.

Shulman: Gentle Giant were always as careerist as everyone else. But we never had the big song, or the huge album. We took it very seriously, but we were never just content just to be serious musicians. We wanted to be rock stars, and when it became obvious that this wasn't going to happen, we stopped.

Brock: As long as it's fun I wanna go on, and I always want to entertain people. When I was young, I collected New Orleans jazz records, and a lot of those guys were still playing when they were in their 70s and 80s. I never thought I'd be doing it at the same age *[today is in fact, Brock's 70th birthday]* – yet here I am!

Life Is A Long Song...

A maverick, a mogul and the maestro of his own destiny, **Ian Anderson** has approached his career as a conductor would his orchestra, bringing together disparate elements to create astonishing results. As he was annointed Prog God the Progressive Music Awards in 2013, the man himself sat down with *Prog* to look back on his life and ahead to his future, with or without Jethro Tull...

Words: **Chris Roberts** Photo Illustration: **Ian Naylor/Will Ireland**

Fifty one years since he first joined a band, Ian Anderson is still, it seems, always touring, writing, or recording. If you commend the 65-year-old on his durable drive and incredible work ethic, he says, "If you have a pretty good job that you enjoy doing, then a work ethic isn't difficult to find! If I was an airline pilot or brain surgeon or nuclear physicist or astronaut, I like to think I'd have the same work ethic because those are pretty good jobs too. But if I was stacking shelves at a supermarket I might not have that same enthusiasm. Or maybe I would – who knows? I could definitely do a better job of organising their product display than they tend to do!"

You get the impression he *would* make a pretty good fist of it. Since Jethro Tull broke through in the late 60s the versatile singer-writer-musician has explored a wide range of styles and genres, winning acclaim in the realms of folk, blues, world music, hard rock and of course prog. He still tours the planet, with the recent shows featuring the classic *Thick As A Brick* and its 40-years-on sequel *TAAB2* a triumph. Along the way, albums as characterful and diverse as *Aqualung*, *A Passion Play*, *Minstrel In The Gallery*, *Heavy Horses* and *Roots To Branches* have cheered, chastised and been argued over. In 1987 Jethro Tull – controversially, some might say bafflingly – won a Grammy for Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Vocal Performance with *Crest Of A Knave*. Anderson was appointed an MBE in 2008. In whatever time he has found away from music, he has thrown himself into other projects, organising charity concerts and finding success with a salmon farming business on the Isle of Skye that proved extremely profitable.

The dirty raincoat and capricious codpiece that defined his image in Jethro Tull's heyday have gone, but the eccentricity has not. His live shows this year have incorporated surreal

"It's been the voyage of a restless soul..."

Ian Anderson



JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY

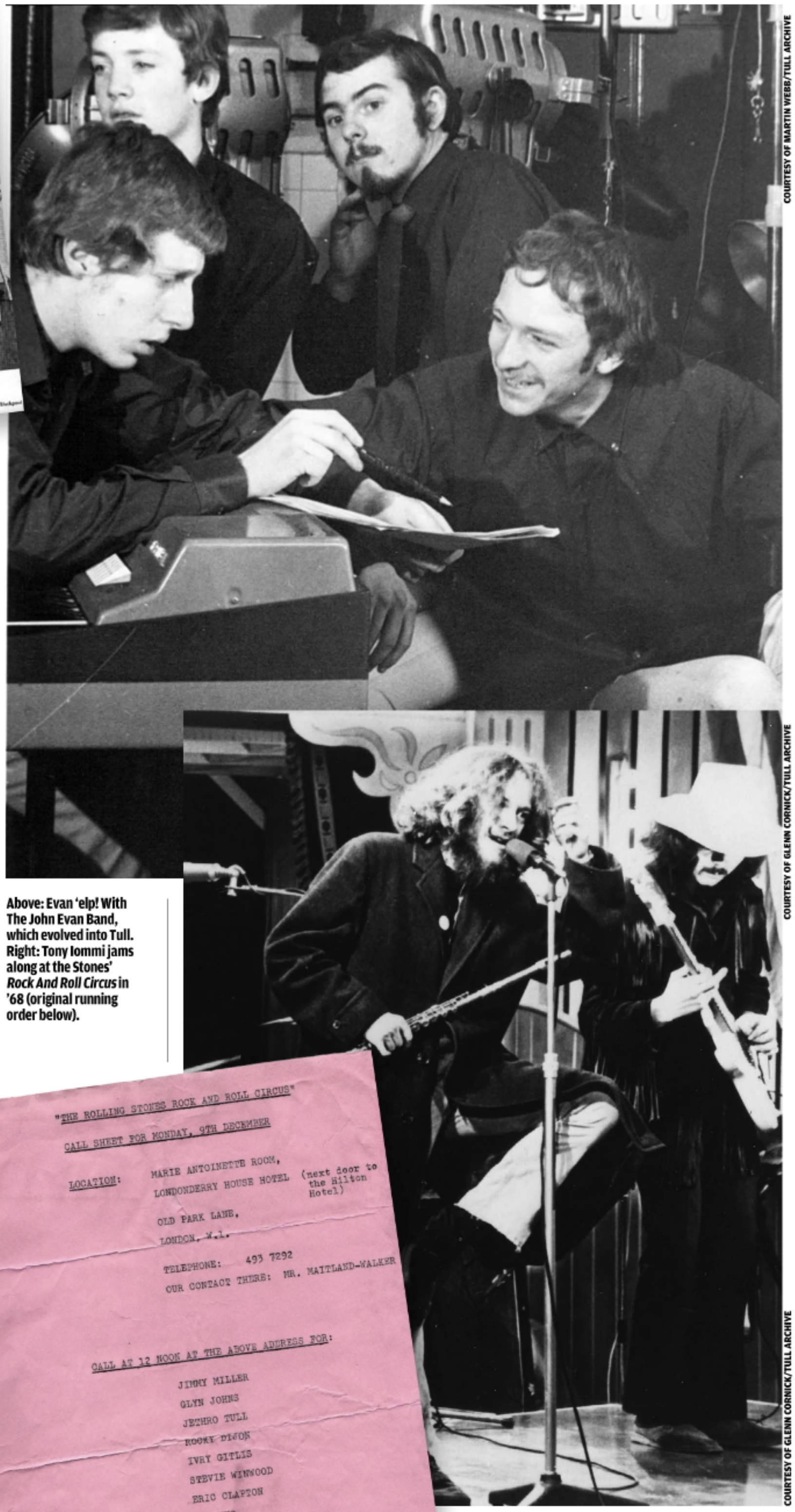
Baton down the hatches! Right: Ian shot exclusively for *Prog* in London, July 2013. Below: the young maestro 40 years earlier.




THICK AS A BRICK
Aqualung
JETHRO TULL
LIVING IN THE PAST



COURTESY OF MARTIN WEBB/TULL ARCHIVE



COURTESY OF MARTIN WEBB/TULL ARCHIVE

COURTESY OF GLENN CORNICK/TULL ARCHIVE

COURTESY OF GLENN CORNICK/TULL ARCHIVE

nod-to-the-past appearances onstage by frogmen, Skype and YouTube clips on big screens and a comedy skit advising men of a certain age to get their prostate checked. In conversation he's almost absurdly articulate and eloquent, surging forth with paeans, monologues and rants on everything from religion to art to acting to the internet. His knowledge of music history is broad and boundless, and Heaven help the interviewer trying to interrupt him! Through an accidental screw-up our chat begins later than planned, and he suggests we are now pushed for time. As he opines and muses from his hotel room in Phoenix, Arizona, it becomes evident that he's happily forgotten that caveat, and over nearly two hours we cover much of his life story and, for good measure, those of some others.

Above: Evan 'elp! With The John Evan Band, which evolved into Tull. Right: Tony Iommi jams along at the Stones' *Rock And Roll Circus* in '68 (original running order below).

Born in 1947 in Fife, Scotland, Anderson moved with his family to Blackpool when he was 12. He recalls first falling in love with music upon hearing his dad's big band and jazz records. "It was the rhythmic nature of it, the syncopation of swing jazz, which immediately caught my attention. You don't find that in church music growing up in Scotland. There was something energising about it. As an eight-year-old I started to listen to music seriously. I paid attention to what was going on, tried to make sense of it. So when I began to play as a teenager, rock music like Bill Haley, early Elvis and their British imitators like Billy Fury, Marty Wilde and dear old Cliff, seemed light-hearted, a bit of fun. I guess in the post-war years the Brits were in love with everything American. Rock music really became rock music from the mid-60s onwards.

"But it was the music towards the end of the 60s, when I really began, that suddenly changed everything in a big way. By now it wasn't just imitation. It wasn't enough just to be a blues band or play Americanised rock'n'roll. It really was the era of experimentation. In the pop sphere, it began in a big way with *Sgt Pepper* and *Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, which was a breakthrough album, something completely different. And that really opened up what by '69 was being termed in the press 'progressive rock'. Eventually it became a dirty word, a desultory phrase to those who weren't enamoured of complex instrumental expertise. And yes, there was some self-indulgence which didn't do anybody any favours. Then in the mid 70s came the refreshing back-to-basics blast of punk, as a direct repercussion. I actually went out and bought *Never Mind The Bollocks* – I thought it was quite fun. Later in life of course John Lydon admitted that *Aqualung* was a strong influence. My Richard The Third-meets-Quasimodo look on that album sleeve clearly was! It was a strange choice of image by me; that hunched trampy guy in an old overcoat – bearing in mind I was only 23 at the time!"

Yet Anderson perhaps always seemed wiser than his years, a deeper thinker than most, famously responding to the rise of prog by penning the wilfully over-the-top *Thick As A Brick* and then, ever the provocateur, reacting to press snipes by releasing the even more extreme *A Passion Play*. Reviews of the latter led to "Tull Quit!" headlines, though in fact what appeared a hissy fit ("maybe I overreacted a little") was a publicity ploy by their label, and the band continued apace with, arguably, more direct rock and folk albums. ("I long ago got used to being slapped down," he says now.)

Prior to his sustained success, Anderson's first band The Blades (formed 1962) had become The John Evan Band, then Jethro Tull (named after a 17th century agriculturalist who also played the organ - but notoriously misprinted as Jethro Toe on their first single). It became clear to all that he was the pivot and frontman, the one with the ideas and the vocabulary, and the willpower to assert them. Early on, they'd keep changing their name to get more bookings. Still, they built up a live following. The launch of the Chrysalis label gave them their initial leg-up. Yet as late as '67, as Tull conceived their debut album, Anderson had a day job cleaning cinema toilets in Luton where the band were then based. He'd already committed youthful acts of rebellion, having been 'asked to leave' Blackpool Grammar School.

"Ah, yes, there was a misdemeanour. To be very open about this, I was engaged in an act of what I thought was cheerful 'ragging' towards another boy. He was a good kid, just a few months ago I finally tracked him down to apologise for the embarrassment I caused all those years ago by taking a 'jolly jape' a bit too far, unaware that he was an epileptic. He had a fit as a result. I and another boy were carpeted by the 'beak' to be punished.

"And you see, although *Thick As A Brick* was half-serious and half Monty Python-influenced surreal comedy, the serious part was about that



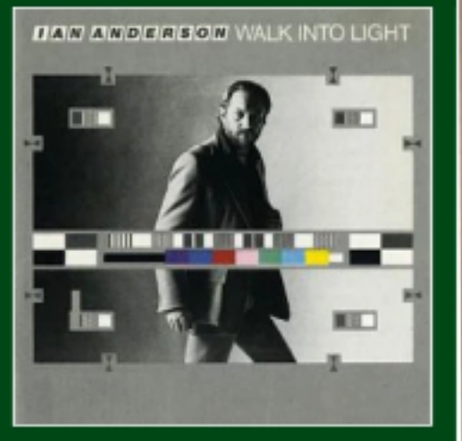
COURTESY OF MARTIN WEBB/GLENN CORNICK/TULL ARCHIVE

This Was: Tull back in '68, the year of their debut album. The band quickly caught the imagination of the good old British press.

The Minstrel In His Gallery

The Maestro goes solo...

WALK INTO LIGHT (1983)



With Anderson working closely with then-Tull keyboard player Peter-John Vettese, this was his first solo work (though Tull's *A* had been originally mooted as such in 1980; Chrysalis urged the use of the band name to boost sales).

"I suppose the first thing here was to embrace the changing world of technology in the early 80s," he muses. "Sequencers and samplers and computers became a real prospect in music as a songwriting and performing tool. So, rather than just ignore it, I thought I'd better try to get to grips with this, because it probably will be the face of change. And, of course, it was, just as Fender and Gibson guitars and the Hammond organ changed the face of music in the 50s and 60s. And I thought I'd better do this outside the orbit of Jethro Tull, rather than set out with a band identity, which people might not like if the little experiment didn't work out. The context of a solo album made more sense."

Shrewdly, the album didn't jettison all recognisable Tull tropes, marrying electronica and folk-rock stylings together with flair and customarily darkly witty lyrics. The band's *Under Wraps* followed its form and, to put it mildly, divided fans. **CR**

"The acting headmaster said either I accepted the caning or he had to expel me. Well, I said, you give me no choice. So I was despatched. I never went back."

Ian Anderson

confused transition of boy to post-puberty and adolescence. The values those children of my generation faced growing up were rather distorted, post-World War II, as highlighted in the boys' comics of the day. I mean, Billy Bunter was very cruel! So it was a commentary on how boys can be cruel to each other, and how the weaker tend to get stamped on. Gerald Bostock had a lot of addled views of the adult world he was about to enter. If not autobiographical, it was stuff I knew about as a schoolboy.

"Anyway, I was to be caned. But I politely refused. I said I wouldn't accept a beating from an older man. I volunteered for some other form of punishment, because I recognised my guilt in the matter, but the acting headmaster was placed in an awkward position. To have a boy refuse corporal punishment threw him. My biggest fear wasn't being caned, it was the indignity of it. So there was an impasse. He said either I accepted the caning or he had to expel me. Well, I said, you give me no choice. So I was despatched. I never went back. To my relief, my parents didn't overreact, and so, halfway through my A-level course, I had to look for something else to do."

PHOTOSHOT





COURTESY OF GLENN CORNICK/TULL ARCHIVE

Above: Lady And The Tramp! Movie star Julie Ege models Tull's 1971 gold disc Right: Bad Santa! (Cranberry) sauce on Island Records ad.

There followed 'a little non-musical moment' of trying to join the police force, then one of attempting to enlist as a cub reporter at the Blackpool evening paper. A career in forestry was also considered, "But it was to art school that I went". He spent a year and a half learning to paint and draw, "During which time music became the more immediate and exciting outlet for these embryonic creative skills". Again, the staff sniffed trouble, telling Anderson he had to 'buckle down' or be asked to leave. "Well," he confessed, "I'm afraid I'm going to have to give music a go." He praises a tutor who agreed with him that if he showed his face once a week he could stay on the college register and a blind eye would be turned. "And so I spent most of my time reading the *Melody Maker* and trying to learn to play guitar. Which I did, but only to a limited degree."

Which explains, to an extent, why he picked up, of all things, the flute. Mention Jethro Tull to most people and to this day that flute is one of the first things they think of. It became, by accident as much as design, the multi-instrumentalist Anderson's iconic USP. Anderson thought "it looked kind of sexy".

"My guitar skills, such as they were, weren't up to the Eric Clapton standard. I could improvise bluesy solos, but by then Eric had burst upon the scene with the John Mayall Band. We were aware he was at the forefront, and according to *Melody Maker* there were a few hotshot gunslingers right behind him like Jimmy Page, Richie Blackmore, Jeff Beck. They were ahead of the game. So this caused me, oop north in the summer of '67, to abandon my Fender Stratocaster and part exchange it for a microphone and – for no particularly good reason – a student-model flute that was hanging on the wall. I have no idea to this day what made me choose it. It was just... shiny. Sexy. A glittering object. It had a lot of moving parts, and looked like it was meticulously and carefully made. The physicality of it appealed somehow: it was small, compact, and easy to carry around if you were an itinerant musician. Which I now became."

