

MOGWAQ

The Rock Magazine

Vol 6 No 2 No 52

25p

**LOU
REED**



**CARAVAN
JOHN
CIPOLLINA
COUNTRY
ROCK
STRAWBS**

**WISHBONE
ASH
PART TWO**

**FLYING
BURRITO
BROS.
FAMILY TREE**

A BREATH OF SPRING



AMERICA



EMMYLOU HARRIS

Three refreshing albums—America's 'Hearts', Emmylou Harris' 'Pieces of the Sky', & Allen Toussaint's 'Southern Nights', to blow away the cobwebs.



ALLEN TOUSSAINT



FROM WARNER  BROS. RECORDS

EDITOR: ANDY CHILDS
 BUSINESS MANAGER: O.D. MCGUIRE
 ADVERTISING MANAGER: PETE GRAY
 SECRETARY: CHERYL MARSDEN
 DESIGN & LAYOUT: J. EDWARD BARKER
 PRODUCTION: NICK LUMSDEN

HANGIN' AROUND
 PETE FRAME
 JOHN TOBLER
 JERRY GILBERT

CONTENT

LOU REED A fallen knight	Page 4
WISHBONE ASH Part Two	Page 9
COUNTRY ROCK A Zigzag Beginner's Guide	Page 14
CARAVAN The story of	Page 18
THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS Family tree	Page 22
JOHN CIPOLLINA John Cipollina in the seventies	Page 24
THE STRAWBS Part One	Page 30
RECORDS Reviews and New Releases	Page 36
BLABBER 'N' SMOKE	Page 42

ZIGZAG IS PUBLISHED BY SPICEBOX BOOKS LTD. PRINTED BY THE CHESHAM PRESS OF GERMAIN STREET, CHESHAM, BUCKS, AND DISTRIBUTED BY MOORE HARNESS LTD, 31 CORSICA ST., LONDON N4 (01 359 4126)

Copyright here and abroad of all editorial content is held by the publishers, Spicebox Books, and reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden, save with the written permission of the publishers. 1975.

...and there's even some
EVIL MOTHERS
they're gonna tell you
EVERYTHING
is just DIRT



LOU REED
a fallen knight

Bad Company

STRAIGHT SHOOTER

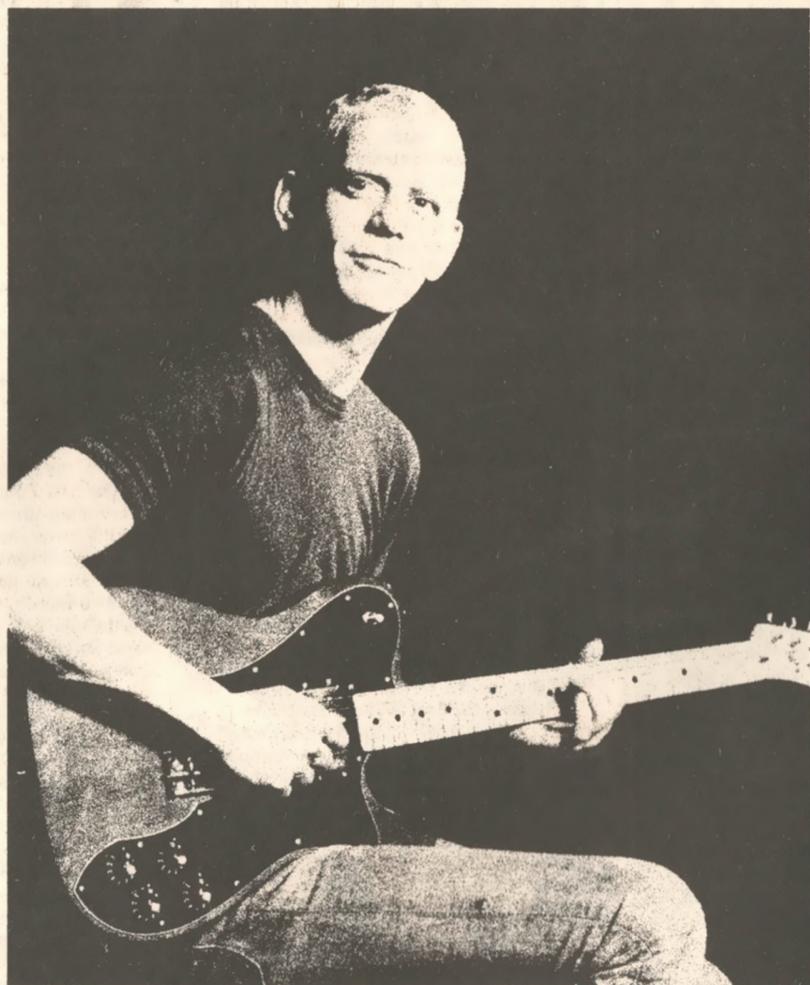


9LPS 9304



Also available on
Cassette and Cartridge

LOU REED



THERE WAS once a time when I thought that Lou Reed was the single most important person working in contemporary American rock 'n' roll. I thought and still think that the Velvet Underground were one of the most original and inventive bands I've ever heard, and I thought that Lou Reed wrote some truly memorable rock 'n' roll songs. My respect for him stemmed from an avid appreciation of songs like 'I'm Waiting For The Man', 'I Heard Her Call My Name', 'Beginning To See The Light', 'Sweet Jane', and 'Rock And Roll', and also from a firm belief that somehow Lou Reed understood the role and importance of contemporary rock 'n' roll... he had an overall view of things, a grasp of what really constituted the essence of rock 'n' roll, plus his own personal perspective which saw him writing very disciplined and basically very simple songs and performing them in a manner that for the most part embodied the very spirit that great rock 'n' roll will always be part of.

But all that's some time ago now. Today, a few weeks after seeing Lou Reed bungle his way through a so-called 'performance' at Hammersmith Odeon, I think he's a wanker... probably the most burnt-out ghostly hunk of wasted talent that still has the nerve to stagger onstage and insult the audience

with horrifyingly abysmal renditions of songs that were great, and despite him, still are great. His current status, in my eyes, is that of a slightly predictable and very unfunny joke. And like all bad jokes he gets worse every time I hear him.

Assuming that my drastic change of opinion is reasonable and valid, what's caused this complete and devastating transformation from hero to villain? Drink? Drugs? The unscrupulous behaviour of some of the parasites that are bleeding him for everything he's got left to give? His inability to come to terms with his own talent? All of those things and a lot more I would reckon. Tales of Lou Reed's physical condition and his interminable intake of drink and drugs are plentiful... there are almost as many stories about him as there are Keith Moon stories or Syd Barrett stories. During his last European tour, String Driven Thing were the opening act on the bill and as their manager Fred Munt is a ZigZagger (in more senses than one), he was able to lay a few hairy stories on me, most of which I don't feel obliged to repeat. But to all intents and purposes Lou was so 'out of it' for practically all the time that he can probably remember very little of what went on. There was even one instance where he thought that String Driven must be his greatest fans because they

kept following him from place to place and hanging around backstage!

But Lou's state of health is something I don't want to discuss further except where it has an important bearing on his music. I'd also want to meet and interview him rather than rely on second-hand stories, and as that's impossible (he only does one interview a year with Lester Bangs), what I'm going to do is talk about the times I've seen him and briefly trace the tragic and almost terminal downfall of his recorded work through his six solo albums and see how he's degenerated from a major force in rock 'n' roll to a parody of something that just about resembles his true self.

