

## FINALLY

**Jasper Smit** runs the 'Continental Caravan Campaign and European Information Service at Tielstraat 112, 1107 RC Amsterdam.

**Manfred Bress** publishes 'Canterbury Nachrichten' which covers the whole Canterbury scene. This can be obtained from Nikolaistr. 90, D-47055, Duisburg, Germany.

**Phil Howitt** continues to produce 'Facelift' - an excellent publication which covers the Canterbury scene and includes information on Caravan from time to time. He can be contacted at PO Box 69, Manchester. M16 8RD.

*I get lots of people saying how difficult it is to find Caravan's material in the shops. The fact is that you can get almost every album on CD (Better By Far will be available eventually) but only through specialist mail order outlets. Try the following:*

**Piccadilly Records** of Manchester. Tel: 0161 839 8008

**GFT** of Surbiton Tel: 0181 339 9965

**CDX** of Wales Tel: 01222 843604

**Compact Disc Services** of Dundee Tel: 01382 736702

**Terrapin Records** of London Tel: 0181 292 0085

**Mike Lloyd Mail Order** of Hanley Tel: 01782 269012

**Revolution** (specialists in Japanese imports) PO Box 143, Ruislip, Middx. HA4 6BG (Their current list includes everything down to 'Back To Front' and 'If I Could...' but at Japanese import prices (around £18.00 to £27.00!))

The current issue of the Newsletter remains FREE i.e. all that is required is a S.A.E. in a decent sized envelope (or I.R.C. for Europe and the World!)

Copies of the booklets for the 1990 and 1991 concerts at Old Buckenham cost 2 x 1st class stamps *plus* a largish stamped addressed envelope.

Past Newsletters i.e. combined Issue 1 and 2, Issues 3,4 and 5 can be obtained for 2 x 1st class stamps per issue plus S.A.E.

### **RALPH CROSS**

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RICHARD SINCLAIR'S  
CARAVAN OF DREAMS  
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## Newsletter



INCLUDES INTERVIEW WITH  
DAVE SINCLAIR

## FOREWORD

Welcome to this, Issue Number 6, yet again packed with information about the activities of the band! The partnership of myself beavering away gathering information, coupled with Codge Barber's excellent work on the production side seems to be working out: we hope you agree. Do continue to send in any anecdotes, pictures etc. for future issues: the members of Caravan do after all read the contents of the fanzine as well as contributing to it!

## NEWS update

Clearly the after-taste of last Autumn's gigs is still sweet, as the band have agreed to play the London Astoria on **Friday 19th September**. The line up will be Richard Coughlan (drums), Pye Hastings (guitar), Dave Sinclair (keyboards), Jim Leverton (bass), Simon Bentall (percussion), Doug Boyle (guitar) and Geoffrey Richardson (viola, guitar and flute). Although there is a sense of disappointment that Jimmy Hastings is unavailable, we have the mouth watering alternative of Geoffrey appearing for the first time since the one-off 1983 Marquee gig. The set list is still under

consideration and although it will bear more than a passing resemblance to the previous dates, at least a couple of changes are likely, including the possible addition of 'Cold As Ice' from Battle of Hastings.

The fact that Kevin Ayers is providing support makes it all the more interesting because of his historical connections with Caravan through membership of the Wilde Flowers.

The following weekend sees Caravan playing in Holland for the first time in many a year. Jasper Smit who runs the European Fan Club 'CocaCamp', has worked in partnership with 'Mojo Double You' promoters (more used to setting up European tours for U2 and Pink Floyd) to organise a date in Utrecht on **Saturday 27th September** (capacity 1,000) and Groningen on **Sunday 28th** (capacity 750), support is likely to be Incaboots.

Jasper tells me the promoter is a Caravan fan: it helps! Provisionally the idea is that if you buy three tickets (at around £8) you will receive a FREE Live Double CD of the concerts. Let's hope this comes off. Jasper can be contacted on Tel: 00 31 20 697 8433.

Jim Leverton and Geoffrey Richardson will also be playing a set of their songs in a Irish Pub in Utrecht during Saturday. Richard Sinclair expressed an interest in supporting Caravan, and Pye was enthusiastic about the idea but that has not been possible.

Other news concerns the possibility of a **Christmas single by Dave Sinclair!** The interview, elsewhere in this issue contains more details!