The band headed south. "I didn't actually learn to do anything with the flute for another few months, until the end of '67. Then I was able to coax a couple of notes out of it. Three or four weeks later I was playing it on stage. When Jethro Tull became Jethro Tull, in spring '68 at the Marquee Club, there I was with this flute!"

COURTESY OF MARTIN WEBB/TULL ARCHIVE

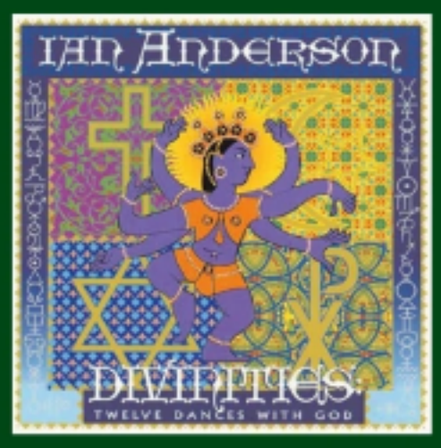
"*Aqualung* was a strange choice of image; that hunched trampy guy in an old overcoat. Bear in mind I was only 23 at the time."

Ian Anderson

The Minstrel In His Gallery

The Maestro goes solo...

DIVINITIES: TWELVE DANCES WITH GOD (1995)



Anderson's second work under his own name, this ambient, instrumental album is strong on melody, and influenced by a plethora of ethnic traditions. As such it is the type of album often consigned to the 'world music' section of the record shop.

Sometimes lazily lumped in with the then-voguish genre 'new age', *Divinities* sees Anderson looking far afield for inspiration. The music ranges from the African styles of *En Afrique* to Spanish touches of *In The Pay Of Spain*, and is perhaps at its most credible when close to Celtic roots, as on *In The Grip Of Stronger Stuff*. Tull's Andrew Giddings provide keyboard arrangements that complement Anderson's primary instrument well.

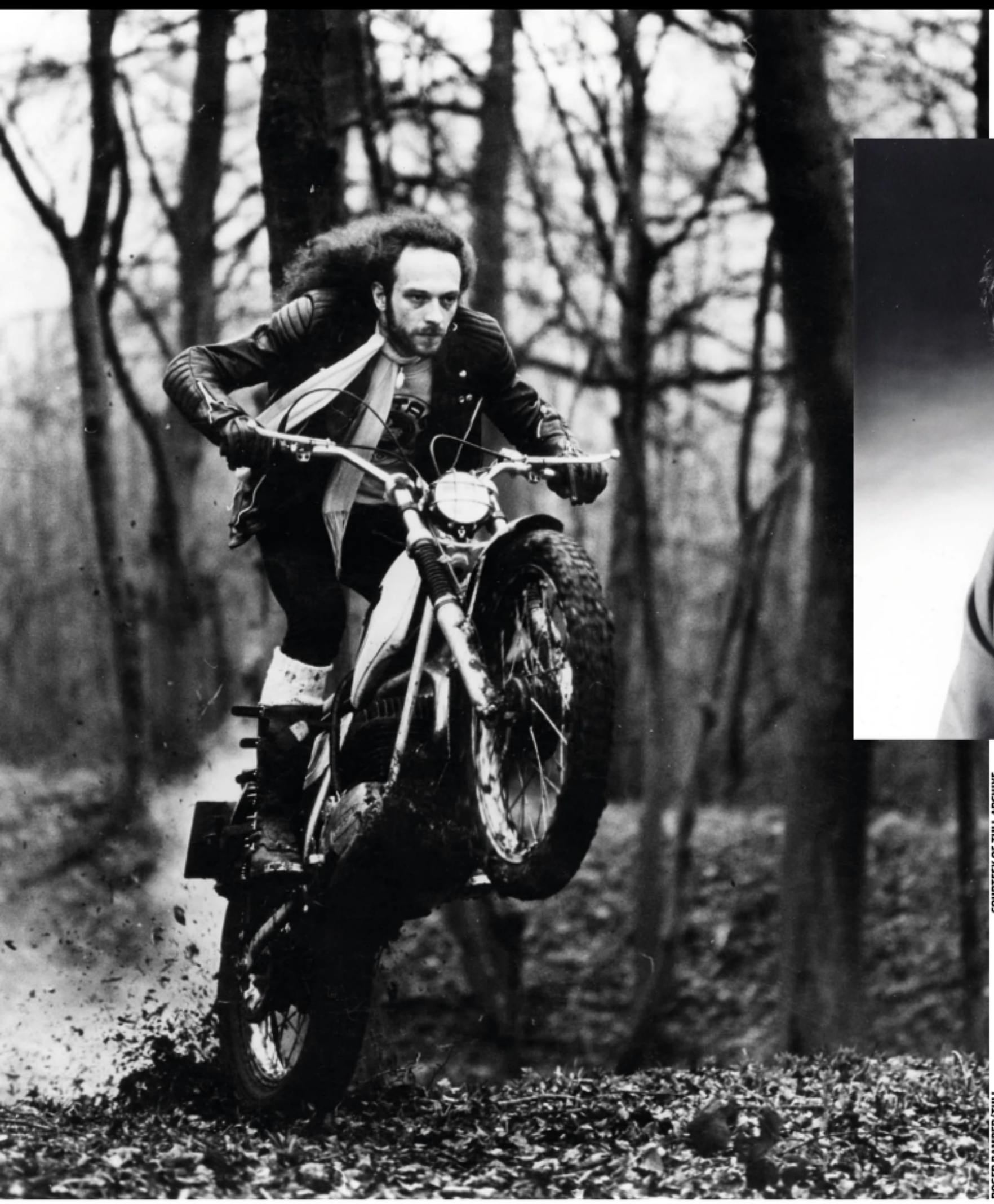
"That was made for EMI's classical music division," he recalls, "and was effectively a flute album, exploring the instrument."

Reviews have praised the way in which the album avoids the pitfalls of the 'rock star turns musical tourist' routine, displaying real imagination in its changes in tempo and technique, and its genuine sense of atmosphere. **CR**

"Anything I did, or do, onstage, has got to come from *me*. It's part of me. I'm not an actor."

Ian Anderson

Promoting Tull's *War Child* album *and* helping schoolchildren safely cross the road back in '74...





ROGER BAMBER/TULL

COURTESY OF TULL ARCHIVE

Above: even the biggest bands were hit by the tour bus strike of '73. Right: Giving the 'journo death stare' for 1983's *Walk Into Light*.

Fortunately, Anderson had a leg to stand on. "I'd adopted the stance of standing on one leg when I played harmonica. But the very first press comments about Jethro Tull went, 'This new band had a singer who played harmonica, flute and stood on one leg'. Which was technically correct, but gave the impression that I played the flute standing on one leg too. Which I didn't, to begin with.

sat down to play. Jon Anderson of Yes had his very girly high-tenor voice. Nobody else sounded like Jon. Possibly nobody wanted to, but these things stood out. You didn't sound like everyone else."

Anderson seemed to apply this point-of-difference idea visually too, developing flamboyant personae from the raincoat-tramp to the whiskery codpiece-sporting minstrel to the

"I actually went out and bought *Never Mind The Bollocks* – I thought it was quite fun."

Ian Anderson

Then I thought: well, I'd better give that a try as well, since it's caught somebody's attention! And of course it became a trademark, a point of difference. That's an important thing to have. Zappa had the goatee beard and big moustache. Beefheart had the larger-than-life character. Even King Crimson had a strange guitarist who

English country squire. You might think these striking characters freed him from self-consciousness, allowed him to be larger-than-life.

"I don't think it was that, because it always felt to me like anything I did, or do, onstage, has got to come from *me*. It's got to be part of me. I'm not an actor. I can't pretend to be people or characters that I'm not. It has to take on some aspect of my personality.

"We're all multi-dimensional creatures. We don't grow up as just: what you see is what you get. Well, most of us don't. There *are* people like that, bless 'em, but most of us are a bit more complex. So I just tend to draw on things that I have some experience of, and then blow them up a little. I press the button that expands them. Larger-than-life, yes, because you've got to kind of overcook it. It may then be overdone for the people in the front row, but to reach those way at the back of the auditorium you have to deliver it in an over-the-top way. In the same context, I suppose, as a Shakespearean actor. On the screen, it's different, I'm told. My son-in-law, [actor] Andrew Lincoln, runs around killing zombies in *The Walking Dead*. Real actors underplay it on screen: you've almost got to contract a little bit, because the screen sees *too* much. On a live stage, you have to open up and become bigger in the way you present your character.

"All this sounds like I am a person of thespian aspirations! I'm not. I just do what I do because what's in the songs is saying: okay, my turn to come to the fore. That's how I write, too. I take something of me as a starting point, and then I develop an observation. Occasionally, if it's something in the first person, it has to have that authority of being sung as if you really are that person."

Ian Anderson may not be an actor, but neither is he what would generally be classified as a rock'n'roll animal. The man who sang *Too Old To Rock And Roll, Too Young To Die* in 1976 (a concept album about how styles of music come in and out of fashion), was never really one for trashing hotel

"It's a series of snapshots about... us."

Anderson's new solo album explores humanity, 'from the Ice Age to the future'.

"There's a new album on the way next year; that's something I've already written.

My window of opportunity, when I gathered my resources after a busy year of touring, suggested to me a starting point [for writing] of January 1, 2013. It's rather exhilarating to have a deadline, to say: this is it, I'll start here and finish there. So I gave myself three weeks to come up with it. Obviously not to 'complete' it, but to substantially write the lyrics, the tunes, the general shape of a whole new album. It was a good thing to do.

Then in February I made simple demos of all the material and sent them out to the guys in the band. And we have all promptly put them under the pillow and forgotten them! But we'll re-examine them in November and prepare for the serious recording that we start in December, and wrap up after Christmas. This mirrors what we did with *Thick As A Brick 2*.



The solo band: proof it's not all doom and gloom...

It's an album which explores certain aspects of humanity across a huge period of time, from around the Ice Age to the future, and clearly reflects what's going on in the world today. It's a series of snapshots about... us. I do like drawing parallels between the events of the past and the present, as well as thinking how they're going to resolve themselves up ahead. It's not *all* doom and gloom, but it does touch on subjects of a worrying nature.

There's little point in me talking too much about it, as I reserve the right to scrap the whole thing and start again, which I'm known for doing! While I do have an album that I'm excited about, sitting there waiting to be delivered, as midwives go, I may fail to turn up for work on the day, or turn up with something completely different!"

Anderson has since announced a 21-date 2014 UK tour – starting April 28 at Brighton Dome and finishing with May 24 and 25 at Shepherd's Bush Empire – to support the release of the forthcoming, as-yet-untitled album, which is a concept piece that he now describes as "folk prog metal".

Bookmark www.jethrotull.com for more info, and keep a look out for updates in *Prog* and on our own website, progrockmag.com. **CR**

COURTESY OF TULL ARCHIVE

rooms and partying till dawn, even at the height of Tull's considerable international popularity. Was it again the need to work and create that helped him to eschew hedonism?

"I eschew it in terms of personal involvement, but some artists like to observe it, to write about it – Andy Warhol, Frank Zappa. I never use real people in my lyrics, I only write about imaginary people, but within that there's usually some observational experience. At least I hope I've never written about anybody identifiable, or who would feel upset or used.

"Hence, no sex or drugs or rock'n'roll in my life! Better to just observe and mull it over than be a participant. Even as a teenager, it struck me that I might be one of those people who had what we later learned to describe as 'an addictive personality'. I mean, it took me many years to quit smoking; I know exactly what that grip of neediness is like. It's a bad thing. So I thought to myself: if I'm a 40-a-day smoker, I'd better not risk doing anything from marijuana onwards. I guess I realised from other people I was around that it was a very short step from 'trying' other things, with that self-assured idea that it was just an 'occasional' recreational experiment."

In fact the closest this minstrel ever got to a drugs bust may have been a curious incident at Madrid Airport about a decade ago. "One of my hot powders concocted from my chilli-pepper experiments was in a little plastic bottle. It was an evil-looking reddish-brown colour. I wasn't breaking the law, but the customs official thought this was his lucky day; discovering this serious drug would mean promotion for sure. In spite of my trying to dissuade him with every word I could think of in a number of languages, he insisted on doing what he'd seen narcotics officers do in the movies and licked his finger and tasted it. And then his face started to go red and he literally just ran off. We were left there with our suitcases open, stuff all over the counter. After several minutes he hadn't come back. I assume he was in the loo trying to wash his mouth out. So we picked our stuff up and left. I wonder if he ever did come back..?"

Anderson is something of a renaissance man and polymath. His chilli-pepper experiments were small fry next to his years of Strathaird salmon farming. He and his wife Shona owned several such farms, based around his Isle of Skye estate, until

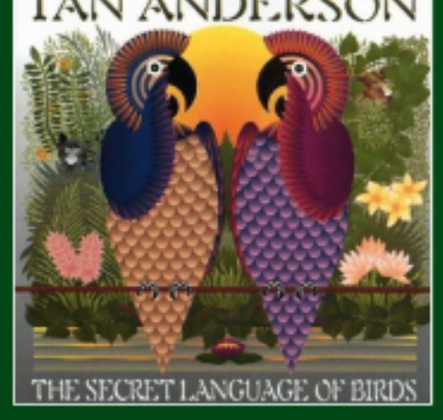
"My show in Kansas City next week is to be picketed by an outfit of buffoons. According to them Obama is the Anti-Christ, so I'm in good company."

Ian Anderson

The Minstrel In His Gallery

The Maestro goes solo...

THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF BIRDS (2000)



With this playful album named after the dawn chorus, Anderson explored the acoustic side of his musical personality, "because that had been a big unheralded part of Jethro Tull".

Martin Barre chipped in with electric guitar, while Anderson sang, played flute, piccolo, acoustic guitar, bouzouki, mandolin, acoustic bass and percussion. In his droll explanatory sleeve notes, he mentioned the painters Walter Langley and Sir William Russell Flint. *Circular Breathing* he described as "the deep breath that goes on forever... Pink Floyd's *Learning To Fly* meets LS Lowry meets Status Quo's *Pictures Of Matchstick Men*. Or not."

Boris Dancing revealed a peculiar affection for Russia's Mr Yeltsin, for whom he had a soft spot. "I wrote the music for this based on a visual image of a CNN news report.... He was filmed in Red Square, sweating profusely, bright red in the face, boogieing frantically in front of a young Moscow rock band. The song is in several rather-difficult-to-follow time signatures, as when Boris was dancing he wasn't quite on the beat. It's a celebration of his strange, individual dance style." **CR**

"I'm not a Christian, but I like to do things for the Church. There are certain aspects of our society which, while anachronisms, are worth preserving."

Ian Anderson

Only Solitaire?

With talk of a new solo album and tour, what of the future of Jethro Tull?

"It is fair to say I see things panning out as Ian Anderson rather than Jethro Tull from now on. It doesn't mean there won't be some concert in the future that says 'Jethro Tull' on the ticket. It's just that right at the moment I'm well aware of my age and my mortality. So, while the spirit and body are willing, it is appropriate to tackle the bigger, more challenging jobs rather than just go riding on my own sordid coat-tails. It'd be easy enough to play the odd tour around the major countries and just do the 20 best-known Jethro Tull songs. That would not be a 'bad' thing to do; it'd be quite enjoyable. But there's other stuff out there I rather like taking on.

What excites me most now is the prospect of an album – or two, or three – yet to come, and a few more intellectually-challenging tours. Writing in a more symphonic style appeals to me now, more than just doing 'Best Of' tours. That said, we've done a few things this year with the Jethro Tull repertoire, and it is a lot of fun going back to it. It's my music!