THE FIRST TIME I ever saw Lou Reed I can remember feeling slightly bemused because he wasn't quite like the image I'd conjured up from listening to Velvet Underground LPs, and yet at the same time I felt elated because despite his raw and energetic backing band (the Tots), he was great... a bit podgy, caked with unnecessary make-up, and a wee bit camp, but still great. The second time I saw him he still had the same band but even then the signs of deterioration were beginning to show. Someone had to help him out onto the stage and his set was inconsistent and bad-tempered.

Richard Williams who was writing for the *MM* at the time, and had always been a great admirer of Reed's work with the Velvets, was moved enough to call him a pathetic old faggot or something equally charming, and in retrospect one can't help but agree with him. The next time I saw Lou Reed was at last year's Charlton concert at which I spent a good half hour literally fighting my way to a good position where I waited patiently for him to come on only to stagger away during the third number in complete and utter disgust. By this time Reed was a sizeable commercial success—something he'd never been before, he had a new band—more experienced but almost totally unsuitable, no guitar, and he was painfully thin with his hair dyed yellow and wearing blue shades. His performance that day rates as one of the worst I've ever seen from anybody as he butchered 'Sweet Jane' and turned 'Heroin' into a lousy sadistic 'B' movie melodrama completely devoid of the incisive phrasing and objectivity that so distinguishes the original version. I couldn't take more than a couple of minutes of it and fled to the furthest point from the stage that I could find, only to wander aimlessly around in a morose state of disbelief. I think it was then that I really became disenchanted with Lou Reed's apparent lack of integrity both as a solo performer and as a recording artist. By now his public reputation was one of complete deprivation... you know the sort of thing—always out of his skull, on the point of dying any minute, unable to remember anything that happened more than five minutes ago... through the eyes of the press he was the ultimate degenerate, the public in their morbid fascination for anything that smelt of death lapped it up, and Lou Reed loved it. He'd found a niche for himself that no-one else dared to compete for and he played the part perfectly—in fact he's still playing it—stooping ever lower to reach new heights of glittering stardom. It all reminds me of a line out of 'Pale Blue Eyes' from *The Velvet Underground*:

*Skip a life completely
Stuff it in a cup
She said money is like us in time
It lies but can't stand up
Down for you is up.*

I ventured to my fourth ever Lou Reed concert—the first of two nights at Hammersmith a month or so back, only out of interest and a rather naive optimism that he might turn in a good show. As it transpired he wasn't as bad as at Charlton but he was still pretty damn awful. His backing band this time around was again thoroughly undistinguished save for Doug Yule, and even he had an off-night by all accounts. The offensive stage mannerisms that Reed employed at Charlton were again in evidence, only whereas at Charlton he encouraged a very apt definition of himself by vigorously pretending to jerk-off, at Hammersmith he limited his surly remarks to "Shut up", "Let me know when you've made up your minds" (in response to the audience shouting for requests), "Why don't you go watch Mott The Hoople (!?!)", and "You're just a bunch of hippies", and that was to an audience who adored him, applauded generously, and brought him back on for an encore that he most definitely didn't deserve. Lou

Reed audiences (myself included) must be masochists. And what's more it wasn't only the paying customer who came away satisfied. In general, the weekly pop press commended him on a fine show and were able to obtain roughly three million times as much enjoyment out of it as I could. One of these 'favourite reviews' was written by a bloke who I happen to respect and know quite well, but how on earth he ever found anything to savour out of that noisy piece of amateur dramatics I'll never know. Still, maybe you'll think it's me who's got his head buried in the sand or up in the clouds or whatever the case may be, to which my answer would be *@+-%* 'cause I know quite definitely that the Lou Reed I saw at Hammersmith Odeon is not the Lou Reed who'll ever make any sort of valid contribution to rock music... he may not even make another half-decent album or write another good song, and he'll never be able to compare with the Lou Reed of yesteryear, that's for sure.

FOR ME, the most significant and overwhelming factor of the concert was the suffocating, morbid death-like ambience that Reed generated... a sickly, unhealthy, icy, stagnant stench that gave me the shivers. The atmosphere created was the exact antithesis of what rock 'n' roll is all about. The very nature of great rock music is a fantastic celebration of life itself and the power of a great rock song is to encapsulate a feeling that is identifiable to a generation of people who are in the process of finding out what life is about. And if all that sounds terribly corny and pseudo-intellectual try listening to 'Loaded', 'Back In The USA', 'Live At Leeds', or 'Teenage Head' through cans at top volume. The Lou Reed of today however appeals, as Lester Bangs has so succinctly remarked, "To a 70s generation that doesn't have the energy to commit suicide", and that is definitely what rock 'n' roll is NOT all about. Which brings us to the point where we have to ask ourselves if it's unreasonable to expect Lou to revert back to his former stance when all he wanted to be was a Long Island rock 'n' roller when his songs exhibited an objective lyrical awareness, so obvious and simple but so stunningly accurate, and when he delivered those songs with a sense of phrasing and punctuation that very few rock singers could match. If he had an ounce of integrity or any respect for the past left in him then I guess he should and would, but my own good sense tells me that he is now both mentally and physically unable to be really creative. And what's perhaps even more unfortunate is that he doesn't really have to be; there are enough people around who'll buy his records, go to his concerts, and generally fall for the whole thing so that his position as anti-hero No.1 is assured. I dread to think that he might plummet to even lower depths than he's reached already but it wouldn't surprise me. Unless he's lost his soul and every grain of talent he once had, then the futility of such a nihilistic stance must be eating him away like a rodent tumour... in which case I feel very sorry for him and also very disillusioned and angry that he's letting it happen.

LOU REED

NOW WHAT ABOUT his albums. Well there's six of them altogether and let me say right away that I'd willingly trade four of them for any one Velvet Underground LP anytime. In general they get successively worse although the last one (his second 'live' album) is not quite as bad as I'd feared.

The first and second albums, *Lou Reed* (RCA LSP-4701) and *Transformer* (RCA LSP-4807) respectively are undoubtedly the best, although the high critical acclaim that was bestowed upon them at the time of their release seems now, in retrospect, a little over-generous. If they'd been the start of something great rather than something monstrously atrocious then I'd feel a little more endeared towards them, because like everything that Reed's ever done, they cannot be judged as albums entirely in their own right as there is always a link connecting them in some way or other.

The first album suffered basically from a very insensitive production job and a horrible cover, but it did contain a number of very good songs. Only 'Walk And Talk It' on side one stands out for me, but on side two there's 'Love You', the excellent 'Wild Child' and 'Love Makes You Feel', all of which come well within the standards that Lou set for himself in the past. Of this album Lou said in *ZZ34* "It reflects very accurately where I am now. The same person writing the songs, you know... It won't be the 5th Velvet Underground album. The thing I'm pleased about is that it's very straight ahead rock 'n' roll. I've been heading slowly but surely in that direction. Each album, if you follow it, gets more into straight rock". Well maybe the songs are rock 'n' roll I'll agree, but the performances for the most part aren't. The playing is too clean and structured and the vital raw jagged qualities of good rock 'n' roll are missing. Furthermore the album was recorded over here using people like Caleb Quaye, Steve Howe, Rick Wakeman, Paul Keogh, and Clem Cattini, which certainly isn't my ideal rock 'n' roll band. The inimitable Lester Bangs wrote in *Creem* that the album has "sketches of brilliance and unresolved problems" and concluded that Lou Reed "may just be the Sage of the Seventies"... that's right, the same Mr Bangs who no less than two months ago wrote that "Lou Reed is a completely depraved pervert and pathetic death dwarf".