Pye has passed on a couple of pieces of information. Firstly, there is almost

## BITS and PIECES

### HOW I DISCOVERED CARAVAN by Jim Henderson

I always enjoy reading other fans telling how they got into Caravan so I thought I'd share my story. I discovered Caravan in 1996, yes 96! Where have I been until now you may ask? Well I was only born in 1976 so I guess that may qualify me as one of the youngest Caravan followers and it certainly gives me a valid excuse for not supporting them in their heyday. Having been a huge fan of 60s/70s music, as well as disowning most modern music, for the last 2-3 years in particular I finally became aware of Caravan via a mail order catalogue which was advertising the HTD reissue of the debut album. The description of the CD was what inspired me to buy; had it been different I may not be writing this now. The text read 'full of underground psychedelic progressive magic, this is on a par with the first Pink Floyd album when it comes to essential items...' Already holding 'The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn' in high esteem I had to buy 'Caravan', a phenomenal album which appealed to me greatly from the very first listen. Early standout tracks were 'Place Of My Own' and 'Policeman' but I quickly began to appreciate the album as a whole. The next question was, where now?

Reading up on Caravan in places such as the marvellous 'Tapestry Of Delights' book and Issue 4 of Ralph's wonderful newsletter the best step seemed to be to get right up to date, with 'The Battle Of Hastings' which I duly purchased from that superb label HTD. It's a very different album to their debut but undoubtedly contains that same Caravan magic. I think it's a great collection and every track has something special, my particular favourites being 'It's Not Real', 'Liar' and 'Travelling Ways' but there is not a bad song on the album. My only regret is that I discovered Caravan too late to catch them on the late 96 tour, but if the band are reading



this I hope they will play Wolverhampton again on the next tour as it is very near to me compared with the other venues on the 96 list.

Since acquiring the two aforementioned albums I have strengthened my collection and admiration of the band further by purchasing 'In The Land Of Grey And Pink' 'For Girls Who Grow Plump...' and a secondhand 'Best Of...' on C5 Records. These too contain some brilliant material and at the time of writing I am well on the way to enhancing my set further with 'All Over You.'

Although a recent convert I can already begin to understand the feelings felt by many fans about Caravan. I'm now looking forward to more new studio material, further albums from the back catalogue, future editions of the newsletter and, of course, the chance to sample a live performance. But 'if I could do it all over again' I'd definitely have been born earlier and followed the group from the beginning.



Cuttings supplied: Chris Coutts of Twickenham

## DIARY DATES

Friday, 19th September, Astoria, London  
Saturday, 27th September, Utrecht  
Sunday, 28th September, Groningen



## LETTERS

**John Tizard of Christchurch, Dorset:** The Astoria gig was marvellous as I hadn't seen the band since 1973 when I moved from London. The feeling when they played Memory Lain Hugh and Headloss can only be appreciated by enthusiasts like us! Please tell Pye that we want to see them play again. My brother Paul went to the Tunbridge Wells gig and said if anything they were better. It would be great if Geoff Richardson appears in the next line-up but I wouldn't want that at the expense of Doug Boyle - what a guitarist. P.S. The Battle of Hastings continues to improve with each listen, which is the hallmark of quality.

**Dave Roberts of Croydon:** Congratulations on Issue 5. I was one of the (what appeared to be) thousands of fans packed into the Astoria so I was surprised some gigs had to be cancelled. The Astoria promotes its own gigs so that goes some way to explaining the good attendance there. I still feel Richard Sinclair's presence and contribution is integral to the abiding spirit of Caravan, no matter how talented the current line up - the same goes for Geoff Richardson. I may be an old stick-in-the-mud, but in most cases I prefer the original arrangements of the old tunes in the live arena - there's no substitute for Dave Sinclair's searing Hammond solos. Keep up the good work.

**John Deans of Aberystwyth:** Thanks for the recent Newsletter 5. I must congratulate you for providing such an informed and very welcome service. Living in the wilds of Wales and not having seen Caravan 'Live' for nearly 10 years, it's great to know that the band are still playing and that there are like minded people who greatly appreciate their music. So thanks again for devoting time and energy to such a worthwhile cause.