Regarding the corporate band identity, I'm the only guy who was there from the beginning, so the degree to which a show is under that identity depends largely on the repertoire. If I'm doing other material – even *Thick As A Brick 2* – I don't want to suggest to the less knowledgeable people that it's a generic Jethro Tull concert. Some of them might get bent out of shape if they're not hearing the spectrum of material they'd associate with the band's history. Honestly? I don't give it all that much thought. When I'm on stage it doesn't feel any different to me if I'm doing it as Ian Anderson or Jethro Tull. That's the reality."



COURTESY OF TULL ARCHIVE

Tull's 2007 incarnation: "It is a lot of fun going back to it, but..."



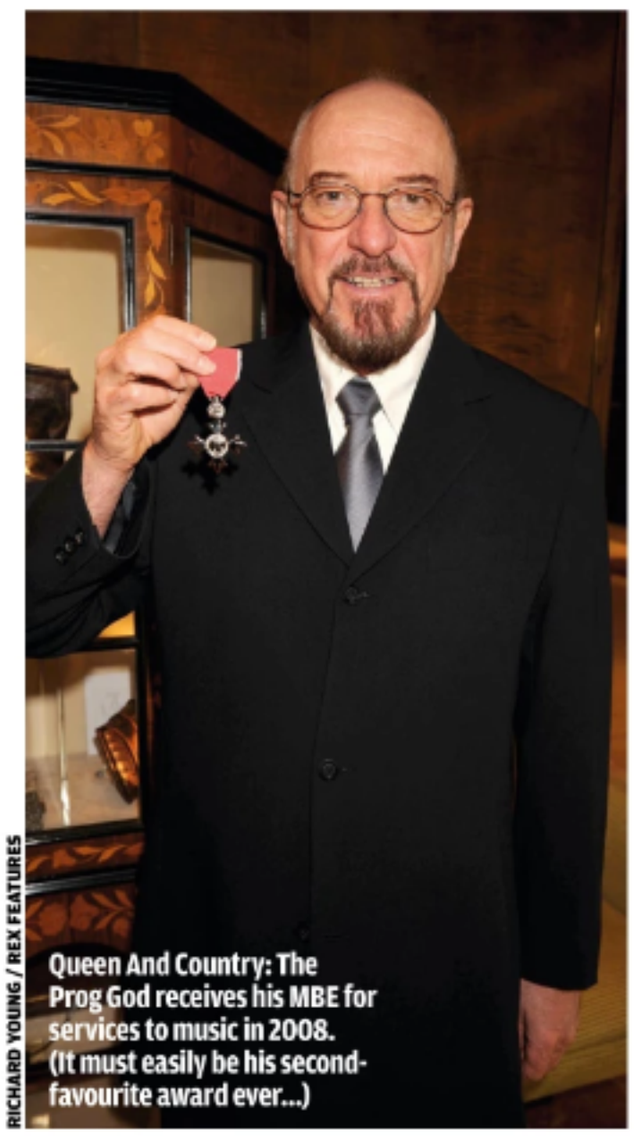
He's been a vocal critic of the dark side of organised religion, but Anderson's views on the subject are fittingly complex.

COURTESY OF TULL ARCHIVE

selling some off in the late 90s, at which time their value surpassed £10 million. To the layman that seems a peculiar business for a musician to go into – and to excel at. What led to the leap towards salmon?

"I suppose in my interests, from school onwards, I was always split between the sciences and the arts. I enjoyed music and painting but I was better at, say, maths and physics than I was at history or Latin. So – it's like choosing the flute. That was mechanical, detailed, carefully designed like a Swiss watch. That attention to precision appealed, and it appeals to me about some of the applied sciences like aquaculture. They're biological sciences but you actually *do* something with them which is very pragmatic, tangible. Heavy engineering, laying moorings, boats, cages, marine farming – it's all 'man's work'! It's not quite being a rigger on a North Sea oil rig, but it is a man's job. You roll your sleeves up. So while it seems to you perhaps at odds with the flimsy world of songwriting and performing, it's a part of me that obviously is out there. It's the same part that wanted to join the police force or fly a fighter jet when I was 17, I suppose!"

"So for nearly two decades of my life, I was involved with all that. Then, to put it bluntly, when I hit 50 I realised I had to make decisions. Either I'm going to spend the rest of my life coming home smelling faintly of fish, or coming home as a slightly whacked, breathless musician, having pushed the limits for a couple of hours onstage. And I think that probably is the more healthy option at my age: to keep up those two hours of aerobics as long as I can!"

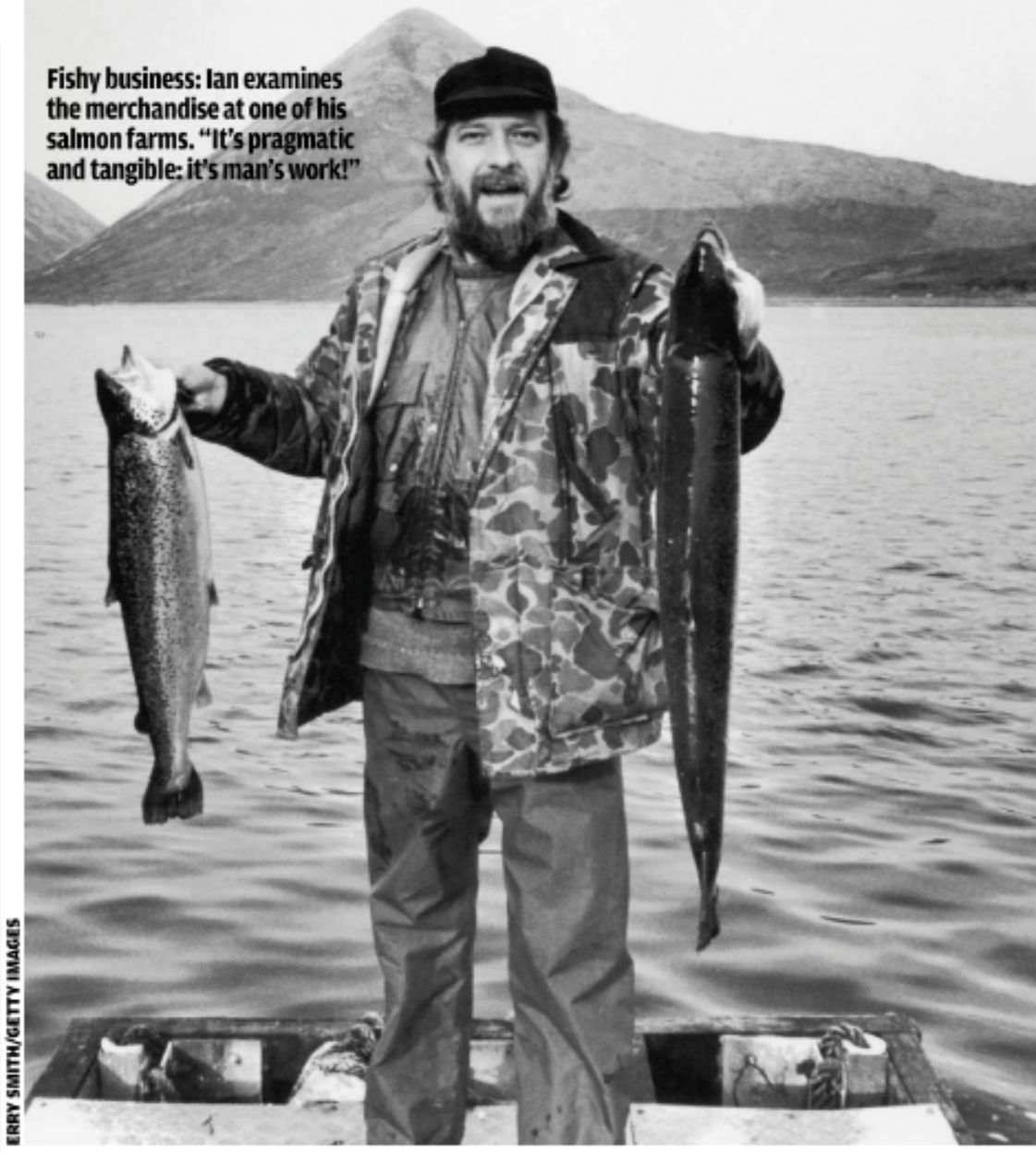


RICHARD YOUNG / REX FEATURES

Queen And Country: The Prog God receives his MBE for services to music in 2008. (It must easily be his second-favourite award ever...)

References to mortality come frequently from the philosophical Anderson. "I think it's good to keep pedalling," he told *Prog* earlier this year. "At my age, if you take your feet off the pedals and free-wheel, there's a danger you'll just slow down and fall off." If he gets time to relax at home 'being Family Guy', it's usually around Christmas and after. Although his penchant for festive benefit shows in cathedrals (the last Tull album, back in 2003, was *The Jethro Tull Christmas Album*) usually sees him ringing out a solstice bell or two. Again, there's an interesting potential paradox here: the man who heatedly criticised organised religion on *Aqualung* has a fondness for churches and cathedrals.

"I'm not a Christian, but I like to do things for the Church. There are certain aspects of our society which, while anachronisms, are worth preserving. As a non-Christian,



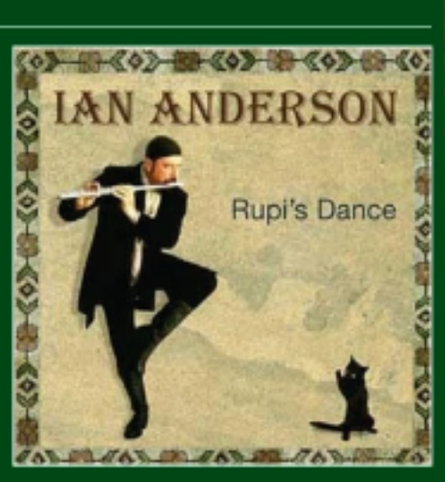
Fishy business: Ian examines the merchandise at one of his salmon farms. "It's pragmatic and tangible: it's man's work!"

TERRY SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

The Minstrel In His Gallery

The Maestro goes solo...

RUPI'S DANCE (2003)



"Around the turn of the millennium," Anderson recalls, "I'd decided I'd like to make a couple of albums in this acoustic, singer-songwriter context. The brand name Jethro Tull suggested something more 'rock' and band-oriented, so this was an opportunity to stretch out from that. Often, tracks had started as just me singing and playing live in the studio, from the *Aqualung* album onwards. So from *The Secret Language Of Birds* on, I was increasingly doing things as Ian Anderson."

Rupi's Dance was 'progressive folk', not in truth utterly unrecognisable from Tull, and occasionally the album recalled *Minstrel In The Gallery* or *Heavy Horses*. The 'world music' elements that characterised his previous were used sparingly and tastefully, *Griminelli's Lament* honoured the Italian flautist Andrea Griminelli, while the title track took inspiration from Anderson's beloved cat.

Emerging just before *The Jethro Tull Christmas Album*, the closing track here – *Birthday Card At Christmas* – also opened that album. Fans began to hail Anderson's reinvigoration and new lease of life. **CR**

I support the Christian Church and the places Christianity is worshipped, because they won't make any more of them. When I stand by a pulpit or altar, a holy area, to perform, I'm mindful of there being a right and wrong way to do it. You shouldn't cross a line in being too light-hearted or dangerously disrespectful. The majority of the people there may not be regular church-goers, but to bring them into that environment – to sense a spiritual-social inclusiveness – that is a good thing. If a few of them then decide they want to partake in Christian worship, that's fine. I'm not trying to get them to do that. I'm just trying to relieve them of their 30 quid or whatever to try to keep the building's roof on.

"We're not out there telling people to fall under the spell of Jesus Christ or Anglicanism. We're just saying: come in and feel the atmosphere, the spirit, the groove. There's an ambience in those buildings and it's an option which should be kept open for future generations. That's why I do it. And there's possibly a little guilt as well, having been a fierce critic of organised religion. Which I still am!"



PHOTOSHOT



COURTESY OF TULL ARCHIVE

Above: Duetting with NASA astronaut Cady Coleman live from the International Space Station. Right: Scotch, bonnet – a chilli, the bane of the Spanish customs official...

If this all sounds rather righteous, the singer is nevertheless still drawing flak from extremist evangelicals Stateside. "Apparently my show in Kansas City next week is to be picketed by an outfit of buffoons with an outpouring of hate and vitriol towards homosexuals. They're the web presence of a Baptist church calling themselves God Hates Fags. They think I'm an 'adulterer' and a 'fag enabler'. It's quite extraordinary. According to them Obama is the Anti-Christ, so I'm in good company. I can only try to be amused rather than disturbed. They're not suggesting I'm a homosexual, just that I 'enable' them by waving them through. I emailed Marc Almond this morning to say it seems I am doing something useful in life! Seriously though, hatemongers like these make me feel more positive about tea-and-cakes Anglicanism. I have very harsh views about those who mindlessly use religion to divide."

There are few topics the erudite Anderson isn't happy to discuss, from David Bowie's 'chameleon-like unpredictability' ("which I think is rather good, when the Rolling Stones have become a cosy blue comfort blanket") to the digital age. "Social media, the internet: it's the world we live in now, the facts of life. As a writer, I've got to touch on that. The positive is that my generation are the first homo sapiens on Earth who don't have to just close down the shutters and fade away. People can go out with a huge benefit of communication, of knowledge-gathering, of staying mentally alive. My parents never had that opportunity. I'm going to make use of all these facilities; keep involved, keep learning."

And, of course, keep writing. "Yes. I paint people in a landscape. I'm not a portrait painter; I like them to be in a context. I want to know about those people, but also the context in which they exist. And we're blessed with this wonderful language, the language of poets and playwrights and novelists, so let's not be afraid to use it! It seems strange to me that pop and rock lyrics use such a tiny vocabulary. I use our language fully, unashamedly. I like to throw spanners in the works in terms of linguistics and semantics. There's a joy in words."

That work ethic shows no signs of abating. "Either you curtail the journey at half-time and say I'm perfectly happy here, let's just break out a picnic and stay put, open a couple of beers and eat some smoked salmon sandwiches. Or: there are other folks, like me, who want to continue the journey and see where it takes us. That defines me. Happily, I'm never content with what I've already done. I'm still searching for that elusive sense of: This is my masterpiece, my crowning glory. The flagship that we have to sail in the wake of is Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. In the final years of his life he came up with the all-time complete symphony, and was even halfway through the Tenth, which of course we'll never hear. So, for some folks, towards the end, the candle burns brighter. And I think I'd like to try to be one of those." ❶

"Either I'm going to spend the rest of my life coming home smelling faintly of fish, or as a slightly breathless musician. That probably is the more healthy option at my age."

Ian Anderson

The Minstrel In His Gallery

The Maestro goes solo...

THICK AS A BRICK 2 (2012)

Four decades on from the thrilling *Thick As A Brick* came the justly acclaimed *TAAB2: Whatever Happened To Gerald Bostock?*. "I wonder what the eight-year-old Gerald would be doing today?" Anderson pondered. "Would the fabled newspaper still exist?"



And so he ingeniously traced five possible life routes for the now middle-aged Bostock, from avaricious banker to homeless man, from soldier to preacher, to 'ordinary' corner-shop owner. A lonely gloom potentially awaited all five personae, but that didn't prevent Anderson gaining his first Top 40 album in quite a while.

"I suppose it was something of a calculated risk," he suggests. "It leaves people with a slightly enigmatic rather than despairing feeling, I'd say. There's a note of optimism and defiance conveyed in the final elements of the music. I can only judge by the approval we seem to get for it when we play it. I'm glad I took the risk, and I'm glad we have the kind of audiences that not only accept that but revel in it. As you become older and more reflective, there is such a wealth of material to work with: nearly every morning I'm tinkering around with some idea or other." **CR**

ORANGE presents Progressive Music Awards 2013

Ian Anderson on winning the **Prog God Award** in 2013.