The second album, *Transformer*, sees the problems slightly resolved, and the brilliance even more apparent. 'Walk On The Wild Side', which you must be thoroughly familiar with unless you've been living in a cave for three years, is a masterpiece... one of the most evocative and subtly arranged songs that Lou's ever written. 'Hangin' Around', 'Satellite Of Love' and 'I'm So Free' are pretty neat too, and the rest of the album, if sometimes trite and unremarkable, does achieve a certain standard of craftsmanship that is indicative of some of his best work. One of the most noteworthy aspects of *Transformer*, and one that was much publicised at the time, is the involvement of David Bowie, and to a lesser extent, Mick Ronson. Ironically I feel that Bowie's work on this album (he co-produced it, and had a hand in the song

LOU REED



THE CHANGING FACE OF LOU REED. Before (above) and after (below) or the other way around.

arrangements) is highly beneficial, whereas his overall influence on Lou Reed (and vice versa for that matter) is nothing but bad news.

REED'S THIRD solo album, *Berlin* (RCA RS 1002), is seventy percent unlistenable... quite definitely one of the most deathly-depressing records I've ever heard. As a love/hate relationship between two people, one's infidelity, the other's sorrowful anger, and the eventual resulting suicide, I suppose it paints a fairly accurate picture. But most of the songs themselves are mostly devoid of any character or substance; they're tuneless, rhythmless, emotionless pieces of dirge and they reek of death. You can forget side one altogether, and if you are compelled to hear any of *Berlin*, play the last three cuts on side two, 'The Kids', 'The Bed', and 'Sad Song'. At least these songs create some sort of atmosphere and lasting impression... the children screaming "mummy, mummy" on 'The Kids', the dreamy ethereal chorus of 'The Bed', and the resigned, ironic grief of 'Sad Song', although this last track is nearly ruined by the entrance of some totally inappropriate horn section, something that rendered a future album, *Sally Can't Dance*, completely unbearable. *Berlin* is quite definitely where the rot set in, and there isn't one rock'n'roll song on it at all.

Reed's next offering was a 'live' album called *Rock'n'Roll Animal* (RCA APL1-0472) which although material-wise was a considerable improvement, turned out to be nearly as much of a bummer in another way. The tracks are 'Sweet Jane', 'Heroin', 'White Light/White Heat', 'Lady Day', and 'Rock And Roll', and as you can see all but one are Velvet Underground standards although any resemblance apart from the titles is purely coincidental. It's like Van Gogh having another go at the Mona Lisa only this time with a wallpaper brush, a gallon of creosote, and with his hands tied behind his back. Well perhaps I'm exaggerating a bit but I certainly wouldn't play this album in preference to the Velvet's versions, despite the fact that his backing band of Dick Wagner (guitar), Ray Colcord (keyboards), Pentti Glan (drums), Prakash John (bass), and Steve Hunter (guitar) have the makings of a thoroughly professional rock'n'roll outfit.

Another portion of the concert from which this set was taken (at Howard Stein's Academy Of Music N.Y.C.), has been released as Lou Reed's most recent album, *Live* (RCA APL1-0959), but in between came the dreadful *Sally Can't Dance* (RCA APL1-0611), a complete non-entity in terms of both material and performance. Not one memorable song, nothing to lift it above the insipid shallow level of quality it smugly occupies, and absolutely nothing that'll ever tempt me to play it again. A total bummer, and that's all I'm going to say about it.

Which brings us to *Live*, and the most acceptable album he's made since *Transformer*. Apart from 'I'm Waiting For The Man', everything is post-Velvet which in this context is good for a start, and his 'live' versions of 'Walk On The Wild Side', 'Vicious', 'Satellite Of Love', 'Oh Jim', and 'Sad Song' are surprisingly true to the

originals due, in no small measure once again, to his backing band.

SO THERE we have it. Lou Reed's current status on record is not as grim as it could be, yet his standing (yes folks, he can just about stand up) as a person and as a performer is pretty despicable. If he dies tomorrow then in a lot of people's eyes he will have snuffed it in a really heroic fashion—a martyr to a life-style that has already claimed too many victims although none of them gleefully diced with death for as long as Lou has. Me, I'll remember him as the guy who had the very future of 70s rock'n'roll in the palm of his hand and then squandered it effortlessly in an orgy of self-indulgence and nihilism. But somehow I doubt very much if he will drop dead in the near future—the signs are that he is still basically aware of his own physical limitations—and I'll be glad if he goes on and on for years to come. Because you see despite the bleak picture I've just painted, I really do believe deep down, like some cranks who are convinced the world is flat, that Lou Reed has still got it in him to eventually make another great rock'n'roll album. I don't know when or how he'll do it but I still follow his career in the hope that he will. He'll have to take some time off, straighten himself out, get a new band—a real punk rock'n'roll band, and reconsider his position in relation to how his music can progress purposefully and not in a barren wasteland of sickness and dumb, arrogant posturing, but whether that'll happen remains to be seen. I think we all want our rock'n'roll heroes to tell us something and not to vegetate in front of us like mutants from some unimaginable catastrophe.

Lou Reed, apart from being a once-great songwriter, was also a great writer of prose, and he wrote an essay a long time ago ironically enough about the casualties of rock'n'roll. He talks a bit about his own early dealings with the seedier side of city life and he laments the passing of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Brian Jones and Brian Epstein. But it's his concluding paragraph that seems to be strangely and morbidly relevant to Lou Reed today:

*And if it's all so true, all so true that you can't live up to everyone's expectations, and if it's true you cannot be all things to all people, and if it's true you cannot be other than what you are (passage of time to the contrary), then you must be strong of heart if you wish to work the problem out in public, on stage, through work before them' who fully expect and predict in print their idol's fall. And if it was true it was inevitable and oh yes we know sad, and oh nothing could be done about it after all that's how she started out she just realized too late the habits of years are not undone in days, then if it's true that princesses are besmirched, then all of us are fallen knights. (From *Fallen Knights And Fallen Ladies*—a chapter from *No One Waved Good-Bye*, published by Charisma Books.)*

□ ANDY

Wishbone Ash

Part Two



L-R: Andy Powell, Laurie Wisefield, Martin Turner, Steve Upton.

TOWARDS THE beginning of 1972 Wishbone Ash went into the studios to record their third album, *Argus* (MCG 3510), which was released in April of that year. The standard of the album surpassed anything they had done before and it very soon appeared in the British album charts, its success being given the final stamp of approval at the end of the year, when it was voted top British album of 1972 in the *Melody Maker* and *Sounds* polls. Produced once again by Derek Lawrence, *Argus* was recorded at De Lane Lea studios, which had now moved to a brand new recording complex in Wembley.