**Keith Nicholl of Dubai:** Many thanks for kindly sending the Caravan Newsletter and your letter as requested, I have enclosed some S.A.E's. for future issues. I am at present living in Dubai in the Gulf but have seen Caravan perform all over UK in the 60's and 70's. The last time I saw them was at the Marquee in London sometime around 1983. They are undoubtedly the best

band of all time and though often copied will never be surpassed. Living out here on the edge of the desert I often wonder what my neighbours think when they hear the strains of Memory Lain Hugh and Hoedown (often played at excess volume) floating across the desert.

**Nick Gould of Tamworth:** Thank you for Fanzine 5 - excellent as usual. I took my girlfriend to the Astoria show and she genuinely liked it. I also visited in April to see the equally excellent Camel: hats off to Andy Latimer. Re the Astoria gig I was really wishing for Richard Sinclair to appear and sing on his parts, especially the part on 9 Feet Underground. That aside, I'm just glad that Caravan exist and was much cheered by Richard Coughlan's comments in the last newsletter. I would really like to see Caravan at the annual Cropredy Festival (18,000ish people). I've been going for eight years and it would be the perfect setting for Caravan.

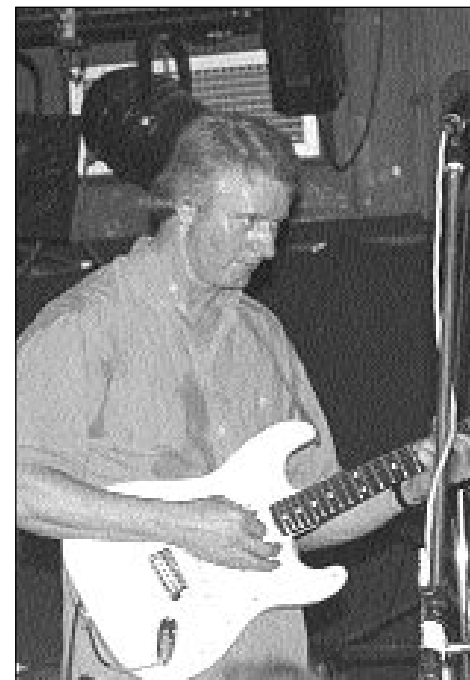
**Chris Stacey of Stroud:** I chanced upon this address whilst going through The Battle of Hastings sleeve. I really hope it gets into the right hands! I've been living in Southern Africa all my life and still remember my first introduction to Caravan - In The Land Of Grey And Pink. My stoned out brother and friends raved and raved, It wasn't long before I too was hooked. Although I consider myself to be an avid fan of Caravan I had no idea that Battle Of Hastings had been released until my return to the UK this year. It was a refreshing and great surprise. Excluding compilations the last album I have was Back To Front... Yeah going to Herne Bay one day. Most of my Caravan LP's are in excellent condition apart from an irritating scratch at the end of side one in If I... and have all crossed the Atlantic successfully. Compliments to Pye, David, Richard (Coughlan) and Jimmy etc. etc. Look forward to a response and maybe a new release!

**Dejan Klaic of Yugoslavia:** I am 33 years old and great admirer of Caravan. Music of Caravan has changed my attitude in music. I remember summer of 1982 when I first heard 'Caravan and the New Symphonia Live'. I have now four albums of Caravan.

## NEWS update

certainly going to be a Canterbury Festival in 1998, with a proposed date of the first weekend in June. This has the backing of the Council as well as the Kent Messenger Newspaper. Secondly, Pye's mind is once more turning to the possibility of doing some more recording - almost certainly a solo album. Already he has ten tracks 'floating around' in his head, but as yet no lyrics are there. He describes the songs as having a 'folky/chunky/rock' feel.

Following of the heels HTD's re-release of **All Over You, Blind Dog at St. Dunstons etc.**, I am aware that Hux Records have gained the rights to the BBC Radio Sessions and Brian O'Reilly has been in touch with me concerning the proposed running order for two CD's. He has also asked for ideas about the titles for them and the possibility



of me writing the liner notes. Unfortunately much of the early material has been wiped clean of the tapes so we are unlikely ever to hear the delights of 'Feelin' Reelin and Squealin' or the 'Daily Routine of Maurice Haylett! However a good deal of the material remains available and listed below is a *provisional* track line up.