"I've won something? Oh! Well, you're telling me something I didn't know! I had a date in my diary to go to the *Prog* Awards, but wasn't sure what it was about.

It's not that I'm ungrateful in any way, it's just that awards things are something I'm not very good at. But if I am to be the Prog God for a night, it will be taken in good spirit and good heart by me, and hopefully by others as well.

"I have no problem with the term 'prog'. I would've done 20 years ago, possibly even 10, but the term has now taken on an avuncular affection, the affection of a young niece for an affable uncle. It's a friendly term now, one you're pleased to say hello to. In the later 70s and early 80s it became used, usually by fairly negative people, as a sneering, derogatory term.

Having spoken with the guys in ELP or Yes, I know they have a sense of humour about it. They all recognise it got a bit over the top here and there, and that not everything they did was great, but they are fiercely proud of their heritage, and quite rightly so.

Most of the prog musicians back then were a little tongue-in-cheek about it: ELP could see the 'theatre of the absurd' that they were engaged in. There was a degree of showing off, of trying to impress other musos. *Thick As A Brick* was written as a bit of a parody of the over-the-top concept albums, taking it to the extreme and into a rather surreal, comedic area.

Prog aficionados are often to be found in unlikely places. Marc Almond wanted to be a singer in a prog rock band in his college days, but unfortunately there weren't too many around when he came of age so he had to join a synth-pop band instead! Penn of [magician duo] Penn & Teller actually bought a ticket to our show in Las Vegas a few days ago, so he's my new best friend!

I meet people from all walks of life – politicians, sportsmen – where you think: 'What? You like prog? How did that happen? You're from a different school of thought! Come on!' It's interesting to hear their take on it. It's always fun to see people entering into that world of looking at things in a more detailed way, rather than simply just absorbing the repetition of so much of rock and pop music. There are folks who are looking for a bit more spice, more fascination and variety. It isn't all just meat and potatoes – you can have a few exotic green vegetables to sprinkle around the side.

The Prog God Award honours my exploratory career of intelligently crafted music, you say? Well, whatever it's been, it's been the voyage of a restless soul. The people I respect don't do generic music. There are plenty of bands out there with whom you know exactly what you're going to get, so I think it's rather good if I'm hard to pin down!" **CR**

"I've won something?! This award will be taken in good spirit and good heart!"

Ian Anderson



Hello, squire: Ian Anderson, our Prog God for 2013, at *Prog* HQ in July.



"I fully appreciate that I am not a likeable guy. Something about me annoys people."

To The Manor Born

Prog rock icon-turned-country gent **Ian Anderson** is the self-appointed "Victor Meldrew with a flute". In 2014, music's grumpiest old man opened the doors of his manor house to *Classic Rock* and took aim at hippies, Nigel Farage and "boring, repetitive rock musicians".

Words: **Nick Hasted** Portraits: **Kevin Nixon**

Ian Anderson's country house isn't as grand as all that, I'm thinking as the taxi rolls down his drive. Then I realise that what I was looking at is just the gatehouse. When the Jethro Tull mainman's actual 18th-century pile sweeps into view, it still doesn't compare with the extravagantly rambling mansions his Beatle and Led Zep peers accumulated with rock's early rewards. But it has enough turrets to be going on with. There's a bungalow farmhouse at the other end of the single street his 400 acres of Wiltshire quietly dominate. Sheep graze amid all the rolling fields and woodland that royalties from *Thick As A Brick* and the rest can buy.

The shooting parties Anderson used to hold, as with the salmon farm and vast Scottish estates he once owned, rankle with many in a way that, say, Keith Moon's mansion with its crashed Rolls-Royces and champagne-bottle debris never did. We don't cut Anderson the same slack other rock stars enjoy because he's always been different: dancing on one leg to his own tune, played on a bloody flute.

"There are of course many great rock musicians," he tells *Classic Rock*, "but a lot of them are boring, repetitive, mindless and imitative. Nine-tenths of the iceberg is pretty sordid stuff, really. I'm glad to be a flute player in rock because there aren't very many of us, so I can surface for air with a sense of dignity. That point of difference makes me happy."

Thick As A Brick's side-long suites made Jethro Tull massive in the US during prog's peak. But from *Aqualung*'s earthy concept album about an English tramp in 1971, deliberately distancing them from British blues-rock's Mississippi fantasies, to a fascination with folk at punk's height, and an 80s dalliance with synths that appalled their rock fan-base, Tull have reliably tacked against prevailing trends. They haven't been fashionable since 1973, when even supporters in the music press disowned them for *A Passion Play*'s lectures on religion, and panicked manager Terry Ellis announced their retirement. Anderson, Ellis claimed, was too hurt to continue.

Anderson, now 66, keeps the world at arm's length these days. He hates shaking hands and greets *CR* photographer Kevin Nixon by bumping elbows; I get a feather-faint brush of palms. He settles into the sofa opposite the TV in a bookcase-lined living room.

He approaches being interviewed with dutiful professionalism and, on pet subjects, the verbosity of a filibustering southern senator. With his ruddy face and West Country squire's waistcoat, the "satyr's gleam" that writer Lester Bangs saw in his eyes in 1973 as he went spinning across a stage acting the part of a maniac Merlin seems a lifetime ago.

But even in Jethro Tull's 70s pomp, Anderson kept his distance from the rock carnage around him. When communists and fascists fought at shows in Italy, police set the dogs on hated hippie fans in West Berlin, and Tull beat the Stones' record for arrested, rioting concertgoers in San Diego, the singer at the centre of the storm felt only dismay. "Up against the wall, motherfuckers!" his fellow underground rock heroes Jefferson Airplane baited the authorities, as Tull played their first US tour in '69/'70. Anderson adopted a very different approach.

"You made your mark by how many broken police car windows there were," he remembers, "and I always tried to nip that in the bud on stage. A lot of audiences probably were more to blame than the forces of law and order, who some of them would really nastily provoke.""

The bacchanalias back in the hotels, where a generation of rockers were pinching themselves at ↔



Anderson in the 70s: a manic Merlin

REX

GETTY

“I didn’t join in with the drugs and the excesses.”

their good luck, drew equal disapproval from him.

“Obviously there were lots of cases of people being really vile in public – people who made you ashamed to be British, and a musician. I can laugh it off now, but the fact is it was my profession, and I didn’t take it very well. I was definitely seen to be a bit stuffy and overly righteous about it, and not a player. I was a party pooper. I didn’t join in with the drugs and the excesses; it just turned me off.”

When five years of success culminated with Tull’s *Thick As A Brick* album hitting No.1 in the US in 1972, temptations surrounded the band on all sides. But did Anderson simply find such clichéd rock behaviour distasteful?

“Well, the cliché, yes. The reality mostly wasn’t so bad. And you can’t be tempted by something you’re just not interested in. When I was eighteen I’d sat in a life-drawing class next to a student with these marks down his arm, a recovering heroin addict. And you could see the enormity of his climb out of this abyss. If you’ve got an addictive personality – I mean, I used to smoke forty cigarettes a day! – let’s not take the chance with anything else.”

While Anderson staunchly refused the decadence around him, the public’s appetite for tales of it has burnished the legends of bands he once shared stages with, from Hendrix to Zeppelin. The affection enjoyed by this coke-sniffing, groupie-ravishing club won’t ever be Anderson’s. He’s off on his own, way outside rock’s debauched pantheon, and he knows it.

Typically, he dissects with brutal honesty where he actually fits. “I’m that annoying, avuncular do-goody person,” he says. “I don’t fit the mould. I’m absolutely not a likeable, funky rock’n’roller. I don’t have any of the cred of Lemmy, or Keith Richards. But there are other people, who we know are hedonistic, and are racy, but somehow [he drops to a confidential whisper] we don’t really like them. You know, poor old Sting. Phil Collins. Mick Jagger. We kind of admire him, but we don’t actually like Mick. We like Keith. Yeah, and Ronnie, even though he’s not really a Rolling Stone; and Charlie.

“But we don’t like Bono, and we don’t like Sting. I say ‘we’ – I’ve met Sting, and he gets a bum rap. But I put myself in the Sting and Bono category. I fully appreciate that I am not a likeable guy. Something about me annoys people. Even when I see myself interviewed on TV I kind of squirm. There are people we just don’t like. Not for something they’ve done wrong – we just don’t like the way they smell. And I’m one of them.

“But I’m too old to care,” he concludes merrily. “I’m quite happy in my own skin, doing whatever I do because I have fun with it, in my own way.”

Anderson’s new album, *Homo Erraticus*, a hard-rock guitar and flute-adorned song cycle about migration in Britain since the last Ice Age, is ambitious even by his standards. *Puer Ferox Adventus* (Let Us Follow Better Things) is, though, a more personal song, named after the motto of the Blackpool grammar school he attended in the early 60s. American science-fiction magazines had already sparked his imagination towards a “more mysterious and provocative world”. Basic rock had already disappointed it. “Bill Haley looked like a dentist,” he recalls of the first rock’n’roll record he owned. Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart and Roy Harper would form more amenably eccentric influences.

At school his talent for wilfulness also surfaced when he refused to be caned. “I said to the headmaster: ‘Sir, I will not be caned.’ I thought it was creepy.” To his surprise, his emphysema-riddled, emotionally distant dad backed him up.

Being expelled opened the road from Blackpool to London, and to forming Jethro Tull in 1967. It enabled Anderson to escape a home life of narrow horizons. “My father’s last years weren’t happy. I think he felt that he’d failed in some way. And both my parents spent twenty years just staring at the television. I felt that it actually took my parents away from me. And in a way it did, and they never really resurfaced as thinking, active people.”

Not that this has made Anderson, an inveterate watcher of news programmes “from Al Jazeera to Fox”, swear off the box. “My great delight,” he says, “is to come into my hotel room after a concert, double-lock the door behind me, throw my wet stage clothes on to the bed, strip off jack-naked and sit down with my friends [*Newsnight* presenter] Gavin Esler or [CNN reporter] Ralitsa Vassileva.”

They flute! They score!

Proof that Ian Anderson isn’t the only rock star who’s handy with the woodwind.

Living In The Past
Jethro Tull
Lord of the lyrical prog-flute, Ian Anderson’s whimsical lines give this Tull classic its melodic skip and also acts as a breaker for Martin Barre’s rockist guitar.

Legend Of A Mind
The Moody Blues
Ray Thomas’s bucolic solo, arriving midway through the Moodies’ epic paean to acid guru Timothy Leary, accentuates the trippiness of its subject. So popular was it that Thomas received standing ovations at live shows.

Goin’ Up The Country
Canned Heat
The quintessential flute-rock riff for the quintessential Woodstock anthem. Flautist Jim Horn leads the charge, approximating the pan-pipe quills of old bluesman Henry Thomas, who acted as the song’s inspiration.

Spill The Wine
Eric Burdon & War
Burdon’s spoken rap may be the ideal counterpoint to War’s Latino funk, but Charles Miller’s ecstatic flute provides the perfect setting for the dream-like passages in the hall of the Mountain King.

Freedom Rider
Traffic
Great as Steve Winwood’s vocal and piano are, Chris Wood is the unsung hero of this pastoral epic. His folksy riffs heighten the sense of Englishness, culminating in a bright summery crescendo.

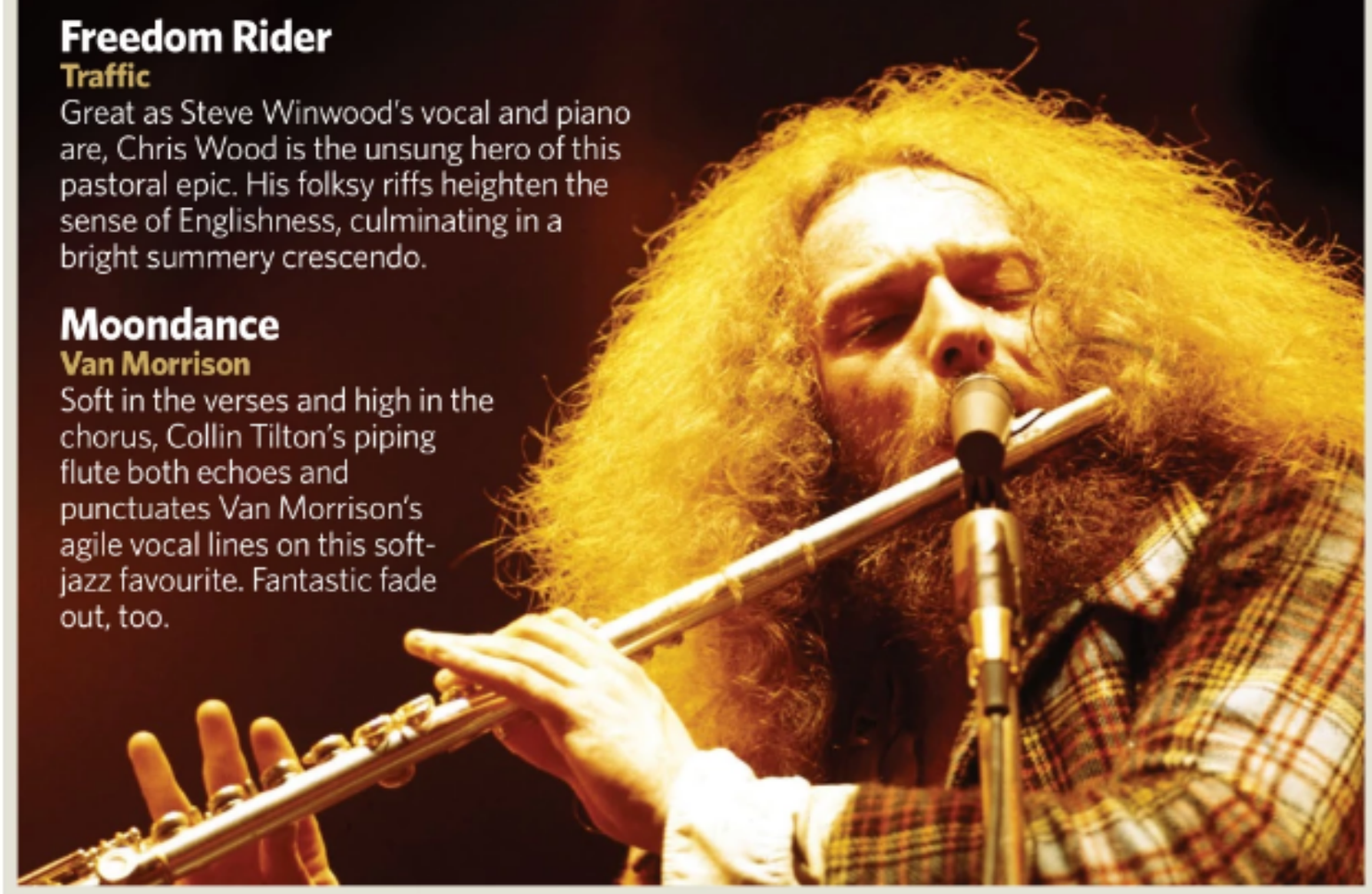
Moondance
Van Morrison
Soft in the verses and high in the chorus, Collin Tilton’s piping flute both echoes and punctuates Van Morrison’s agile vocal lines on this soft-jazz favourite. Fantastic fade out, too.

Hocus Pocus
Focus
The Dutch prog rockers’ instrumental fantasia never lets up from the off, with Thijs van Leer’s scurrying flute runs mirroring the frantic pace of the entire shebang.

Moonage Daydream
David Bowie
Just when he’s about to go all space-freak rock’n’roll on us, Bowie dishes out a penny whistle (okay, so it’s not *quite* a flute but it sounds like one) break that sounds like a playful send-up of the whole Ziggy persona.

Days Gone By
Joe Walsh
The mood of Walsh’s wistful ode to happier times is set by songwriter Joe Vitale’s easy flute intro, after which it goes on to serve as soothing balm for the pained vocals.