Compared with the first two albums *Argus* was written more from a lyrical point of view, with the vocals and vocal harmonies much more in mind, and the result is a perfect balance between the instrumental work and vocals. Various unifying themes run through the lyrics of most of the tracks on the album, notably references to time, history and war, this being most obvious in the last two tracks, 'Warrior' and 'Throw Down The Sword'. As a result, although these connections are very loose, the album gels together as a whole much more easily than *Wishbone Ash* or *Pilgrimage*, even though the music itself ranges from hard-hitting rock numbers like 'The King Will Come' and 'Warrior' to the beautifully restful folk song 'Leaf And Stream'.

Andy: I don't think there was any initial sort of conscious concept or anything. It was just like, we'd all got into this whole frame of mind around the period of *Argus* and the songs that were coming out were obviously about similar sorts of subjects and it just kept sparking us off, because we wrote most of the album in one go, except for a couple

of tracks like 'Time Was' and 'Blowin' Free'. I think 'Blowin' Free' was written in the States when we were playing at the Whiskey, that's when we started to get that one together.

Martin: Lyrically, a lot of the material on that album is about time and the relationship with time, like the warrior and that classic sort of symbolism. It's written in a very historical way if you like, but it lends itself to a number of different situations, contemporary or otherwise.



The album opens with 'Time Was', starting peacefully with Mart and Ted's vocal harmonies backed by Ted's acoustic guitar, before breaking into a real rocker with some powerful but tasteful playing from Andy. Over Mart's pounding bass he knocks out a real foot-stomping solo which is a perfect example of his unique style. 'Leaf And Stream' is the first song with lyrics by

Steve Upton to appear on a Wishbone album, and his lyrics are evocative of a peaceful, pastoral atmosphere which is in keeping with the folksy musical accompaniment. A similar style is also evident in the first half of 'Sometime World' which has some of Ted's characteristic dreamy guitar playing before breaking into a faster pace, ending with one of the most superbly fluent solos I've ever heard Andy play. This track in particular highlights Andy's ability to take a piece of music and put his own inimitable stamp on it, the ability to take even the simplest riff and transform it into something really full of character. The more commercial side of Wishbone's music is evident in 'Blowin' Free', which has a very open feel about it as the title suggests, with some of Ted's lazy, spacey guitar during the quiet passages, followed by Andy's gutsy, driving style which leads the song to its conclusion, ending with some superb slide from Ted. The vocal harmonies give the song a nice full sound, and Andy's lead frills between the vocals add just the right finishing touch.

The two tracks which most closely relate to each other are 'Warrior' and 'Throw Down The Sword', written around the theme of war. 'Warrior' is more of a call to arms—"I'll have to be a warrior, a slave I couldn't be, a soldier and a conquerer fighting to be free", ending in a climax out of which emerges the eerie introduction to 'Throw Down The Sword', which is a response to 'Warrior' sung after the battle is over. On 'Throw Down The Sword' Wishbone are joined by their old friend from Renaissance, John Tout, who plays some majestic organ which, together with Andy's guitar, contrasts perfectly with the aggressiveness of the previous track. Andy's introduction to 'Warrior' is also

WISHBONE ASH

particularly striking. Played over Ted's rasping chords, the power of his playing hits you right between the eyes in a short burst of energy, before giving way to Ted's characteristic echoing guitar.

The one other track on the album, 'The King Will Come', fades in with some lovely chunky chords from Andy and military-style snare from Steve, over which Ted uses wah-wah to make his guitar almost talk, while Martin's melodic bass holds everything together. Once everything has fallen into place, Martin's bass beautifully complements Ted's lead, at times adding a second harmony and at others almost acting as a lead instrument in itself. Ted's wah-wah guitar break is superb too, and he uses it to its full capacity, wringing every last drop of emotion out of his instrument.

The lyrics of 'The King Will Come' were mainly the work of Martin Turner and they follow along the lines of the Biblical conception that when the end of the world comes, man will be saved. The day of judgement in fact.

Martin: Yes, it's a very religious lyric as a matter of fact. I did quite a lot of research for that particular song and I think in actual fact I dug most of it out of the Bible. Yes, now it's coming back to me, I can remember reading the Bible for quite a long time. The Bible's an interesting book, and although I'm not a particularly religious person, I can remember getting into it as a book, you know, being really fascinated by some of the stuff in there, and I think that's where that song came from.

I think it is worth mentioning the album cover at this point as it seems to relate to the music very closely, containing various elements from most of the songs. The helmeted warrior looking out over a misty valley towards a hovering spacecraft has the same timeless quality about it, a sort of meeting of past and future, that is conveyed by the lyrics of much of the album. The title too, *Argus*, conjures up these same images, and without getting too involved, I wondered just how far the relationship between the album cover, title, and music went.

Martin: Yes, I think you'll agree that for an album cover it is particularly relevant to the music, it relates beautifully. Hipgnosis, who designed the cover, are really good with this band anyway, because we'd like sit around for quite a while and be able to communicate and build up ideas. If I remember rightly they really got into the music, very much so, in order to interpret the album cover. Hipgnosis were obviously very involved in it and I think they even went to the South of France to find a place to shoot the picture. And we had to wait hours and hours for that flying saucer to come over! You can interpret it in many ways, in a way it sums up time. I don't know if you've read *Chariot Of The Gods*, but part of it relates to that, like 'The King Will Come' for instance, you know, that whole idea of flying saucers and God. "Was God an astronaut?" as they said in the newspapers. As for the title, we had great difficulty in getting one and it was Steve who came up with it in the end.

Steve: It's taken from Greek mythology and it has several meanings. It means 'watchful guardian', and it's also a hundred-eyed giant that was put in a cave to protect a goddess or something, and it just seemed very appropriate.

ABOUT A MONTH after the release of *Argus*, Wishbone flew to America once again to begin an extensive tour, which turned out, unfortunately, to be not quite as extensive as they had hoped. Everything was fine until they reached St Louis, where during the night their van, containing just about every piece of equipment they owned, was stolen. Luckily, Andy had his Gibson Flying V, which he had been using since before *Pilgrimage*, in the hotel with him, but all the rest of the gear was stolen. So it was a rather disconsolate Wishbone that returned home, somewhat ahead of schedule, to get some new equipment together so they could finish the tour.

Steve: Occasionally we hear rumours that pieces of our equipment have been seen, and we also got a message that they would let us have it back if we payed them four thousand dollars, but we didn't bother. All our amplification was made by Orange then, which at that time wasn't that well known in the States, and they couldn't get rid of it because it was too conspicuous.

Once they were home the plan had been to go straight into the studios to record a single but they suffered a further setback on their arrival in Britain when Martin Turner was rushed to hospital with appendicitis. On his recovery the band returned to De Lane Lea where they re-recorded 'Blowin' Free' and a new composition, 'No Easy Road'. The single was released a month later, on August 18th, the A-side being 'No Easy Road' (MKS 5097).



Martin: At that time we weren't in a position to think about doing another album and we thought it would be really nice to get a single together. 'No Easy Road' was light enough in a mood for a single, so we recorded it specifically for that purpose, and even though it didn't get anywhere, I think it worked. We recorded it at the same time as we were trying out the new equipment and I remember I was in a right mess because I didn't have any bass guitars at all. It was at about that time that I got

friendly with Peter [Overend] Watts of Mott The Hoople and he lent me his guitar, which was a Gibson Thunderbird. He was very good to me, Peter.

Wishbone then returned to the States, where they completed the rest of the tour, playing dates with the Allman Brothers and Quicksilver.