### VOLUME 1

#### Top of the Pops Transcription Programme 19.8.70

1. Hello Hello
2. If I Could Do It All Over Again, I'd Do It All Over You

3. As I Feel I Die

**Alan Black: Transmitted 9.4.71**

4. Love Song Without Flute
5. Love To Love You
6. In The Land Of Grey And Pink

**Alexis Korner: Top Gear: Transmitted 30.8.73**

7. Memory Lain Hugh/Headloss
8. A Hunting We Shall Go/Backwards
9. Love In Your Eye
10. Mirror For The Day
11. For Richard
12. Virgin On The Ridiculous

### VOLUME 2

**John Peel - Transmitted 3.7.75**

1. Show Of Our Lives
2. Stuck In A Hole
3. Dabsong Conshirtoe
4. All The Way
5. Very Smelly Grubby Little Oik etc.

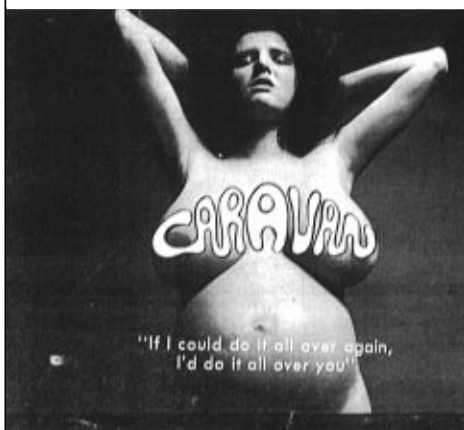
**John Peel - Transmitted 10.5.77**

6. Behind You
7. Last Unicorn
8. Nightmare
9. Better By Far

# THE CARAVAN ALBUMS

## *If I Could Do It All Over Again, I'd Do It All Over You*

*We are proud to announce the birth of a new album!*



You will recall that in 'celebration' of the release of Caravans First Album, Fanzine 4 contained track by track comment on the CD. I am sure it would be of interest to attempt to do this album by album over time, so on this occasion Pye Hastings has provided his thoughts on, '**If I Could Do It All Over Again, I'd Do It All Over You**'. This was issued in September 1970 on Decca SKL 5025. Unfortunately the CD has been deleted, but hopefully before too long it will be reissued!

### THE MAKING OF THE ALBUM

*Q. Why was there a change of label for the album?*

A. MGM/Verve were closing down their rock/pop division and we were only signed for one album.

*Q. Who was pushing for the release of this, the second album?*

A. Entirely the band as we did not have a current recording deal at this time.

*Q. Did you have material already before entering the recording studios?*

A. Yes, we were playing all the material on 'If I Could' by doing as many gigs as we could get in which was necessary in order to pay the bills and to build a following.

*Q. Who produced the album?*

A. The album was actually produced by ourselves and not Terry King as stated on the sleeve. This was I believe a means of Terry getting his hands on a producer's fee which we were not aware of at the time.

*Q. How did the album title come about?*

A. The title came from a chance remark by (Mark) our road manager at the time. I spotted the innuendo which appealed to me and decided that it was a great title for the song I had just completed i.e. Who do you think you are. N.B. The 'Over You' actually means 'Because of you' and not the obvious. Eventually it got used as the album title. Mark was quite a character. Although the band were very hard up and only had one set of clothes each, which were worn on stage and off, Mark was more a star and would change into a black satin outfit for our performance and change back afterwards. Initially this was a bit intimidating as we were supposed to be the centre of attraction but we soon got used to having the flashiest roadie in the business.

### TRACKS

#### 'If I Could Do It...'

Written by me in the bay window of the Olive Branch pub in Canterbury. The two pubs of the time were the Olive Branch and the Seven Stars both within a couple of hundred yards of each other.

#### 'And I Wish I Were Stoned/Don't Worry'

Written by me and I was desperately trying to say something meaningful but ended up with yet another escapist lyric.

#### 'As I Feel I Die'

Written by me and I can't remember what it is about.

#### 'With An Ear To The Ground You Can Make It/Martinian/Only Cox/Reprise'

Written by me. The 'With An Ear' part was my optimism for the future of the band coming out. 'Martinian' was my way thanking Martin Wyatt and Ian Ralfini who signed Caravan to Robbins Music/MGM. 'Only Cox' was Tony Cox who produced the first album and Reprise is just that.