Sing Child
Heart
Ann Wilson’s flute break and Roger Fisher’s hard-edged guitar provide the light and shade of this evergreen rocker, the pair continuing to trade licks into an animated climax.



GETTY



Ian Anderson: photographed at home, exclusively for *Classic Rock*. March, 2014.

Once a series of alarming images have evaporated, I realise these actual friends of Anderson are on his TV screen, not jack-naked in his bed too.

The views Anderson forms from his news-watching lean to the right, but at a defiantly odd angle. We're talking a few days after David Bowie has delivered his postal vote on Scottish independence at the Brits. Anderson, with a Lowlands dad and Mancunian mum, sees himself as proudly British. "Alex Salmond wants his bottom wiped – such a simple fool," he grumbles. "Poor old David Cameron, our Dave, gets accused of being a bully, and Salmond is the ultimate schoolyard bully."

He is suspicious of UKIP's Nigel Farage ("our Nige"), suspecting his Wiltshire neighbours' support represents something "quite unpleasant". What he really gets worked up by, though, is what forms *Homo Erraticus*'s main theme: what he sees as the overpopulation of Britain. His thoughts on this are nuanced, non-racist, but basically amount to: get off my land, and stop having kids. Especially if you're *The Walking Dead* star Andrew Lincoln, who is already part-responsible for giving Anderson two granddaughters.

"I have suggested to my thespian son-in-law that his testicles will be removed from his person if he attempts a third," he declares. "How could you be blessed more than to have two girls? Why would anyone want more?"

Though heartfelt, this is the side of Anderson that he's called "Victor Meldrew with a flute". "Because," he explains, "Meldrew's irritation is quite pompous, and if you're able to do it in a fun way, people love you for it. The Duke of Edinburgh's going to get a really good send-off because he was his own man, with quite a bit of dignity and charm, but doesn't suffer fools gladly. I don't mind being thought of as a bit like that."

Is a professional wind-up merchant such as Jeremy Clarkson, then, someone Anderson has a sneaking liking for?

"I've briefly met him, because on a couple of occasions my wife has disappeared with Jeremy Clarkson for a fag outside. I'm used to her having a cigarette in the cold with complete strangers who are household names."

Are the people he's mentioned – Clarkson, Gavin Esler, Sting – part of his social circle, friends he

"I don't really have very many friends. And the ones that I do call friends, it's a bond for life."

entertains in his spacious home? "Oh no, no, no," he says, "we don't let the riff-raff in here. I don't really have many what I would call friends in the music business. Gavin Esler's a pal, and Tony Snow, who was the Republican spin doctor for George Bush, Sr. and Jr. They're not usually musicians. They're not people I would see socially.

"Part of the reason I don't get too close to a lot of people isn't because I don't like them; it's quite the opposite. It's because I do quite like them, and I don't want to find out something disappointing about them, and for that to go wrong. I don't really have very many friends. And the ones that I do call friends, it's a bond for life. It does include most of the guys who've been in Jethro Tull. Because we've obviously shared something which is about as intimate as you can be without getting arrested."

It's the image of Anderson hunting, shooting and fishing, acting as a possible role model for how not to be rock'n'roll, that defines him to his detractors as much as his unfashionable, idiosyncratic music does. He's put all these extra-curricular activities largely behind him, having sold his fish-farming business in 2001. Still, it's a long way from his early days trying to form a band in 60s London, when he was almost poisoned by the fumes from charcoal-roasting potatoes he found growing in a cellar. His character Aqualung the tramp wasn't so distant then. Did life in the minor stately homes of Britain take some getting used to? Did he ever wake up and realise, to his surprise, that he was the lord of the manor?

"I doubt if even Sting feels that way," he laughs. "No, you don't feel any different at all. But it was very easy, obviously, to be identified with this 'too big for his boots' thing, and I'm quite aware that it probably turned quite a few people off. I had become a landed person. That's been my life since my late twenties. And I have an enormous appreciation of the good fortune of being able to afford to live somewhere comfortable."

Village life sounds less enviable, the picturesque local pub being, Anderson warns me, "a public house in name only. If you went in there, then the chances are you'd be shot." The personal isolation of his 400 acres, the ability to get away from others, is the real appeal of country life. "That's right. But in reality you have public footpaths, and chances are you're going to meet somebody else."

Was he frustrated that his professional fate wasn't solely in his own hands either in the 70s and 80s, being dictated by outside factors like the damning reviews Tull's *A Passion Play* album received?

"If you read the music press then you were well aware that your time to have your balloon pricked was just around the corner," he says, more philosophical now than he was at the time. "It was almost a relief that you'd been publicly knocked off your pedestal and you could inhabit lower ground with a degree of dignity, hopefully, and carry on.

"Musically it didn't make any difference whatsoever, because *Stand Up*, in '69, was a very eclectic mix of music. It was really nice to put that in place early on. It gave me a sense of freedom, that eclecticism would be the calling card of Jethro Tull, and we wouldn't be constrained by fixed movements like punk and glam rock."

Homo Erraticus is being released under Anderson's name, rather than Jethro Tull – as, more controversially, was *Thick As A Brick 2*, the 2012 sequel to Tull's bestselling album. Dispensing with his band looks like a last act of emancipation by this stubbornly individual man.

"I wouldn't say it's emancipation," Anderson says. "It's the end of an enduring sense of guilt about our agent having knocked off the identity of a dead man [Jethro Tull was an 18th-century English agriculturalist and inventor].

"Jethro Tull's a band of twenty-eight musicians over forty-odd years, and it's for me more than anything about the repertoire. The songs that I've written, arranged, recorded, produced, engineered, performed on as a member of Jethro Tull, I'm really very proud of – a lot of it, you know, quite a lot of it. And these days, if I do something else it's probably going to be quite conceptual, and one-man in terms of creativity. So I think I'm just going to use my own name. A Jethro Tull concert isn't impossible in the future. But who's going to be in the band? A lot of them don't play, aren't feeling terribly well or are dead – or, in terms of musical ability, wouldn't hack it. There are some who it'd be fun to have in the band, but only for a day or two."

With our allotted time up, we're firmly shown the door, having glimpsed only briefly a huge room hung with guitars, and not glimpsed at all the 1989 Grammy that Tull beat Metallica to, which Anderson claims was for "excellence in the field of heavy metal flute" and deliberately lost; or the 70s four-person baths he kept from the previous owners, just to see the looks on people's faces.

Tying up some loose ends on the phone later, he mentions that Tull's old manager Terry Ellis has recently resurfaced, with plans for an *Aqualung* rock opera. The unsentimental Anderson seems pleased the two of them are back in touch, but offers a characteristically knowing word of advice. "I told him it has to appeal to Japanese tourists, not just lapsed fans of Jethro Tull," he says. "He'll run out of those very quickly."



The *Thick As A Brick* line-up of Tull.

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DESCENT OF MAN



Never one to rest on his laurels, **Ian Anderson** entered 2014 with new album *Homo Erraticus* – and, as he told *Prog*, he had brought an old pal with him…

Words: Paul Sexton

For a product of Ian Anderson's fertile imagination, Gerald Bostock has come a long way. At the age of eight he was the lyrical wellspring for the whimsical milestone of early 70s prog that was Jethro Tull's Thick As A Brick. Forty years on, we learned of the five multifarious fates that may have befallen the child prodigy on Thick As A Brick 2. Two more years later, Bostock is back, and this time it's for real. Sort of.

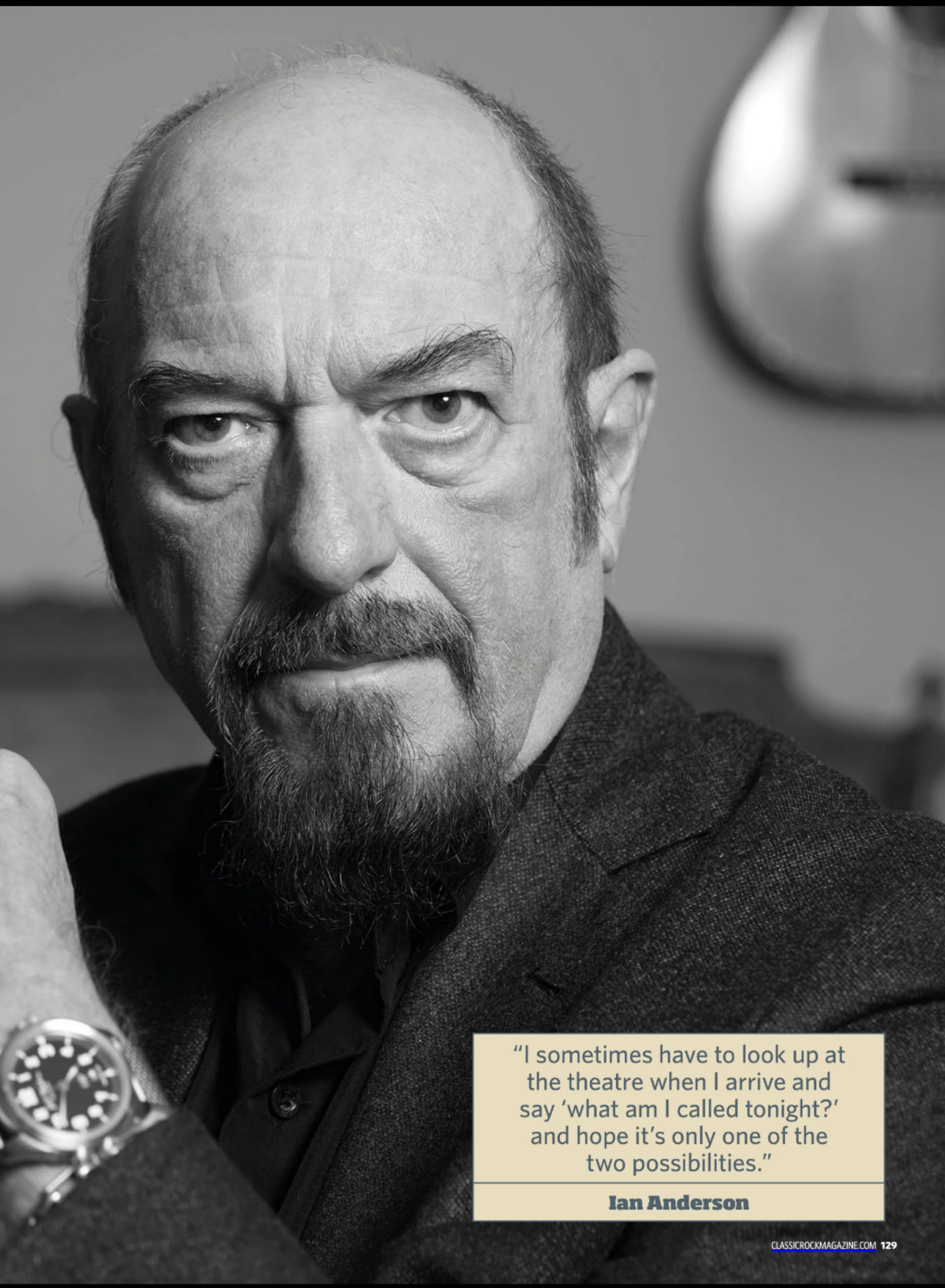
"I suppose TAAB 2 examined all of our lives," says Anderson, as he sets the scene to his new opus, Homo Erraticus. "How did we get to be where we are now? Did we end up where we imagined we might have done? Or were there twists and turns and interventions of fate along the way?

"That was the subject there, but I decided that Gerald should come back, not just as a subject, a couple of years further down the line, but as the writer of the lyrics for the new album.

"So we have a back story about how Gerald, in his retirement years as an ex-Labour politician, took up writing, and discovered some wordy tome written by a country gentleman [one Ernest T Parritt] who, in his rambling state of delirium following contracting malaria back in the 1920s, wrote all this stuff down. Gerald pored over it and decided it would be the basis of some suitably absurd and actually very factual lyrics." That old plotline.

Anderson's inventiveness as a creator of expansive and imposing musical landscapes is as fecund as ever on *Homo Erraticus*. The album sets out to address the complex "hot topic," as he describes it, of the time-honoured (and sometimes dishonoured) subject of the human diaspora. But, fear not, it does it with intricately Andersonesque tunes, expressive flutes and the other tools of his unique trade.

"It's all based on history," he declares. "It starts in 8000 BC — or BCE [Before Common Era] as we have to call it these days — just after the last Ice Age, and it ends up some 40-odd years into the future from now. So it's a potted history, primarily about the UK and Europe. It is, essentially, the



"I sometimes have to look up at the theatre when I arrive and say 'what am I called tonight?' and hope it's only one of the two possibilities."

Ian Anderson

story of migration, the movement of people, in each and every direction, and as Gerald says, 'We're all from somewhere. Somewhere else. Get over it.'"

At the same time, the flipside of the modern argument is also represented. "I wanted to make it a little crazy, a little fantastic, while delivering something of a message that I think we all need to take to heart," says Anderson. "It's not to say that I'm one of those people, or Mr Bostock is, that necessarily think 'Everybody come on in here, let's have absolutely free access.' There comes a point where our children, or our grandchildren, will be facing the awful dilemma of having to put up that sign saying 'No room at the inn, no vacancies.' "I'm not the guy that has to face that awful moral dilemma, I can merely talk about it and postulate the frightening reality of years to come, which is that we're going to become very selfish people. [But] perhaps no more selfish than those who came here in the first place, to cross the landbridge from Europe after the last Ice Age and got here first. Those who came second had a fight on their hands."

Musically as well as historically, *Homo Erraticus* charts an epic path, with plenty of ingredients familiar from Anderson's 46-year recording catalogue in Tull's name and his own, but perhaps never quite in this iteration. The artist himself smiles at all of its stylistic subdivisions.

"It's folk-prog-metal, which wraps it up apart from the church music influences, the classical music influences and a certain amount of Latin, which you've got to get your tongue around in terms of some of the titles [which include *Puer Ferox Adventus* and *Tripudium Ad Bellum*]. But yes, prog excess, in the extreme."

TAAB 2 had Anderson postulating on whatever might have happened to Bostock in adult years, in a range of possible outcomes from evangelist preacher to fat-cat banker. But Gerald, it turns out, answered some very different callings. In semi-retirement after his political career, it turns out that he then spent an incongruous and ultimately ill-starred sabbatical on Ian's payroll.

"That's right," he confirms. "Gerald was a tour manager [for Anderson's solo tour] for much of 2012, before I had to fire him. You know," he adds darkly, "once a Labour politician, always a Labour politician." The ever-eloquent frontman proceeds to expound his political ideology which, while "a bit left of centre," disapproves of dyed-in-the-wool Tory-hating for its own sake. "A good Tory is a pragmatic socialist," he says.

"I did think of asking Tony Blair if he'd like to become tour manager," adds Anderson mischievously. "There are lots of Labour party folks that have actually been fans." He recalls former Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon as one that fell at his feet. "The great thing about being a rock musician, especially after all these years, is that you've touched the hearts of lots of people.

"But you've got to remember that you're not the only girl in town. If they're a Jethro Tull fan, the chances are they're probably a fan of at least 10 other or 20 other bands of that era that they grew up with, that they take possession of, and that's what fans do."