Martin: Yes, I can remember watching the Allman Brothers. We played with them in their home town, Macon, Georgia, and it was a really good show. Duane was in the band then and he was really amazing. I've never been so impressed by a stand-up slide guitarist.

AFTER COMPLETING another British tour, Wishbone retreated to an isolated cottage in Anglesey, Wales, at the beginning of 1973, where they spent three weeks writing and rehearsing for the next album. Produced this time by the band themselves, and recorded at Olympic and Apple studios in London, *Wishbone Four* (MCG 3503) was released in May and was received with much less enthusiasm than their previous albums. In the States, though, it was fairly well received, one reviewer calling it "a flawless gathering of solid songs and supple arrangements framed by the endlessly inventive dual lead team of Andy Powell and Ted Turner". The cool reception was partly due to the fact that the album was totally different from anything they had done before. For a start, the production was not nearly so smooth as that of *Argus*, the vocals on some of the tracks ('So Many Things To Say' and 'Doctor' in particular) being much coarser, and in places it is hard to detect the features which distinguish Wishbone's music for that of other bands. The introduction of steel guitar (played by Ted Turner) to their music, proved quite an effective addition however, most notably on 'Rock'n'Roll Widow', and the guitar playing of Ted and Andy still shines through in places, particularly on 'Ballad Of The Beacon', 'Everybody Needs A Friend' and 'Sorrel'.

Martin: At that time we felt that *Argus* was probably the best thing that we were going to do with Derek Lawrence, because up until then we'd always worked at De Lane Lea with Derek producing and Martin Birch as engineer, and we really felt it was time for a move. I think it's very difficult for four guys in a band, who are performing and writing, to be producers as well, because you've got so many different ideas being thrown in all the time that you just kind of end up with a very patchy sort of album, and I think there's a definite lack of continuity. Especially for us at the time it was just straining ourselves a bit thin, and I think maybe *Wishbone Four* suffered a bit because of that.

Nevertheless the album is still of a fairly high standard, it's just that by now everyone knew that Wishbone were capable of coming up with something much better. The single 'No Easy Road', appears on the album, and it is the first Wishbone track to include a brass section (Phil Kenzie, Dave Coxhill and the Bud Parks Horn Section), adding just that extra bit of zest to an already powerful number. Also guesting on that

track is pianist Graham Maitland from Glencoe, a band which used to play on tour with Wishbone quite often. "We really got on well with them," said Martin, "and Graham's a good piano player. We even thought about asking him to join the band once, I think!" Another keyboards player, George Nash, also appears on the album, playing on 'Everybody Needs A Friend'.

Martin: George Nash was a guy that our manager found, and no disrespect to George but I think it was throwing him in at the deep end a bit, although he played everything quite well. It's very difficult if you don't know a guy because he may be into something totally different. The brass section though, they were really good, especially Phil Kenzie, he's a very good sax player. I saw him on stage at the Rainbow with Mick Ronson and he was also in the *Rocky Horror Show* for ages.

'Sing Out The Song' is perhaps the most uncharacteristic Wishbone track on the album and if it were not for Martin's singing it would be hard to tell the difference between this and something by any one of a hundred other bands. Two of the album's better cuts though are 'Sorrel' and 'Ballad Of The Beacon', both having good lead passages with acoustic guitar backing, and the former also containing some nice bass from Martin. The lyrics to 'Sorrel' are particularly good too.

Martin: 'Sorrel' is actually about a plant that I found growing in my garden, but in the song it's personified. I cared for this plant and looked after it for a long time and then I went on an American tour and when I came back it had shrivelled up and died. So I cried and went to bed . . . and wrote a song about it! 'Ballad Of The Beacon' refers to the beacons which we could see from the cottage in Anglesey. It was a kind of joke really, although the song isn't tongue-in-cheek, but it was one of those sayings of the week that everyone cracks up about.

All the lyrics on the album are by Martin except for 'Rock'n'Roll Widow' which is by Steve, written after a particularly nasty incident which happened while the band were in America. Ted's steel guitar is in perfect context here, crying and whimpering over a heavier backing from Steve, Martin and Andy.

Steve: We were doing a gig in Austin, Texas, playing to a couple of thousand people in a field, on a little wooden stage. That was another of our Mickey Mouse experiences, you know, the stage lighting was like bits of wire with the bulb hanging down. Well, we were playing away and these guys started running around in the audience, obviously something big was going on, but we didn't really take it seriously until we came off and found that the guy who was selling hot dogs had been shot and killed. A couple of guys wanted a hot dog you see and he didn't have any left, so they shot him.

Martin: 'Doctor' is also based on fact. It's about a young lady that my brother Glen and I used to know back in the days when we lived in Torquay. The first time I saw hershe really looked like a witch, with very straight blonde hair which she used to iron every

day, heavy black eye make-up, and a very tight black velvet dress right down to the floor. She was a heroin addict and she'd been registered and was receiving treatment, stepping the dosage down to get her off the drug. She used to send someone round to the doctor to plead for an extra prescription because she was lying on the floor with withdrawal symptoms, which was totally untrue, because when they'd eventually hustled the prescription out of the doctor they just used to fall around all over the place and everyone used to take it. She just used to hustle the doctor so she could get enough for everyone else . . . very heavy.

Despite the criticism from the British rock press, *Wishbone Four* still earned the band a silver disc to put alongside the gold they had collected for *Argus*, and they spent the rest of the year consolidating their position, the final coup de grace in America being their tour in May (they were in the States when the album was released over here) which really won them mass acceptance. A few British dates were recorded in June for their forthcoming 'live' album, and in July a third single, 'So Many Things To Say' backed by 'Rock'n'Roll Widow' (MUS 1210) was released. Andy also spent a short while in the studio during the summer, laying down a couple of minutes' worth of guitar for the title track of the Renaissance album *Ashes Are Burning*, which was released on the Sovereign label in October 1973 (SVNA 7261).



DURING OCTOBER the band played a week of British dates supported by Home, who were promoting their third album *The Alchemist*, little knowing that one of them, Laurie Wisefield, would fairly soon be joining Wishbone. November was spent playing to packed houses in the States, and in December the 'live' double-album, *Live Dates* (MCSP 254) was released. It was recorded on the Rolling Stones' mobile between 17th and 24th June, 1973, and re-mixed at Olympic Studios, London. A good cross-section of the music Wishbone had been playing up until then is presented, with selections from all of their albums, and the recording quality is good. The only previously un-recorded track is the Jimmy Reed composition (an old Everly Brothers number), 'Baby What You Want Me To Do', which has some good bluesy guitar from Andy and slide from Ted. All the old favourites are there, including

a thunderous 'Phoenix', and the ever popular *Argus* trilogy of 'The King Will Come', 'Warrior' and 'Throw Down The Sword', with a particularly good version of 'Blowin' Free' thrown in for good measure. The other tracks included are 'Lady Whiskey' from *Wishbone Ash*, 'The Pilgrim' and 'Jailbait' from *Pilgrimage*, and 'Rock'n'Roll Widow' from *Pilgrimage*, and 'Rock'n'Roll Widow' from *Wishbone Four*. Andy did point out, however, that the album was recorded at a rather bad time for the band, having just returned from an exhausting Stateside tour, and with Martin and Ted suffering from various illnesses, "and I think that the music reflects that. It's a different angle on the group, but it's not really a sparkling album." Although that is true to a certain extent (I have heard the band play better), the album does have its moments of glory, and compared with most other bands 'live' offerings, is above average.