## LETTERS

**Jim Henderson of Alcester, Warwickshire:** Many thanks for Issue 5 of your Caravan Newsletter which I thoroughly enjoyed. There is so much superb information in it and I particularly enjoyed the gig review by Terry Westhead and your interview with Richard Coughlan. I recently had Issues 1-3 from you and was very interested to see the piece on Geoffrey Richardson. I've actually got the Nick Heyward album 'Tangled' featuring Geoffrey but I hadn't noticed his name in the credits until I read your article. 'Tangled' is actually a superb album. Everyone always thinks of his past with Haircut 100 when told of Nick Heyward, it's a really enjoyable album full of Beatleseques tunes! Geoffrey appears on six of the fourteen tracks and is credited for both viola and violin. And of course Julian Gordon Hastings is involved as well, as he is on Nick's earlier album 'From Monday To Sunday' which I also have. There are also CD singles off both albums which I have.

**Steve Suddens of Earlsdon, Coventry:** Your efforts are very much appreciated. I have been a Caravan fan for 26 years (1970) having seen them many times (1971-1976). But now I find that our kids are also playing Caravan and singing along, its a good job I've got four copies of Land Of Grey for instance 2 LPs, 1CD, 1 Tape or I don't think I would get a look in. Thanks for the information and your effort.

**Simon Hughes of Sittingbourne:** I saw Caravan for the first time at the Astoria in October, and they were absolutely brilliant. My personal highlights were 'Nine Feet Underground'. 'For Richard' etc. and 'Who Do You Think You Are'. I must now stock up on their albums, as I only have 'Cunning Stunts'. 'For Girls Who Grow Plump' and 'Grey And Pink', and 'The Best Of...' My other favourite bands include Genesis, Yes, ELP, Focus, Rush, Camel(!), Pink Floyd, Santana and 10cc. Has anyone else noticed the similarity in style between Caravan and The Divine Comedy? In particular, their single 'Something For The Weekend' and its B-sides sound very Caravan-ish to me. Keep up the good work and I can't wait until the next concert!

**Noel Baker of Worcester:** Thanks for sending me Newsletter 5. Although I come from the jazzier end of the Canterbury spectrum, I really enjoyed the articles and news. I remain full of admiration for yourself, Phil Howitt, Martin Wakeling and Mike King for all the time and energy you put into the fanzines and other related activities. I struggle to do the odd gig review for Phil, so I really appreciate the efforts you make. Terry Westhead's contribution was a good read, but made me feel I had let the side down by not going to Wolverhampton to see Caravan on the same tour. My reviews in Facelift 16 partly explain this. I was lucky enough to see Richard Sinclair twice with the Hats (once on a double bill with Gong) and I saw a later version of Caravan at Birmingham Town Hall on a double bill with Renaissance when Richard was not in the band but Dave Sinclair was. According to Facelift's history of Caravan that may have been Februarish 1975, although I thought it was a little later - in those days I did not keep dates of gigs I went to.

**Sam Birch of Rochester, Kent:** I would like to thank you for all the work you've put into the Caravan Information Service. I couldn't ask for more since my love for music is rooted firmly in the Canterbury Scene. I was amazed to find that things were still in full swing in about 93 - up until then I was listening to it all through a stereo, totally unaware that David Allen was busy doing his thing for Gong, with others such as Graham Clark etc. at small venues and Richard's Caravan Of Dreams occupied in Canterbury at that time. Living near Canterbury has helped me find out about some gigs but much of my information comes from people like you. I've now been lucky enough to see Jim Leverton and Geoffrey Richardson in pubs and I now know Richard Coughlan runs the Sun in Faversham - that explains why I saw Jim leaving the pub with his equipment one sunny Sunday afternoon. I still think it's a big shame that Richard didn't join the band at the Astoria as he is one of my outstanding heroes. Never let the spirit die!



## DAVE SINCLAIR Interview

it like a guitar. I tried combinations of effects pedals like the Burns Buzzaround, Wah Wah pedals the Coloursound. This last one had a wide aperture to open up the 'wah' so it sounded like a mouthed sound: echo enhanced it further.

### **How do you write your songs?**

I always write the music first - on the piano usually - rarely on the organ - because on piano you can set up a rhythm and you can sustain the notes. Ideas come suddenly to me but I need to be playing the piano on a regular basis to get songs written. I do find lyrics difficult because I just can't express myself well enough. My first bash was on 'Hello, Hello', a 7/8 thing. No one could come up with ideas for the words but I managed it. I remember doing that in the bedroom of the bungalow we were living in at the time in Stodmarsh Road in Canterbury.