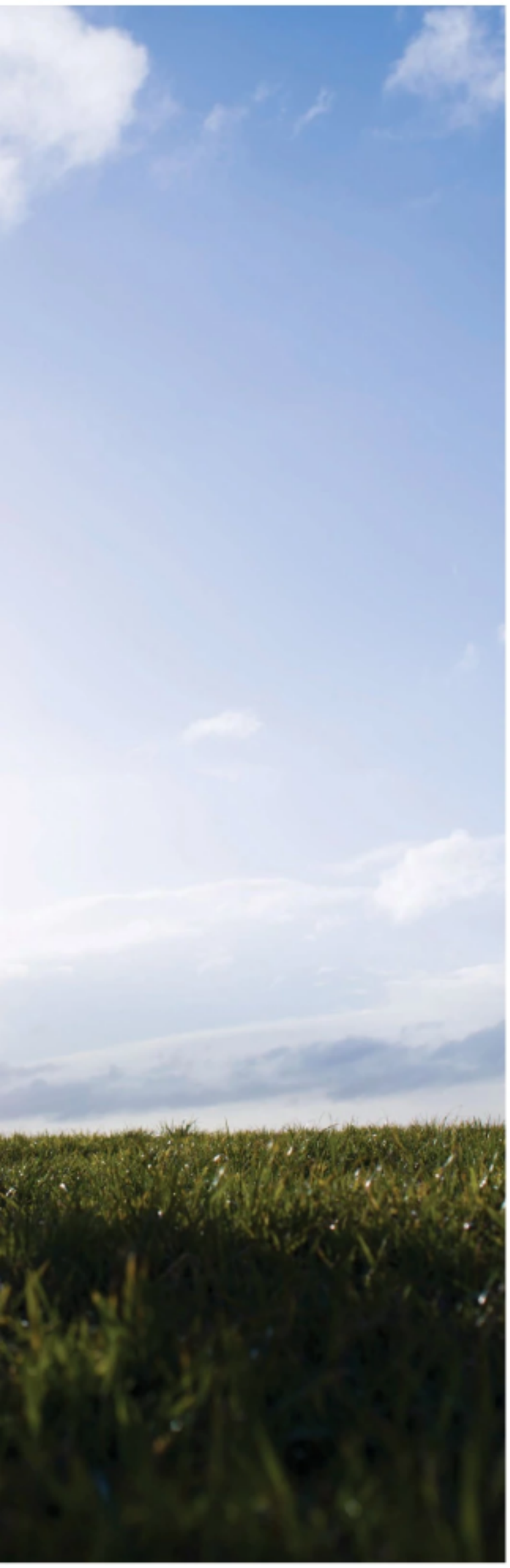
A field in England: Anderson erectus.

Back with the *Homo Erraticus* plot, Bostock — once again semi-retired in St Cleve, in the west country with his wife, warmly referred to as The Old Bag — revisits the authorial muse first hinted at in the poetry of his pre-puberty. This time, the addled historian Parritt is his source. If it all sounds Pythonesque, that was very much in Anderson's mind, just as was the case when Tull pricked the prog bubble with the original *Thick As A Brick*.

"It's quite important to me that you come up with some [lyrical content] that's never been done before,



Homo Erraticus: prog-folk-metal with church, classical and Latin influences...



not in the context of rock music. So I've got a few things in there that we touch upon that are words that make me smile a lot, because I know that some fan in some far-off land will be immediately turning to Mr Google to find out, 'Watney's Red Barrel, what's that?'

"That's one of many, and of course one that's harkening back to the Monty Python sketch of some time ago." Remember? ("There's an excursion to the local Roman ruins where you can buy cherryade and melted ice cream and bleedin' Watney's Red Barrel.")

The extensive *Homo Erraticus* tour that will start winding its way across the UK at the end of April promises to be an audio-visual adventure, and another link to Tull's oft-misunderstood satirical edge.

"It's something we did quite a bit back in the 1972-73-74 period," says Anderson. "But this was long before high-tech production, it was very low-tech, am-dram kind of silliness. A bit Pythonesque, in its schoolboyish humour, and the colourful nature of the presentation.

"But it's something that, back then, marked Jethro Tull as being really quite different to most of the other bands, particularly our British peers. I mean, Zeppelin didn't do comedy. Well, not intentionally. And sometimes ours wasn't intentional either, in the sense that, as always, you can't get it right in every country."

But the shows will have some familiar friends in the setlist. "The second half of the show is the best of Jethro Tull, it's repertoire that's mostly fairly familiar to most fans, and one or two things we'll slip in that they may remember, but probably haven't seen us play live on stage before. On this occasion, we will decorate it with a bit more video content and theatricality.

"But the first half of the show is indeed the new album. That's the bit that I suppose is the bigger challenge, certainly musically and delivery-wise because you've got to conceive of the way to make it work live on stage. And it shouldn't be rocket science, or an almighty leap, because we did rehearse and record the album as much in a live performance way as we could.

"It's done in the traditional way, we all get in the studio at the same time and we learn all of the lines and we move and change things around, and then once we've got it right, we record it. It's done really as live as it can be. Even guitar solos, played live in the studio, which is terribly exciting and quite nerve-racking for the guitar player."

This leads to a question that's not exactly the elephant in the room, maybe more of a modest zebra, because Anderson has acknowledged it before. But, as he knows, it will seem strange to some devotees that he's doing the entire *Homo Erraticus* project under his own umbrella, not Tull's.

"Primarily, it's about repertoire," he explains. "I think if it's going to be a 'Best of Jethro Tull' tour, and it's all repertoire that people are familiar with, then that might reasonably be called a Jethro Tull concert. If, on the other hand, it's more of a project thing, a tour or a concert with a symphony orchestra or a string quartet, or an acoustic show, or a concept production tour like this one coming, then I think I'd rather use my own name, only in as much as it's a point of difference.

"We're sort of branded on the supermarket shelf under different titles, and I think that's probably quite a good idea. You have a box that says Ian Anderson, and another box that says Jethro Tull, but inside both boxes it's the same old cornflakes.

"We have to remember that concerts that have been just Jethro Tull shows have included a total of 28 different band members. So it's a huge extended family of musicians who've been in and out, sometimes back in then out again, over the years. The only common factor is me. I'm the guy that writes the music and stands at the front and dodges the bullets.

"It doesn't matter whether it's Jethro Tull or Ian Anderson on the marquee in front of the theatre, nothing changes for me. In fact, all the guys in the band — with the exception of one who's not a musician but a singer/mime artist that joins me on stage — the four other musicians have all been members of

> "You have a box that says Ian Anderson, and another box that says Jethro Tull, but inside both boxes it's the same old cornflakes."
>
> **Ian Anderson**

I DUNNO WHY I CALL HIM GERALD...

Anderson's alter ego strikes again!



"Gerald is very useful to me, he's an alter ego," says Ian Anderson. "He can afford to have views and express things that perhaps I wouldn't do. But this is the point of writing. I think there's a terrible assumption people make that everything you write is autobiographical, that it's heart on sleeve. Quite clearly, it's not. I mean, the writers of [the film] *Gravity*, none of them had been closer to space than the top flight of stairs in the office. You've got to use a bit of imagination, but it's got to be informed imagination. Writing lyrics is just that experience, it's me expressing things that sometimes I know a bit about, I may know a lot about them, I may have only found out something about it this morning. But it doesn't stop me using it as lyrical material. As a performer, you have to step into character a little bit. If I'm singing a song that's maybe some tough kind of words and stern views, I *mean* it, I'm not faking it, but it's not necessarily my views. So I can use Gerald Bostock in his civilian context as a convenient tool to express things that are not quite the way I would express them myself. It's sometimes nice to have two identities." **PS**

[Tull] concerts and tours in the past. I just sometimes have to look up at the theatre when I arrive and say 'What am I called tonight?' and hope it's only one of the two possibilities."

Homo Erraticus features ample helpings of Anderson's flute trademark, but not to the point of repeated scene-stealing. "There was supposed to be a lot of me playing the flute, but I have to say that as always, once I start working on arrangements, I'm thinking very much of trying to feature different musicians in different places, and give them the opportunity to come up with some of their own thoughts about their parts.

"I don't want to overly direct them, and I don't want to take away all the moments that could be given over to somebody else. There's an awful lot of words, and melodically it's quite tricky music, there's a lot of intervals and constructions that make it quite a challenge to get all the words together without tripping over yourself."

Does such a word-packed challenge ever result in drying on stage? "I've occasionally not exactly dried, but gone into gobbledegook," he says. "I suppose if suddenly in that flash of a second, you think 'I don't know what's coming next,' you just become Stanley Unwin with attitude.

"The times this most often happens to me, because it *will* happen a couple of times a year, it's because I'm watching somebody in the front row who's mouthing all the lyrics, who knows every word, along with me. I become transfixed, and of course if they suddenly stop or do the wrong thing, I'm thrown. So absolutely don't watch the person who thinks they know all the lyrics."

Thus, a few years shy of half a century since he started along a very individual road, Ian Anderson continues to hoover up new information and influences as greedily as ever. "My whole belief is that as a musician, there's always something you can learn, every time you pick up your instrument. I've really got to feel that today I did something I couldn't have done yesterday, and I'm positive that that is the case.

"It's why I do it for me. I don't necessarily think all of this translates into pleasing all of the people all of the time, which it certainly can't. I'm very happy to have an audience there and people to smile at me or applaud, but that's not the main reason for doing what I do. My profession in life, if it's not too much of an irony, is to be an amateur. I have a passion about musical expression, and so that's got to be the main reason for anybody to do it, whether they're getting paid for it or not.

"If you're a lowly flute student learning to play your first little bits of grade one flute or whatever, you may go onto become a professional musician, but the chances are almost overwhelmingly large that you're not going to. But that's no reason not to start, and it's no reason not to carry on and push yourself to the limit. Do it because you love it.

"For roughly 150 days of the year, I am an unpaid amateur flute player, and I have a lot of fun doing it, because I can go and make lots of mistakes and play wrong notes in my learning about something new to play. That's terribly important, I think."

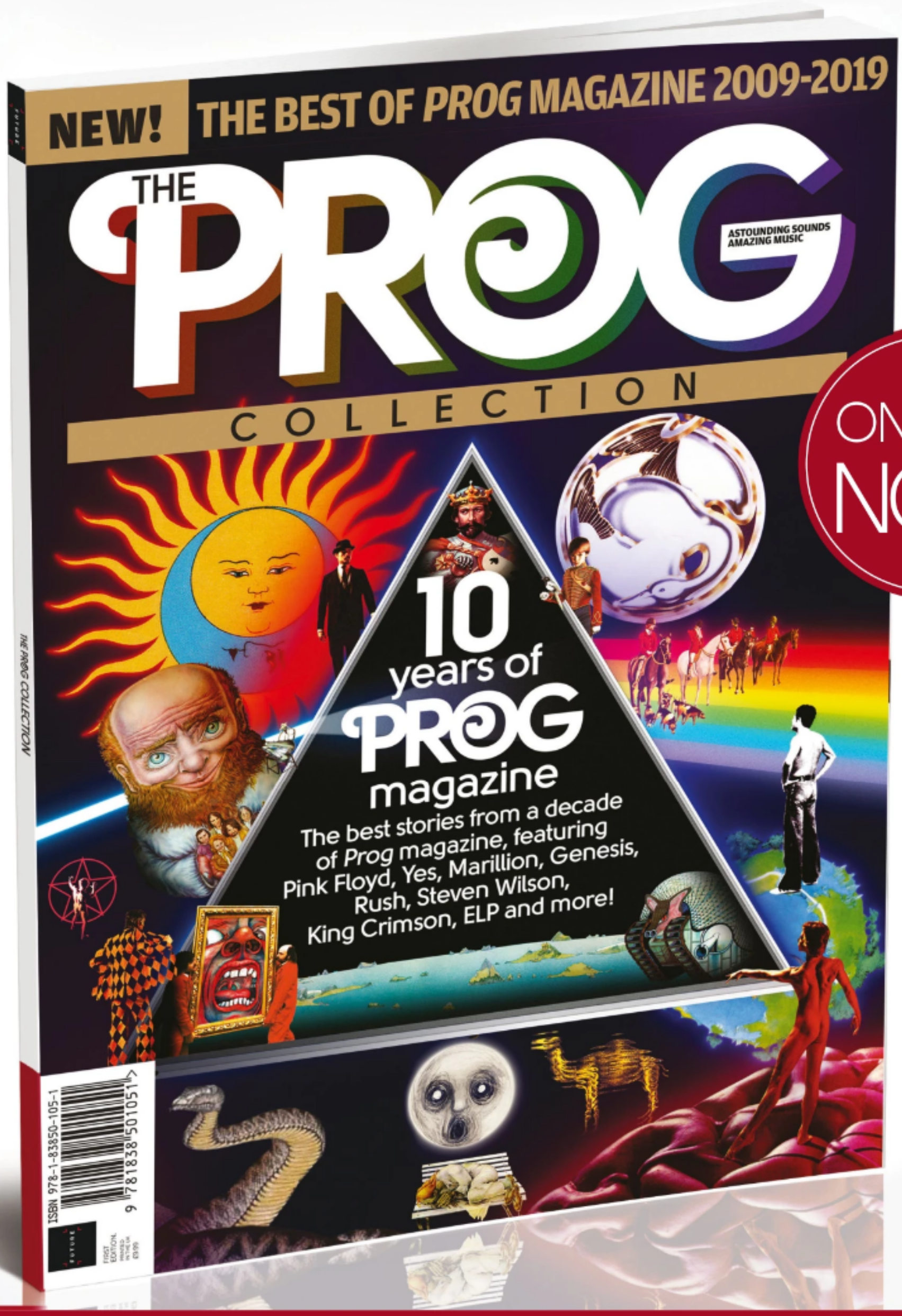


Mr Anderson presents... The Erraticus band, from left: David Goodier, John O'Hara, Scott Hammond and Florian Opahle.

> "My whole belief is that as a musician, there's always something you can learn, every time you pick up your instrument.'
>
> **Ian Anderson**

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF PROG'S FIRST DECADE

Happy birthday to us. *Prog* magazine is 10 years old and to celebrate we've collated some of the finest features and interviews with the cream of the prog world for you to enjoy. Truly astounding sounds and amazing music.



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ROAD STORIES

Stepping out from the shadow of Jethro Tull, in 2018 **Martin Barre** talked to *Prog* about the challenges and rewards of starting over from scratch, avoiding complexity for the sake of it, and why his life is more musically satisfying than ever before.

Words: David West **Photos:** Elayne Barre

"It developed like slow cooking," says Martin Barre about his solo career. After more than 40 years playing guitar in Jethro Tull, Barre has steadily established his own distinct musical identity with the Martin Barre Band, who return with Barre's seventh album as leader on *Roads Less Travelled*.

Since the dissolution of Jethro Tull six years ago, the solo side of Barre's career has taken on a new importance now that it's his bread and butter.

"I had music in me that wasn't coming out in Jethro Tull," Barre says. "I needed an outlet, but they were purely for fun. There was no need for them to have a worldwide release or tour behind them, although I was very much behind them.

"For me, the benchmark was Jethro Tull, so when I was writing music and the odd song, in my mind it had to match up to that high level."

The early solo records arrived in fits and starts – there was a seven-year gap between *The Meeting* and *Stage Left* – but since *Away With Words* in 2013, Barre has stayed impressively productive, releasing *Order Of Play* in 2014 and *Back To Steel* the following year, all leading up to the new record. However, it's been a battle.

"Jethro Tull finished and I had to drag myself out of the mess that was left and to really start from absolute zero," explains Barre. "That was where it was difficult to stay focused, to know what I wanted to do and to be strong-minded, but it slowly, slowly gathered impetus and strength and now it's wonderful. We've got great gigs everywhere, I'm really happy with the new CD and *Back To Steel* gave me a good foothold in my songwriting as well. We played a lot of that album live and it worked really well, so I am really on a springboard at the moment."

> "Jethro Tull finished and I had to drag myself out of the mess that was left and to really start from absolute zero."

Songs From The Wood: guitar great Martin Barre.

As a writer, Barre says he's not someone who can grab half an hour in a hotel room to whip up a tune while on tour. Instead, he needs a situation without interruptions or intrusions, so he settles down to compose in his home studio.

"Every morning I go into my studio and write," he says. "It's so much fun, but I need that environment. I want no distractions, I want a pot of coffee within arm's reach and I just want to be in control of the situation.