AFTER A CHRISTMAS gig at Alexandra Palace and a short break, Wishbone played another three weeks of gigs in America in January, and these turned out to be the last official dates which Ted played with the band. The next couple of months were spent getting material together for the next album and a proposed tour in May and June; but at the beginning of May Ted informed the rest of the band of his intention to quit.

Andy: We'd been rehearsing for a couple of months and we'd got halfway into preparing for the album. It was a very tense period because we were all working downstairs in a tiny little room (the basement studio of Miles' house, where the band first played together in 1969), and we'd been touring a lot, and I think everyone was just pretty down. We didn't really have our hearts in what we were doing, and I think Ted didn't either, and being probably the most spontaneous member of the group, he said he wanted to leave. I think he just felt that he'd been in the band for nearly five years and he really wanted a change. It took us a couple of days to take it in and think what we wanted to do, and we thought, well, shall we get a piano player in, and a vocalist even, you know, there's so many possibilities. Then we decided to try for another guitarist, and Laurie Wisefield was the only really serious replacement, you know, because we all knew him. He's a good guy, and we liked his playing a lot, and he didn't have any commitments at that time, because Home had just split up.

While all this was going on Laurie Wisefield was out in the States, backing Al Stewart, together with Mick Cook, Cliff Williams and Jim Anderson, who was later replaced by Francis Monkman. (For Laurie's history up until this point, see ZZ49.)

Andy: I was going out to New York for a couple of days, to do a gig with Renaissance at the Academy, just playing on a number because they were recording for a radio broadcast, and when I was out there I met Laurie. We hung out together for a bit and talked it over, and he said he'd come back and give it a try when he'd finished the Al Stewart tour. So he came back and that was it, it was great.

WISHBONE ASH

Laurie: Andy did the Renaissance gig and we got really friendly, but I didn't know at the time, that he'd come over to suss me out. He came along on a couple of nights and played with us on 'All Along The Watchtower', which was just an excuse to have a jam really. Anyway, we were hanging about together and we went to see Climax Blues Band play at the Academy one night, and we were talking and I said, "Well, how's Wishbone going then?" and he said, "Well, actually, Ted's left the band", and I sort of said, "What! you know, 'What are you going to do?'" So he said, "Oh, I don't know whether we're going to get a keyboards player in, or a vocalist, or what". I didn't really have any thoughts that I'd be asked to join, and then the next day we were sitting in the bar and he said, "Er, what would you say if I asked you to join?" and I said, "Well, I'll give it a try, and come back and see how we get on", because that's very important too, to get on with everyone personally, not just musically.

When I got back from the States I was suffering from really bad jet-lag, and they all phoned me up and said come over. So I went over and we started talking and jamming and then it all happened from there, and we started rehearsing. I still had another gig to do with Al Stewart, at the Howff, in London, so I went along with Andy and that was really a gas. Andy got up and played, and there was Isaac Guillory, and Mick Stubbs leapt up on the stage, whipped the microphone out of Al's hand, and started screaming 'All Along The Watchtower'. We'd had a lot to drink that night and I don't know what I played, I was probably playing in a different key. It was really funny, but it went down a storm.

Until the beginning of August, Wishbone spent their time rehearsing and getting things together for the new album. Much of the material which had been written by Ted was either scrapped or completely re-worked, and Laurie quickly settled in, contributing a good deal of his own ideas to the music and re-kindling the enthusiasm which was missing earlier in the year. By the time August arrived a complete set of new material had been put together, and Wishbone flew out to Criteria Studios in Miami to record their fifth studio album, under the direction of American producer Bill Szymczyk. Szymczyk had worked with a great many top American bands before (Eagles, J. Geils Band, Joe Walsh, etc . . .) but never an English one, so it was a new experience for both parties.

Andy: People kept suggesting Bill to us and his name kept coming up, and we'd mention it to other people and they'd say "Oh yes, he's great". So we listened to some of the records that he'd produced and they were very good. I think the actual contact was made by Miles, who knew Bill.

Having an American producer has really benefitted us, because it's still obviously a very English group, but things like the drum sound and the overall production of the album is . . . it's a nice merging of the two. He taught us a lot of things on the album, but I think we also managed to spark him off on a few things. Like the first time Martin plugged his bass guitar in and he was getting this ridiculous bass sound, and Bill

said, "I never record a bass guitar like that", and at the end of six weeks he was recording it halfway between that and a sort of classic American bass sound.



THE ALBUM, *There's The Rub* (MCF 2585), was released at the beginning of November 1974, and it soon became apparent that Wishbone were back on form again. It is naturally different, in some respects, from the previous Wishbone albums, Laurie's more aggressive style, combined with that of Andy, giving the music a much harder bite, but the basic twin-lead concept remains the same. The production is obviously very different too, and much of the energy of their 'live' performances has been captured on record, something which eluded them on *Wishbone Four*. When I spoke to them, they were full of praise for Bill Szymczyk, and listening to the album it is easy to see why. Without making them sound coarse, he has preserved a sense of power in their music, and I think it is true to say that it is more complex than any of their previous work. That is to say that, although the basic structure of the music is the same, Szymczyk has used the facilities at his disposal in the studio, to give a firm backing to the songs, so that the more you listen to the album, the more you begin to hear things which at first were not apparent.

There's The Rub is an album of contrasts. There is the sadness of tracks like 'Persephone' and 'Lady Jay' (the former with some lovely guitar at the end from Andy), the aggression of 'Don't Come Back', and the unusual (for Wishbone) blackness and slight unease of 'F.U.B.B.', the only instrumental on the album. "We called it 'F.U.B.B.' (F***ed Up Beyond Belief)," said Martin, "because that probably most accurately described the condition we were in when it was recorded. Quite a bit of it we'd been playing for weeks, but it's just a jam mainly, and we'd worked on little bits here and there." 'F.U.B.B.' displays to the full the compatibility of Andy and Laurie's styles, each guitarist picking up on the phrases of the other, at times duetting in harmony, at others battling it out in real style.

Two session musicians also make short appearances on the album. On 'F.U.B.B.' Nelson 'Flaco' Padron plays congas, and keyboards player Albhy Galuten contributes some organ and synthesizer on 'Persephone'.

Martin: Nelson is a Cuban musician who does a lot of sessions, and Albhy's one of the resident guys at Criteria. His bag now is definitely synthesizer and he's really got the mind and everything to be able to operate that instrument. We had quite a lot of visitors in the studio. Joe Walsh came down, and one of the guys from the Eagles, and Bill Wyman, but none of them played on the album.

Two tracks from the album have been issued as singles by MCA, both, curiously enough, backed by 'Persephone'. The first, 'Hometown' (MCA 165) saw the light of day at around the same time as the album, and is a fairly straightforward rock song, with some of those characteristic Wishbone harmonies. The second, 'Silver Shoes' (MCA 176) came out in February of this year, and has a lovely bass sound from Martin (compare it with, say, 'Vas Dis' from the second album and you'll see how it's changed over the years), together with the battling guitars of Laurie and Andy.