### **Could you have contributed more songs to Caravan's albums?**

In the early days there were a fair scattering and on Cunning Stunts I wrote 2/3: it just depended who was in the driving seat at the time. Pye is the figurehead and I respect him for that, so it tends to be up to him.

***I am told that generally there were no tracks left over after recording Caravan albums, but is it right that 'One More Time' was left off 'Back To Front'.***

Yes, that was my song and we had done all the backing bar the vocals. While the others were down the pub, John Murphy went into the studio with me and did the vocal. You know, I originally got together with John because I liked his music, so it's a shame for him that he's ended up writing lyrics for my songs!

### **Will you do another solo album at any stage?**

I've got a Tascam 8 track and I could use that then go into the studios, add vocals and finish the thing off. I've certainly got some nice songs, so who knows. It does cost a lot though - I've just spent £1000 recording a Christmas Single provisionally called 'Christmas Tune'. It still needs work doing on it before I can even consider a release. Pye plays acoustic guitar, John Murphy bass and Julian (Hastings) has added sample drums. There is also live cymbals and tom toms. Martin and Michelle, friends of mine who play in a local band, have done the vocals. Children from Hampton Primary School are also involved. At present the mix isn't quite right and the vocal line has detracted slightly from the melody line on the chorus. The B side would be a remix by Julian. Knowing him it will end up sounding completely different to the song.

### **Do you regret the fact that you haven't had greater success in the music business?**

No, not really, although I would like to be more successful as a songwriter. 'Travelling Ways' was play listed on Radio 2 and that did give me great encouragement. I just slung that together for the album and geared it for Jim (Leverson) to sing - it wasn't meant to be a single. The lyrics were

written just to go with the feel of the music - they just seemed appropriate. So, no I have no real regrets: I'm not really a performer and I just don't have the charisma.

### **Did you enjoy the touring side of performing life?**

I've always enjoyed that - it's good to visit lots of places and as a Sagittarian I'm an exploring/travelling kind of person. I must admit touring abroad was great. Once you've been round England about thirty times, it gets a bit monotonous! I toured Japan with Camel on the 'Breathless' tour and that was mindblowing. I just loved it there - the food and the way of life. I remember sharing hotel rooms with Richard (Sinclair): we've always been close.

### **Do you have a favourite Caravan album/track?**

It would have to be an album I was on! I don't know really because I've never listened to the albums, though I suppose 'Grey and Pink' is the one. I don't know about an individual track. I'm really a songman, the pieces with long instrumental passages aren't so appealing. I love Pye's quirky song. If you listen to the 'Mirage Live' Album, I arranged the Caravan medley on it and that has my favourite bits like Love In Your Eye. I like Pye's 'Cold As Ice' and I love 'Winter Wine' and 'A.A. Man'. From my own writing I tend to like the one I'm working on at the time: I started one a month ago, but it's got no lyrics yet.

### **Personally I love Piano Player which was originally done for your solo album and then also appeared on 'The Album'**

Actually I'm quite disappointed with how it turned out. Originally 'The Album' by Caravan was going to be live but they decided the budget would cover it, if it was recorded straight without overdubs. 'Piano Player' was going to be an almighty track but it wasn't possible to achieve that on one take.

### **What does the future hold for you?**

My piano business pays the bills but I'm at the stage where I'd like to give that up. Moving pianos is wrecking my hands: My thumb is seizing up and my back is constantly under strain. On top of that you have the dust and fumes from the French polish. At the end of the day I come out doolally! It would be nice to close that door and spend time at home helping with the children and doing gardening and music. I'd like to write for other people, I'd like to do my own album. It would also be nice to do more gigs. I would also like to do some work with say just me on piano and a female singer.