"When I'm writing, it's a very concentrated process," he explains. "Every day I'm getting ideas formulated, revisiting them and hopefully fine-tuning them. I love writing, so in some ways I could make more albums than I do and would enjoy it. *Back To Steel* was almost three years ago and I can't believe it's that long. In my mind it feels like a year because things happen so quickly around the Martin Barre Band."

Starting his career from scratch in a post-Tull world, Barre had to prove that he could be a draw without the brand behind him. "I think it's the same for anybody in a big band who goes out on their own. People are slightly sceptical and cynical about what you'd be like away from the main event and probably think, 'Well, is he just going to go out with a bunch of his mates and play twelve-bar blues and get drunk?'" he says. "They're not going to take it for granted that you're going to fill a theatre full of people.

"You've got to work for that audience and because Jethro Tull had the logo, it had such a catchment within the name, I really had to start from zero on every front."

However, he believes that the challenge revitalised him as a songwriter and player. "I was lethargic, very frustrated musically," he says. "Suddenly the floor opened up underneath me and I had to come up with something. I had to say, 'What are you going to do? Are you going to sink or are you going to swim?' And I wanted to swim very badly so it gave me that strength, and the end product has made me a much happier and, I hope, a much more musical person."

The last thing he wants is to be a Tull clone or to rely on that cache of music to attract people to the Martin Barre Band. "I don't play *Aqualung* onstage because it's a cheap way of getting the audience on your side," he explains. "I want to win them over with music where they go, 'Wow, I wouldn't think he'd play that one.' I just want it to be on my terms. I think I know what works really well for an audience because I've been doing it for


Barre is back with new album *Roads Less Travelled*.

nearly 50 years, but I want the Martin Barre Band to be its own thing. We play some Tull music, but we do a lot of other things as well because I have the freedom to play what I want."

The core of the band contains Dan Crisp on vocals and guitar, Alan Thomson on bass, and Darby Todd behind the drums, although Barre jokingly notes that they've gone through their share of drummers on the way to finding Todd. In quieter moments, he's been known to compile lists of how many bass players passed through the ranks of Jethro Tull, how many divorces there were among the members and so on.

"But the biggest number was always how many drummers Jethro Tull had. I guess it's a shit gig!" he says. "We've had some great drummers, but it's finding the right person."

And he's very happy with his line-up now. "I'm lucky with Dan, we're very much an entity musically. Alan is just an incredible musician and Darby Todd is a great drummer. Obviously I'm going to say that, and the other thing that's obvious is he's the best drummer we've had. All that to-ing and fro-ing through things that have worked and haven't quite worked, I think we've ended up with exactly what we want and need. Somebody quoted that a band is as good as the drummer and it's so true. I knew that 40, 50 years ago and it's still true."

What Barre doesn't want is just a backing band, noting that Ian Anderson once said he didn't know who was around him onstage in Tull at one point. "I want them to share what we've got," he says about Crisp, Thomson and Todd. "Everything. I'm talking about the music, the CDs, giving them space within the music, that we all have an important job to do, and I want them to be a big, big part of it. I want them to be really happy with the music."

And where possible, he wants to expand the live line-up, bringing in singers Alex Hart and Becca Langsford, both of whom can he heard on *Roads Less Travelled*.

"Alex and Becca do some of the live shows with us anyway and have done for the last two, three years," he says. "I want them to be a bigger part of the band. I've always admired Derek Trucks. I read an interview where they said, 'Why do you go out with a 12-piece band? It's crazy, so expensive.' He said, 'Success has enabled me to spend more money on my music and that's where I want to spend it. If I had more money, I'd have a 15-piece band.' I thought that was wonderful, that's exactly what I want to do. I'd love a Hammond player. I want the girls there all the time because it's part of the music and every CD I do they've become a more important part of it."

As much as the Martin Barre Band tends to fall under the prog umbrella, that is perhaps more the result of the guitarist's background with Tull than a reflection of the direction and sound he is pursuing now. He describes his earlier output as "too complex for complexity's sake". Instead, what he wants is "my music to sound simple, like it's a song. Verse, chorus, solo, instrumental middle eight, chorus, verse, chorus, out. Accessible. I want the music in there to be the best it can possibly be, so if there is anything complex or demanding, it's inside of it and if people want to access that, they can listen to it a few times and hear hopefully more and more things that are going on. But they need to be supportive of the end result rather than in-your-face complex time signatures and crazy playing. Everybody has done it and we're all guilty of doing it for selfish reasons. You think, 'I can do this so I'm going to do it.'"

> "I don't play *Aqualung* onstage because it's a cheap way of getting the audience on your side. I want to win them over with music where they go, 'Wow, I wouldn't think he'd play that one.'"

His goal, rather than pulling off the flashiest guitar licks possible, is to leave his audience with a smile on their faces. "One day I want people to say, 'I really like your songs,' because that to me as a guitar player would be a big compliment. My guitar playing is my comfort zone, I can do it with my eyes shut. How good or bad I am, I don't care. I'm never going to be in the top 20 best guitar players in the world, or in the UK, or even in Devon probably, but I don't care. I've never really looked to be that sort of guitarist. I like to be respected, I hope I've got a decent standard of guitar playing. I work hard at being better every day I play, but my songs are my outlet. All my musicality goes into the music and the songwriting and that's where I'm looking for people's reaction."

2019 will see Barre out on the road to perform *50 Years Of Jethro Tull* alongside his fellow alumni Clive Bunker and Jonathan Noyce, but he's very keen to make sure they're not sold as something they're not. "There is no Jethro Tull and there won't be," he says. "I won't point a finger, but I've had a couple of occasions where they've tried to bill it as Jethro Tull. No, I want people to know exactly what it is. It's me, Clive Bunker, Jonathan Noyce, with the Martin Barre Band and surprise guests, some of which I've got lined up. It's an evening of the history of Jethro Tull, the music that I think is important."

Barre says he feels powerfully motivated to keep the Tull brand alive, even if the band itself is no more. "It's made me what I am or what I'm not. It's why I'm 71 and still playing music because Jethro Tull enabled me to do it and fans respect the name Jethro Tull. The music is really important to them. I have 100 per cent respect for it and this is my way of showing it. People say, 'Oh, you should play more Tull,' or 'You should play more of your own music.' Leave me alone! I just want to have fun. If I can put together a night of music that people are going to love and the quality is going to be really high, that's all I want."

Choosing the setlist and revisiting his back catalogue has brought its share of surprises. "Some things you go, 'Wow, what was that? How did I play that?' It's quite exciting, it's like listening to another guitar player and figuring out how they did it, what they were thinking about when they did it. 'Oh yeah! That's what I was doing. You weirdo!' It's a mixture of familiarity and discovery. At first I was a bit reticent about the whole process but as I've looked at albums and as I examine all the songs, they come alive again. It's going to be fun. There's nothing in there that's going to be hard work. We're going to laugh a lot and we're going to play a lot. It's my 'thank you' for 50 years of enabling me to be a musician."



Birthday Boy: Ian Anderson ready to mark Jethro Tull's 50th anniversary.

50 The Enduring Appeal of Jethro Tull

Five decades, 30-plus band members and more than 20 albums – and **Jethro Tull** aren't ready to pack up the flute just yet. In 2018, ahead of their 50th anniversary, *Prog* met **Ian Anderson** to look back over his band's extensive back catalogue, and to find out how they changed progressive rock forever.

Words: Philip Wilding
Portraits: Stuart Wood

Night Of The Living Dead, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Once Upon A Time In The West, bean bag chairs, ziplock bags, Will Smith, Hugh Jackman and Gillian Anderson. On reflection, 1968 was a pretty good year.

Intelligent, thought-provoking cinema, the birth of three (very different) era-defining actors and the creation of something to keep your sandwich in as you flopped down onto the latest in soft furnishings – all while listening to *This Was*, the debut album from a bluesy rock (if not for long) band called Jethro Tull.

It's debatable how Smith, Jackman and Anderson will be celebrating their respective 50th birthdays, but suffice to say there'll be enough candles to constitute a pyre. For Ian Anderson and his band, though, it's about moving forever forward, but with one eye on the past – and a very specific part of the past at that.

"When you think there were 36 members of the band over the years outside of me, it's a lot of people..."

Ian Anderson looks up from his coffee and makes some mental calculations, tapping out a rhythm on the table between us with his forefinger as the numbers add up.

"All of the different line-ups and sub-line-ups, there are 10 or 11 meaningful line-ups, in my mind. I think that's what I'm doing with this anniversary tour – thinking about the first 10 or so years and the Jethro Tull bands that were responsible for that period of music."

And what a remarkable decade that was. It saw a musical evolution that carried them from their bluesy debut through to the breakout *Stand Up*, the conceptual landmark piece *Thick As A Brick*, and took in two-thirds of their folk rock trilogy, *Songs From The Wood* and the inestimable *Heavy Horses*.

Along the way, they reinvented prog rock, introduced folk rock to a truly international audience and kept in step with the times, all while fine-tuning the way they kept moving as a band. What a first 10 years.

"I think that period is when most people would have come to Jethro Tull," says Anderson, "Maybe it was '69, maybe it was '78 for some people, but it was in that era when they got to know about us. Even for much younger fans today, they will almost certainly gravitate to that era of music to check out what was happening when Tull was relatively shiny and new, even though we were in a period when we'd evolved so much, when prog rock was in its original incarnation when it was successful. You must remember, it was only four or five years before it became ridiculed.

"In truth, the band kept making more progressive music than actual prog rock, possibly feeling a little alone, a little bit twitchy about being mauled in the press and getting bad reviews, but it had ceased to bother me by then. I might have been bent out of shape in 1973 but I got over it by 1974."

So did the band and bandleader feel in or out of step with the times? Part of Jethro Tull's enduring appeal is that they always kept a wary eye on the world around them. Anderson was writing about the ecological impact on the world as far back as the 1970s, which would later mutate into something much more cohesive and pointed (and way ahead of the times) in the subject matter of the 1979 *Stormwatch* album.

"It's kind of you to think that I'm in step with the times – many people would take issue with that notion."

Anderson arches both eyebrows and smiles thinly. "*I* think I'm usually in keeping with the times, it's just that my way of expressing that isn't going to be a fashionable and glossy way of making it seem relevant today.

"It's something I felt pretty obvious about in the mid-70s – then there was no point in trying to follow fashion and reinvent myself, to be somehow in keeping with the next generation of music makers. I loved the music I loved: I wasn't a fan of things like Elvis – I was too young – but then I got into the Howlin' Wolf and grittier blues and wasn't interested at all in what went before. I sneered at it. They weren't my thing. Same thing with the early Beatles.

"So I've always been very conscious that there's no point in trying to keep up with fashion to endear yourself to someone – you just have to plough your own furrow, whether it's with, say, *Heavy Horses*, or whatever it might be, and do the thing that you feel good about at the time. You hope people like it, that they're captivated by those notions and music, and that you scrape through and get to make another record."

"I've always been very conscious that there's no point in trying to keep up with fashion to endear yourself to someone – you just have to plough your own furrow."

He swirls the remnants of his coffee around in the base of his cup. We've been picking over the band's expansive catalogue for the best part of two hours. No one is more invested or willing to pick over the bones of the band that's been his life's work. He talks about product, titling, how to present – and sell – his music. He's an artist with an acute sense of business, which is yet another reason for his and Tull's longevity. That and his acute eye for the times he and his band found themselves in.

"It's interesting that you mention *Stormwatch*," says Anderson. "That album was very much about issues of conservation, climate change. You must also remember that the album came at a time when the scientific thinking of the day was that we were verging towards the likelihood of a mini ice age, so that was the driving force behind some of the songs on the album. Once the ice core samples started coming out in the 80s, the scientific community had to rethink this.

"It was all slightly arty farty!"

Producer **Derek Lawrence** recalls working with the fledgling Tull on their first single.

Mostly known for his work with Deep Purple and Wishbone Ash, producer Derek Lawrence recalls how he first encountered Jethro Tull.

"It was Ronnie Beck at Feldman Music who suggested I might like to work with a band called John Evan Smash. So, I booked time at Columbia Studios in New Bond Street, London, and that's where we recorded the *Sunshine Day* single and the B-side, *Aeroplane*. I have to admit that I wanted them to be more of a rock band, but they were determined to be more left field."

Lawrence subsequently worked with the young band on four more tracks at Abbey Road Studios, by which time they'd changed their name.

"I suggested they become Candy Coloured Rain. It seemed to fit what they were trying to do much better. To be honest, it was all slightly arty farty!"

While he wasn't exactly in tune with what the band wanted to do musically, Lawrence respected their potential.

"They were clearly talented and had some very good ideas. These were also nice guys, although the only one I used to hang out with was Mick Abrahams. Ian Anderson definitely had a strong vision for what he wanted to do, and I appreciated his single-mindedness."



What's In A Name?: Jethro Toe, er, Tull's 1968 debut single.

When *Sunshine Day* came out as their debut single, the band had become Jethro Tull, although a spelling error meant the label had them down as 'Jethro Toe'. In the past, Lawrence has taken the blame for this error. Now he's ready to set the record straight.

"It was actually a secretary at the label who misheard the name and made the mistake. I took the blame for what happened as it seemed unfair to let a hapless employee at Island get it. But now I can tell everyone: it wasn't me!" **MD**

"To go back to the first climate song I wrote, it was *Skating Away On The Thin Ice Of The New Day*. For the first time we were hearing about the distinct possibility that there could be man-made climate change and all of that tied in to population growth and all the other issues that have been exacerbated by pollution and so forth.

"In some ways I feel okay about having touched on those topics back then. It didn't make for a good or even acceptable song, but at least it's not just repeating yourself in the same old way; at least you're moving on, into topics that are a mixture of the contemporary while still paying attention to where we've come from.

"That's my take on pretty much everything: I'm not a historian, but I believe in the value of history, because it gives us perspective on how we got here and so it might be an indicator of where we might be going. My approach to music is to take on elements of the past, but I certainly don't want to be a prophet of doom. I'm essentially optimistic, but very concerned."

And back to Anderson's musical evolution as an artist: was that him striving artistically or did he simply get bored with one form if he had to repeat it over and over again?

"To be honest, in the case of the blues, I always felt a charlatan. Blues as an influence, it's as important to me now as it ever was. It's almost like a technical thing when you analyse the scales and the rhythms applied in that music. Lyrically, on the other hand, there's almost nothing that has hung over in my life after the first Jethro Tull album, nothing from that world.

"Musically, blues still has a part in what I do, but it's just one of several influences and arguably maybe not as important compared to folk and classical music in the broadest sense. There are perhaps greater influences, but blues is still part of what I do and who I am.

"Some of the things I was recording last March, at least one of them is rooted in a blues feel, so it's still something that's there for me today. There are certain passages, even on an album like *Heavy Horses*, that I will use and use again. Think of it like a chef in a kitchen with a spice rack. He's probably got 30 things in there and he's used them all before, but perhaps not in that order or with that twist, but there are lots of things you can do with that repertoire. And that applies to music too, you hope.

"Talking lyrics, though, when I started going through all the lyrics I'd written with a view to editing a collection of lyrical material, particularly the earlier stuff, I was expecting it to be excruciating, but with most of it, that turned out not to be the case. I could read it and think, 'It's 20 years old, it may be naïve or simplistic, but it's succinct, it's to the point, even if it's very much in keeping with young people writing lyrics for rock music.' There are howlers, but I'll let you root those out for yourself..."

Casting an eye over the Tull catalogue, does Anderson unearth many howlers? Are there moments when he does nothing but wince? Are there many musical missteps?

"Oh yeah, absolutely," he replies without hesitation, "And maybe if it wasn't for them then there wouldn't be any right steps either – you've got to fall to get up again. But sometimes you look back, whether it's a year later or 10 years later, and you'll regard it as not one of your finest moments, but on the other hand, they don't seem so bad after all. The heart and the head were in the right place, it's just that somehow it didn't quite work the way one had hoped."