The lyrics to 'Lady Jay', as you probably know if you've read the album cover, are based on a Dartmoor folk legend, and the atmosphere of the song is perfectly set by the eerie introduction, while the sadness of the story is given that extra bit of emphasis by the vocal and guitar harmonies.

Martin: The story goes back a few hundred years and legend has it that a young lady, a peasant girl called either Jane or Jay, no one is quite sure what her name was, got mixed up with the local lord of the manor's son, and they started having it off and she got pregnant. Well, in those days there was no way that they could be married, so she committed suicide, and because sinners who commit suicide aren't allowed to be buried in holy ground, she was taken to Dartmoor and buried beside the track. After that, her lover used to travel there every day and place fresh flowers on the grave, and legend has it that when he died, fresh flowers continued to appear there every day and still do. I went there with some friends one windy winter's night and I can only describe it as a very weird, spooky experience. It struck me as being a rather beautiful legend though, I thought it was very romantic, and there it is in 'Lady Jay'.

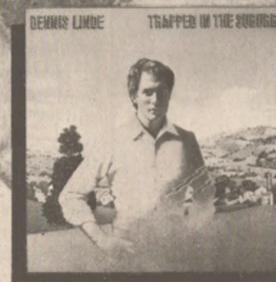
Those of you who read *Rolling Stone* will no doubt remember something a few months ago on the subject of 'album graffiti'—those words you sometimes find etched into the plastic around the centre of an album. Well, *There's The Rub* has its own piece of graffiti, contributed by Bill Szymczyk, which has a rather amusing story behind it. On one side you've got "Can you do this?" and on the other "Just testing". "Just testing" was the usual excuse from any member of the band when he made a mistake in the studio, but "Can you do this?" has a more interesting story behind it.

Martin: One night after we'd been working at the studio, we went back to the Thunderbird Hotel on Miami Beach seafront, which was where we were staying, and we went into the bar where we got progressively drunker and drunker during the course of the evening. There was a sixty-five year old dude playing

Continued on Page 39

DENNIS LINDE

TRAPPED IN THE SUBURBS



Trapped in the Suburbs
K52013

A stunning tour-de-force of pop romanticism. Dennis has turned being eclectic into a veritable art-form



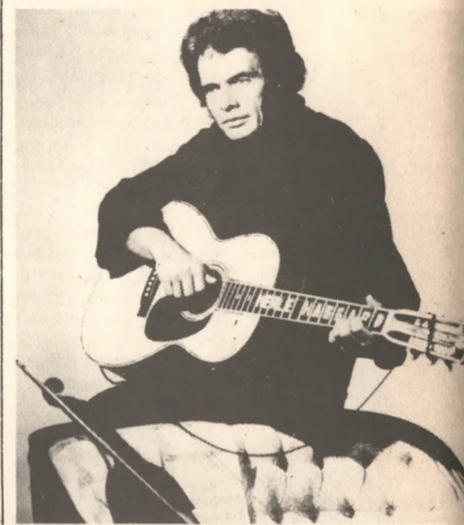
A ZIGZAG BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO COUNTRY ROCK



Gram Parsons.



Emmylou Harris.



Merle Haggard.

The Country-Rock Outfits

Okay, I can sense that your feelings are being aroused. Perhaps even to boiling point. "Country music in ZigZag," you'll be saying, "what's the bloody game?" But hang on there, you rock freaks, and you'll find that we have a lot in common. All will be explained during the next few thousand words.

To start at the start (and that's the best place!), your editor—being a pretty liberally minded sort of a guy—realised that there was more to associate country and rock music than a mere passing connection. A good excuse for a feature, he said (after laying a few drinks on me one lunchtime), and I, always eager for the opportunity to plug that much maligned country cause, readily agreed. And then—after constructing a brief plot line, assembling the cast of characters and noting the music's varied directions—realised that the task was far greater than I had originally imagined. Omitting the straight-down-the-middle, country charts, beer-drinking and broken-love-affairs, honky-tonk styled singers (that's a few hundred names cast to one side: artists who really do fall into the pure country enthusiasts' slot), there's still one hell of a lot of country sounds remaining. Therefore this feature must be regarded as the barest guide to country music with rock over/under-tones: an undefinitive rambling with, perhaps, a more detailed approach towards some of the artists and the sounds at a later date.

Just to set the ball rolling, and put you in the right frame of mind, ZigZag has already devoted a substantial amount of space to country music under various guises. Just call them —

You have only to think about the activities of these outfits and those musicians who either came from country backgrounds or have moved on to play a more active role in straighter country music. Let's name a few names.

The Byrds are a prime example: with Gram Parsons' appearance in April 1968, the outfit took on a practically traditional country sound which led to the appearance of their 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo' album—a release which met with the approval of the rock devotees and those country enthusiasts who have not tied themselves down to the premise that country music had to be performed by established country performers. Parsons' own role in the country rock syndrome is considerable: after his brief sojourn with the Byrds, next came the Flying Burrito Brothers and then his two solo albums, both of which were country music pure and simple. Who would argue with such titles as Tompall Glaser and Harlan Howard's 'Streets Of Baltimore' on 'G.P.' or Tom T. Hall's 'I Can't Dance' and the Louvin Brothers' 'Cash On The Barrelhead' to be found on 'Greivous Angel'. Even Parsons' own original material, songs like 'Still Feeling Blue', 'The New Soft Shoe' and 'Return Of The Greivous Angel', all bear the sentiments and the feel of the grand traditions; and the duetting with Emmylou Harris is West Coast doing what Nashville had been doing for many decades.

Now let's briefly return to the Burritos and pick up on Byron Berline, one of the group's prominent members from early 1971. Berline was their fiddle virtuoso, three times proclaimed America's National Fiddle Champion and served his apprenticeship with bluegrass innovator Bill Monroe. After the Burritos, an on-off assembly of musicians followed known as the Hot Burrito Revue/Country Gazette which eventually led to

the four piece Gazette breaking off and going their own way. Although the outfit frequently made exacting use of the Crosby, Stills, Nash styled harmonies—and material that covered such writers as Don McLean, Graham Nash, Stephen Stills and Herb Pedersen—it's far easier to think of Country Gazette as a traditional country outfit rather than as a rock band. The sounds are there via the use of acoustic instruments and a greater part of their repertoire are songs that have been handed down from country musician to country musician throughout the years. What about the rest of the line-up? Alan Munde, guitar/banjo, a former session musician from Nashville; Roland White, guitar/mandolin, another musician with session work in his blood as well as experience with one of Monroe's proteges, Lester Flatt; and Roger Bush, bass, one-time member of the famed Kentucky Colonels—led by the late Clarence White, which also included the already mentioned brother Roland—who brought bluegrass out west and laid their non-electric sounds on two albums released by World Pacific, one of which was released a year or so back by United Artists with the title, simply, 'Kentucky Colonels'.

(Incidentally, whilst we're with the subject, if Country Gazette can meet with universal approval, why not Bill Monroe—the Father of bluegrass music—and all that followed in his pathway. Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Jimmy Martin and others? To pick upon the most known names, both Monroe and Flatt still continue to perform the music of Kentucky whilst Scruggs, rated as the world's finest banjo exponent, has moved into music more closely related with rock. We'll be dealing with Earl Scruggs in a little more detail at a later stage . . . but back to the question. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that no one has called Country Gazette a country band whilst Messrs Monroe and Flatt have always been tagged as 'country'.)