***The interview confirmed all that I had already believed to be true. Dave's honesty and integrity is of a kind not often seen in the music business and he is yet another example of a highly talented songwriter and musician who has not received his just rewards. You, like me know however that Dave's music has given endless pleasure down the years and, more importantly, continues to do so!***

## If I Could Do It All Over Again, I'd Do It All Over You



### **'Hello Hello'**

'Hello Hello' was written by me and as I was having the regular problem of writers block, both Dave and Richard came to my rescue with the lyrics each adding different ideas. Part of the inspiration was the recreation centre owned by Bretts Quarry near where we were staying in Stodmarsh Road, Canterbury. We were sitting around and we could hear the grounds men mowing lawns and clipping hedges. We actually used their wooden hall for practice sessions.

### **'Asforteri'**

Asforteri was a little dig at Terry King our manager. The original title was Asforteri's 25% but naturally he took exception to this being written down for the world to see and quite amusingly took the 25% off the title as he said he was entitled to it anyway.

### **'Can't Be Long Now/Francoise/For Richard/Warlock'**

Can't Be Long etc. was written by Dave Sinclair on to which he grafted the heavy riff which was written by Richard Sinclair hence the title 'For Richard'.

### **'Limits'**

Can't remember.

**Q. Did you consider this album to be an improvement on the first?**

A. Yes it was an improvement because we produced it ourselves and had complete artistic control. Reading between the lines this

means we had a riotous time trying any ideas that came into our minds at the record company's expense. This album was recorded at Tangerine Studios in the Balls Pond Road in London and engineered by Robin Sylvester.

**Q. What was it like appearing on Top Of The Pops playing your single 'If I Could Do It...'**

A. Top Of The Pops was an excellent day out. We were pampered from the moment we arrived. We must have looked very scruffy because we were sent down to the make up department to have our hair washed and set. We all had bought special clothes for stage and felt we looked the part at last. It all happened so fast we didn't really take it in until the show was over but then we found the delights of the BBC Club which was a private bar for all the artists and performers who had been in the Television Centre that day. Naturally we hit it with all the enthusiasm that you would expect from an up and coming young band. We were young once you know.

**Q. What were relationships like in the band at this time?**

A. This was probably the most stable time of our lives. We looked on course to succeed and were enjoying each others company thoroughly. However with the benefit of hindsight there must have been some undercurrents present in embryonic form but it wasn't until much later that they manifested themselves into the eventual departures of first Dave and then Richard.

**Q. What can you tell me about the front cover?**

A. The picture of us on the sleeve looks as if we were in the depths of somewhere like Sherwood Forest. Nothing could have been further from the truth. It was actually taken approximately two or three yards from the footpath in Holland Park where the photographer Richard Zeff lived. He just said step over the fence and pose and there was the sleeve. The individual pictures on the back were taken lying down on the floor in the house we rented at Stodmarsh Road, Canterbury.

*Best Regards, Pye*



# INTERVIEW with Dave Sinclair

**Ask anyone to describe what it is that makes Caravan such a distinctive sounding band and you'll invariably be told it's Pye's vocals and Dave Sinclair's keyboard solos. Caravan have**

**always been a joy to see live, but never more so than with the animated Dave squeezing every bit of emotion out of the keyboard: what a sound!**

**Offstage, Dave is relatively quiet and reserved though, like all members of the band always finds time to talk patiently to fans about the music, however inane the questions or comments.**

**I have personal experience of his kindness and generosity, for many years ago I called in to his piano shop and after chatting for some time he offered to let me borrow a copy of his solo album, which I gratefully accepted!**

**The interview which followed took around an hour to complete. I found Dave in relaxed and confident mood, eager to talk freely just as much about the past as the present, and with a real optimism about the future.**

## **Do you come from a musical background?**

My grandmother used to play in the music halls. She could just sit down at the piano and play by ear. My aunt was an East End pub player - the best: a Russ Conway with Panache! She would sit there at the piano with a fag hanging out of her mouth, singing away.

## **When did you start learning an instrument?**

My first musical experience was when I was in a church choir in Canterbury. I was involved with some of the choir in a skiffle group - an unusual combination to say the least. The BBC picked up on it and came and recorded us for a programme. I was asked to say a prayer - I was around nine years old. My dad has a tape of it somewhere! To this day I still feel the psalms and hymns had an influence on me musically.

With regard to learning the piano, my brother learnt before me. My aunt really started me off and I began to realise I could do bits. We had a piano in the lounge and at night I sometimes got out of bed and crept downstairs. I had to play really quietly: it wouldn't be long before mum and dad were thumping on the ceiling telling me to go back to bed. I just had so many ideas going round in my head that I wanted them to come out. I was around 10 at this time.