There are still chances to rectify those missteps though – there's a new album that Anderson and his band started last year, though he's still uncertain whether it'll be a Tull record or a solo album. As *Prog* pushes him on it, he shrugs: "It depends what it's going to be released as. It's not something that I carry in my head."

The coffee's finished, as has our interview, but there's just time for one more reminiscence from a life spent living in and around music. It comes when *Prog* remarks that even into his 70s, Anderson still has the singing pipes of a man decades younger, which seems to surprise him.

"I've never been a strong singer," he says. "Comparing me to, say, Robert Plant is absurd – he has a God-given talent, which I recognised, fearfully, the first time I ever met him when Alexis Korner brought him into a club we were in. It might have been the Speakeasy, one of these awful places that your manager made you go to.

"So we'd gone along to this dreary, shitty club in town and it was awful. Alexis came in with this lean youth and said, 'Alright if my boy stands in and does a number? He sings and plays harmonica.' And I was like, 'Well, that's what I do, but sure, I'll just sit this one out and he can have a go.'

"We had no idea who he was and he did some blues standard and it was suddenly, 'Oh shit!' You knew instantly that he had something special about him. And he was a good harmonica player too. I sat there feeling this growing dread and, knowing a bit about Alexis and John Mayall, these were guys who would mercilessly nick your musicians – in the nicest possible way. They were band leaders; they were Svengalis. We got out of there pretty quickly, as I recall. Not too much looking back that night."

Anderson pushes his coffee cup away. There's more dry laughter as we both gather our bags and head for the door. The question of whether there will be another Jethro Tull album remains unresolved, even as Anderson readies himself to go back, once more, to living in the past, knowing that come what may, he's happy to visit all his yesterdays while he's still living for today.



Ian Anderson, shot at home exclusively for *Prog*, January 2018.

"When you think there were 36 members of the band over the years outside of me, it's a lot of people."



A Time For Everything

Ian Anderson reassesses every **Jethro Tull** studio album of the last 50 years...

Interview: **Philip Wilding**

This Was

(1968)

"It's all in the title, isn't it? This was Jethro Tull. That's no accident because when we were recording it, the one thing I felt sure about is that if we were lucky enough to make another album, I knew it wouldn't be like this one: based on blues elements and black American folk culture. That's not part of my life and I couldn't keep doing that – I'd look like a complete twit. The cover had no logo or anything and people were telling me we couldn't do that, but we did it, of course."



Stand Up

(1969)

"The coming of age, in a way. The birth of more original music for us. It was then that what was referred to as progressive rock music was coming into being. If it's in that vein, it's rock music rather than folky, but it's progressive in that it reflects more eclectic influences, bringing things together and mixing and matching and being more creative. For me, it's a very important album, a pivotal album."



Benefit

(1970)

"A darker album. You have to put that into the context of a band returning from the first of three forays into the USA and that altered my mindset. It's not all gloom and doom, but it's a slightly more oddball album. On *For Michael Collins, Jeffrey And Me*, we referenced Michael Collins, the astronaut who was stuck in the command module and we now know was given the instructions to leave the others behind. The loneliest man in space, and also he gets no glory because he's not the guy who walked on the moon."

WILL IRELAND

Aqualung: "The album that broke us in countries beyond the UK and US."

Thick As A Brick: "I thought, 'Right, let's show them what a concept album is.'"



Aqualung

(1971)

"That's the singer/songwriter side of things, where a lot of the music did come out of me strumming an acoustic guitar with a view to keeping it that way, as opposed to writing that way and turning it electric. That big title track riff came out of an acoustic jam – you've just got to have that imagination to hear that. You have to know that you can make it sing. It went on to sell and sell across the world. It's the album that broke us in countries beyond the UK and US."



A Passion Play

(1973)

"The 'step too far' album. We decamped to the Château d'Hérouville in France where Elton had recorded, and had a rotten time: technical issues, gastric bugs... we just wanted to go home. So we did, and had a frantic few weeks of writing a new album. Two pieces made it on to the *War Child* album and one or two morphed into something more sophisticated, but they never came to light on that album. Steve Harris [Iron Maiden] loves *A Passion Play*. I'm glad someone liked it!"



Minstrel In The Gallery

(1975)

"That's an odd one. It's the last one that Jeffrey Hammond [bass] played on, so it has this negative undertow to it as we knew he was going. So with Jeffrey leaving, it made me think, 'Maybe I need to do this without relying on others so much.' I started working more on my own in the studio, writing and recording, playing to a click track, so a lot of it was a bit more 'them and me' – a bit more insular, musically speaking, which wasn't great in the spirit of working together."


JETHRO TULL

The St Cleve Chronicle & Linwell Advertiser

THICK AS A BRICK

JUDGES DISQUALIFY "LITTLE MILTON" IN LAST MINUTE RUMPUS

ART DEMO FORCES CLOSURE

Thick As A Brick

(1972)

"After *Aqualung*, I felt we had to take a big step forward. Many writers wrote about *Aqualung* as a concept album, and I kept saying, 'Maybe two or three songs in the same area, but not a concept.' In the wake of all of that, I thought, 'Right, let's show them what a concept album is,' and it seemed like an amusing idea to go down that route in this Pythonesque way and to try to use surreal humour. It clicked in America, which was a surprise, and it was our first real foray in that sort of theatrical presentation."



War Child

(1974)

"It's kind of okay. The big one on that was *Bungle In The Jungle*, which is a complete rebuild of a song from the Château tapes. Very much rewritten, but it used the reference of people behaving like they're animals in the jungle. It was written to be a radio hit, and in America it nailed it – we got AM radio play, which opened us up to a much wider audience and brought a lot more people into the concerts. It had its moment. Ritchie Blackmore has a soft spot for that album, for some reason."



Too Old To Rock'n'Roll: Too Young To Die! (1976)

"The title track came to me on a plane journey when I was in heavy turbulence and very frightened. It was a piece about the kind of 50s Brit rock'n'rollers. Those bikers in that era, it was their world and they were already pushing 40 or 50 by then. You could mock that but there's something rather noble and determined and dignified about it, and I just wanted to explore that dichotomy. It's wistful and nostalgic and also a bit of a put-down, and it's finding that balance in a song sometimes."

A Passion Play: "Iron Maiden's Steve Harris loves *A Passion Play*. I'm glad someone liked it!"

A: "It was as simple as *A* for Anderson because it was supposed to be a solo album."



Songs From The Wood

(1977)

"More than any album we've done, this is one where the band had more to do with the elements of the songs. Martin Barre [guitar] and David Palmer [keyboard] particularly had worked some material up that would fit right into a song, and where the recording process had all the band involved. There was an exception or two – *Jack-In-The-Green* was me one Sunday after lunch in there alone – but the rest of it was all of us. I feel perhaps since the days of *This Was* or *Stand Up*, it had much more of a band vibe. It was good."



Stormwatch

(1979)

"There was a lot of stress within the band, mainly to do with John Glascock's illness [the bassist had heart problems]. We sent him home and told him he had to get out of this spiral he was in because it wasn't just his illness, it was lifestyle. He'd be on stage and his face would be white like wax, with a film of sweat. I made him leave to get himself well and sadly he got worse and then we got the terrible news that he'd passed away. Did we do everything we could to help? That's a question we'll ask ourselves forever."



The Broadsword And The Beast (1982)

"That followed a bit of hiatus and we were getting towards the end of the record, and I thought, as I have before, 'I've spent so much time with this material, I'd really like someone else to come in and mix.' We found Paul Samwell-Smith, who we knew from The Yardbirds, and he came in towards the end and took a lot of pressure off me. We worked well together – we had this good accord and bounced off each other very well. I'd been feeling very pressured on the previous albums, nursemaiding everything to the end."



Heavy Horses

(1978)

"It wasn't a concept album – I didn't really have an overall thematic approach. It really was a collection of songs, albeit with a certain sense of tone and mood, and at the end of it, Heavy Horses was the one that presented itself somehow. It had this significance and it was a visual reference for the album cover. And it was also, let's not pretend, quite a good title. That said, it's unashamedly about something that was lamenting the passing of an age."



A

(1980)

"It was as simple as *A* for Anderson because it was supposed to be a solo album. I wanted to take some time out and I asked Eddie Jobson to be involved, so we started in the studio. I heard this guitar line in this bit I'd written and I called Martin Barre and he ended up staying. Then the record company said, 'It sounds like a new Tull album,' and I regret giving in to that. It sits there on the edge of our repertoire: it's quite the mainstream thing."



Under Wraps

(1984)

"That was following my solo album called *Walk Into Light* [1983] where I'd been exploring what was then the new technology of the emerging world that was moving from analogue to digital – drum machines, very primitive sequencers and so forth. I thought we could use that on a Tull album. It's got some great songs and it's arguably the one album where I really pushed myself as a vocalist. It's a great album apart from the drum machine – it annoys me to this day, and the public didn't like it either. I'm glad I did it though."

Under Wraps: "The drum machine annoys me to this day, and the public didn't like it either."

Rock Island: "*Kissing Willie* is a regrettable piece of saucy innuendo. Benny Hill would have been proud."



Crest Of A Knave

(1987)

"I was going out and doing *Under Wraps* [1984] live, and I ripped up my throat – I couldn't sing and I thought maybe time was up and I'd blown my voice completely. I spent a year not doing anything but seeing throat specialists, so it wasn't until the summer of '86 that we went out and did some shows, including one in Budapest where I wrote the song of the same name. In America it was the early days of MTV and *Steel Monkey* got quite a lot of prominence. That album did well in the US and won the Grammy."



Catfish Rising

(1991)

"A rather good collection of songs, but at a time when Tull weren't exactly in fashion! Some people felt it went back to our bluesy base – maybe too much for one reviewer who referred to it as 'cod blues'. *This Is Not Love*, *Still Loving You Tonight* and *Rocks On The Road* stand out for me. A lot of this was recorded alone in my studio with overdubs from Martin [Barre] and [bassist] Dave Pegg. The worst thing about the record was the album cover. Too much black! Too much Spinal! No space to sign autographs with a black Sharpie."



J.Tull Dot.Com

(1999)

"With the advent of the internet, I thought we should have our own website. After some legal arm-wrestling with the cheeky owner of the name www.jethrotull.com, I beat him into submission in a Swiss court and got the name freed up for our use. The title track stands out, along with *Hunt By Numbers* and *Wicked Windows* – a reference to the heinous Heinrich Himmler of the bespoke dodgy specs. I was in the Auschwitz museum recently where the glasses of many incoming prisoners are on display. I thought of him while I was walking around. A lot."



Rock Island

(1989)

"The antidote to the more cheerful *Crest Of A Knave*, it's mostly dark subject matter of alienation and desolation, except for the absurd *Kissing Willie* – an all-too-regrettable, unsubtle piece of saucy innuendo. Benny Hill would have been proud of that one. But the song *Strange Avenues* is still a favourite of mine. And *Another Christmas Song* too, which talks of origins and cultural identity. *'Everyone is from somewhere, even if you've never been there.'*"



Roots To Branches

(1995)

"The last album with Dave Pegg who played, I think, only on three tracks due to the resurgent popularity of Fairport Convention – always his first love – and the increasingly difficult task of being the bass player of two bands at the same time. All the songs on this record still work for me. We enlisted American jazz rocker Steve Bailey to play bass. He turned up on a freezing January morning to start work on the record in my new studio. These days he's Chair of Bass at Berklee College."



The Jethro Tull Christmas Album (2003)

"When the record company suggested we do a Christmas album, my immediate reaction was no, but I started to wonder if there was a way to do something not altogether cheesy and trivial. So I came up with some variations on Christmas carols, looking at the 'other side' of Christmas. Some Tull material was re-recorded as I already had a few pieces in the repertoire that touched on the spirit of winter. *Birthday Card At Christmas* is special for me as my daughter's birthday is on December 22 and it tends to be glossed over in the days before Christmas."

Catfish Rising: "The worst thing about the record was the album cover. Too much black!"

Heavy Load

Heavy questions for heavy rockers

Ian Anderson on life, death and sex changes.

Interview: **Paul Elliott** Portrait: **Will Ireland/Future**

Leader of veteran progressive rockers Jethro Tull, Ian Anderson, MBE is a most unorthodox rock star. He plays flute – mostly while standing on one leg. He has never been into drugs. And in the 70s he ran a parallel career as a salmon farmer.

His life has been full of surprises, not least when his former Tull bandmate David Palmer had a sex change, or when Tull beat Metallica to win Best Hard Rock/Metal Performance in the 1989 Grammy Awards.

You're a self-taught musician. Why did you choose flute instead of something more rock'n'roll?
I started off with the guitar, but I decided to give it up when I heard Eric Clapton. It's the way people are put off playing tennis when they watch Roger Federer. I found the flute gave me something interesting melodically.

What else can you do on one leg, besides playing flute?
I can hover in a rather interesting way. Playing on one leg is a very stilling and focusing way of achieving balance, physically and mentally. And of course it's a visual trademark, a bit of a moment for the audience.

Did the old rebel in you have difficulty accepting an MBE?
My only problem was that I was very much opposed to some of the policies of [ex-PM] Tony Blair during his regime, and my award was decided under a Blair government. I came very close to saying I couldn't accept it. I'd like to think that it was awarded for my efforts in having musicians' copyright recognised, rather than for making rather too much money out of playing the flute for many years.

Where do you stand politically?
That's a difficult one. I know more Labour people, but in past years the Conservatives have had my grudging support.

Do you resent paying high taxes?
I've never been a tax exile. We secured Swiss residency, but decided that such a radical change of life just for saving money was… well, not cricket. I am, in principle, in favour of a relatively high level of tax for the highest earners. If you're making £20 million a year and you pay 80 per cent tax, life's not come to an end.

Do you believe in God?
I'm not a Christian. I don't 'do' Jesus. But Christianity, like most of the world's great religions, is a good, practical moral code for living. However, there are some very nasty messages in the Bible. That Moses guy – dangerous freak!


Ian Anderson, MBE: blame Eric Clapton.

"Ritchie Blackmore's sense of humour can be cruel, but he's definitely not mad."

How did you react when former Tull keyboard player David Palmer said he was going to have a sex change?
My reaction when I first found out that David was undergoing gender change was one of anger, because he might have told me before the *News Of The World* camped on my doorstep, having assumed it was I who was about to place something precious to me in a jam jar on the mantelpiece.

You played on Blackmore's Night's album *Shadow Of The Moon*. Do you think Ritchie Blackmore has lost a few marbles?
I don't know Ritchie terribly well, but he's far from dotty. He's always had an interest in medieval music, and has cited Jethro Tull circa 1974 as being very illuminating. Ritchie certainly has a fondness for dressing up in what I believe they call 'garb'. But it's slightly tongue-in-cheek. Ritchie is not someone who is palpably comedic. His sense of humour, it has to be said, can be cruel, but he's definitely not mad.

Why were you never into drugs?
I don't enjoy the change of mood that comes from people who are drugged or drunk. I find it difficult to form bonds with people who are out of their brains.

What and when was the lowest point of your career?
In 1972, at the end of an American tour for *Thick As A Brick*, I had a firm resolve to walk away from Jethro Tull and playing live music. It was a feeling of betrayal – these people buy your record and then come to a concert and whistle and hoot and screech and generally do everything possible to stop you hearing what you're playing! A baying crowd just looking to get their jollies out of volume and repetitive rhythm – it all felt quite vulgar.

What's your biggest regret?
Not having developed a wider set of interests. There are things I've never done that, physically, I'm patently too old to do. Intellectually as well, there are things I should have grappled with. The trouble with a music career is it's a whirlwind.

What is the meaning of life?
To know the answer to that, you have to know the meaning of death. And I'm not sure I believe in any life after death. Life is an opportunity as well as a test, but ultimately it's all just preparing us for the big mystery of death. That's pretty scary stuff for people like me who can't face the idea of retirement sitting in an armchair watching repeats of *Casualty* until we finally pop off.

What will be written on your tombstone?
'Nice try'?

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