At a later stage I picked up bass guitar and drums. I remember in about 1975 playing drums in Mark Hewins

Band The Polite Force in Canterbury at Alberry's Wine Bar and I had a solo: the audience applauded me after it!

## **What did you do before becoming a professional musician?**

When I left school I worked in a warehouse for around £6.00 a week. Every couple of weeks I seemed to get a new job with better pay. I eventually ended up with a construction firm called Cementation. I worked incredibly hard, getting up around 4:20am and working until 9:00pm I did just about every kind of job including labouring and I drove a bulldozer, though not the crane! One of the jobs we did was to build the Sevenoaks Bypass I did all the hours I could because I desperately wanted a Hammond Organ which I achieved in 1967, I already had a VOX Continental.

## **Were you in any bands before Caravan?**

I used to play with Richard Sinclair. I had a VOX Cougar Bass Guitar. We had a great time together and we were writing songs even then. We'd get together in his house and play through until the early morning. We used to drink a bit too and I can remember doing daft things like climbing telegraph poles! I was in the Wilde Flowers before Caravan for a time.

## **What persuaded you to go professional?**

It just happened. I thought if I could earn money that way, why not! We started out as a band living in Pye's sisters flat in Sloane Gardens, London. Jane was out in one of the Spanish Islands. Her boyfriend came back but allowed us to stay. We were completely broke so we even shared his food - he only cooked macrobiotic meals. We stayed around six months.

## **One of things that intrigues me is the fact that you came and went from Caravan on a number of occasions during the 70's and 80's. Why was this?**

Within the original framework of Caravan I had a great deal of freedom and I was the main soloist. I got a bit bored doing the same thing night after night. Also, the others were progressing musically and they were buying higher amplification and stacks. I felt drowned out. It wasn't working for me so I left. I did bits of music as well as some building work. Caravan were recording the 'Girls That Grow Plump' album and it wasn't working out for them so they asked me to do the album and I agreed. I was asked if I wanted a share in the royalties or a flat session fee. I decided on the latter which was probably the wrong thing as the album sold well. I did manage to buy a car out of the proceeds though! When I toured with Caravan, I was paid as a member of the band. I then rejoined but left again when there were legal problems with the band. We were being ripped off right, left and centre - the typical thing of naive musicians who just want to play their music. I was concerned that the new manager Miles Copeland was trying to get royalties which were due to me from Terry King. My solicitor

advised me to get out for a year until contracts had expired. It was a bad time for me and the band.

I rejoined on other occasions when I was available. I always enjoyed playing with Caravan and it was a way of earning some money in the bargain! Anyway I've always liked to go off and do different things - it gets you right away and clears your mind.

## **You played with Robert Wyatt's Matching Mole when you first left Caravan, how did that come about?**

I played my last gig in 1971 for Caravan. It was in the West Country. I had met John Murphy, with whom I have collaborated a great deal since, in a pub. We got on really well and I liked his songs - there was a spirit in them. Anyway he got married and went off for his honeymoon to the Algarve in Portugal - his sister had a property there. For some reason I decided to hitch there with just £20 in my pocket. You should have seen his face when he opened the door with me stood there!

While I was staying there, I received a really funny message from Robert Wyatt: 'Come back, your country needs you'. I returned and was offered the chance to join Matching Mole. We wrote 'O Caroline' - my tune, his

lyrics - so I assumed we would be a song band. The rest of the album lacked direction - it just wasn't for me so I left. It was a good experience and Robert is a great guy. It was more of the same with Hatfield And The North. Songs were in strange time signatures like 14/22. The music might have sounded clever but I did enjoy it! I said to Richard (Sinclair), 'Dave Stewart's your man - he can do this, and I left.

## **At what point did you decide you wouldn't be in music full time?**

I can't really handle being on the road all the time. It might have been different if it had been my own band. I did have plans but I couldn't get it together and you need money behind you to do it. I suppose that's when I realised I had to do something else.

## **How did you discover your wonderful keyboard sound?**

There were people around who I admired and they played Hammond keyboards. Brian Auger was my hero and I like the sound made by Keith Emerson in The Nice. Graham Bond, Dave Stewart and Mike Ratledge were other influences. When I got my Hammond I wanted to get my own sound, to push the barriers further and play