Then there's the other outfits. The New

Riders Of The Purple Sage, once closely associated with the Grateful Dead, have strong country roots lurking behind their rock face (and even country titles appearing on their albums!) whilst Poco also feature country as more of an undertone. How about that old John Tobler favourite Rick Nelson who, among his Stone Canyon Band personnel, even supports an ex-member of Buck Owens' Buckaroos, steel guitarist Tom Brumley. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band have never been more than one step away from country and, during August 1971, pledged their allegiance completely by recording tracks—in Nashville—for a triple album that must rate as one of the music's masterworks. The release was, of course, the mammoth 'Will The Circle Be Unbroken', a highly successful fusing of both generations and musical directions: the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band combined their talents with those of such revered names as Roy Acuff, Mother Maybelle Carter, Earl Scruggs, Doc Watson, Merle Travis and Jimmy Martin—and country music, in the form of classics that included 'Keep On The Sunny-side', 'Wreck On The Highway', 'Nine Pound Hammer', 'You Are My Flower', 'Sunny Side Of The Mountain', 'I Saw The Light' and 'Wildwood Flower', met up with a whole new market of enthusiastic record buyers.

The list could go on endlessly, and include others like Mike Nesmith, John Stewart and Ian Matthews, but ZigZag—via its contributors and Pete Frame's infinitely detailed historical trees—has already covered this ground pretty extensively. In fact I had better shut up before any experts catch me out, but I'll merely rest my case and hope that you do believe that country music, in one form or another, does have a rightful place within these pages.

Now let's move a little further into my territory and, for starters, examine a few of the

Anomalies in the U.S. Country Music Charts

Perhaps 'anomalies' is an incorrect word: let's just say a few of the eccentricities to be found in the listings that take country music away from the straight and narrow. How about Billy Swan's 'I Can Help', a lingering remnant of the fifties' music scene, or Linda Ronstadt, not strictly a country name, providing fine justice to Hank Williams' evergreen 'I Can't Help It (If I'm Still In Love With You)'. Then there's Nashville's own brand of country-rock music to be found with Waylon Jennings' latest double header 'Rainy Day Woman'/'Help The Cowboy Sing The Blues' (or Waylon's lovely lady, Jessi Colter—the former Mrs Duane Eddy, with her original 'I'm Not Lisa'), Capricorn's award winning songwriter Kenny O'Dell with 'Soulful Woman' or Mac Davis providing the country (?) version of Kevin Johnson's 'Rock'n'Roll (I Gave You The Best Years Of



From early Byrds to Ernest Tubb

My Life)'. (And, talking about peculiarities, what about Price Mitchell & Jerri Kelly doing their thing with Holland-Dozier-Holland's 'I Can't Help Myself' or Marie Osmond with 'Who's Sorry Now?' I'll say no more about those two records apart from noting their presence in the charts.) Country music, these days, practically defies classification and the above mentioned are just a few of the names—Hoyt Axton, Sam Neely, B.J. Thomas and John Denver are just four others—that clearly confirm that country is not purely for the country enthusiasts. Some of these names are vital for the purpose of this article and we'll be returning to them in due course.

NOW FOR A BRIEF HISTORY LESSON!

I think, before we go any further, it's time to examine just a few of country's origins, and sort out its links with rock. Once again it'll be a pretty brief survey because the subject, itself, is vast enough and no one's asked me to write a book. (Did I hear sighs of relief?) Just a few landmarks—and a few substantial names.

Hank Williams is just one such name and certainly worthy of a few thousand words on his own account because his contribution to popular music—any music, that is—is beyond any form of argument. Instead, a very potted biography. Born in Mount Olive, Alabama, on September 17, 1923, Williams experienced the hard times right from the start. By the age of five he was shining shoes, selling peanuts and, making the street an essential part of his life, learnt to play the guitar from a Negro street musician named Teetot. Seven years later he won his first amateur talent contest in Montgomery, began playing the honkytonks and, the following year, had formed his back-up band, The Drifting Cowboys. Progress, however, was slow and it wasn't until 1947—when he cut his first sides for the obscure Sterling label—that things began to quicken up. Then he signed a publishing contract with Nashville's Acuff Rosa—after the publishers conceded the

point that this illiterate musician did, in fact, write his own material—and was followed by a recording contract with the fledgling MGM Records. From 1948 up until his death on January 1, 1953, Hank Williams dominated the country charts and through his more adult approach with lyrics, launched country music into a whole new era. During that brief period his records sold more than ten million copies: since his death his songs have been recorded over and over again and have notched up countless millions in sales.

But, whilst his professional life brought forth a multitude of successes, his personal life was seized by an overdose of tragedies. He fell victim to chronic alcoholism, and barbiturates only partially eased months of sleepless nights caused by an early childhood spinal injury. He went through a divorce, lost his son Hank Jnr to his wife Audrey and his constant drinking led to non-appearances and, in turn to very few bookings. Eventually he was fired by Nashville's Grand Ole Opry, the veritable pinnacle of the country music establishment. He died on the back seat of a car travelling to Canton, Ohio: the coroner's jury recorded a verdict of "a severe heart attack with haemorrhage" but many people are still prepared to argue otherwise and offer their own explanations. Perhaps it were the tragedies that made Williams' material superior to the run-of-the-mill country songs; perhaps they provided that touch of plaintive realism in the songs that so often reflected sadness and love. Whatever the reason his songs have lived on. Prior to his death, in addition to his own recording successes, the pop industry—via cuts by Tony Bennett and Joni James among others—had latched on to million sellers. Then, as the fifties stretched into the sixties, others followed suit: Frankie Laine, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, Del Shannon, Ray Charles, Charlie Rich, etc., etc. . . . Hank Williams' songs were available to all and sundry, and everybody was chalking up win-

COUNTRY



Paul and Paula



Johnny Cash



ners. Even today the process is maintained: the Blue Ridge Rangers, with 'Jambalaya', and the aforementioned Linda Ronstadt are just two among the recent single successes whilst, on the album front, the list appears endless. 'Kawliga', 'Honky Tonk Blues', 'Cold Cold Heart', 'Why Don't You Love Me' and 'Long Gone Lonesome Blues' are just the merest fraction of the titles that confirm that Williams' material is as vital today as it was over twenty years ago. A need for all markets, whether it be country, rock or pop.

Then we move forward and catch up with the pop revolution of the mid-fifties. Bill Haley—long before the glamour of 'Shake, Rattle and Roll', 'Rock Around The Clock' and all else—was a country boy who moved into rhythm'n'blues and then rock; and the natural progression of these musical directions becomes obvious (as if you didn't already know) with many other performers who were to come to light during this period. This progression is most obviously realised when looking at the phenomenal rise of Memphis' Sun Records once it had moved into the realms of 'rockabilly'. Sun's mentor Sam Phillips, having secured the talents of several white musicians, just let that Southern musical feel flow easily. The results brought forth a whole new generation of entertainers whose country origins not only showed at the time, but also today—practically two decades later. Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Charlie Rich... need any more be said? The influence of country music, especially that of Hank Williams, made its mark on most forms of popular music that was to follow.

Of course there was also the other side of the coin. Once rock'n'roll was established, once country was swamped in its newly created monster, the country entertainers had to fight back desperately. Many country entertainers deserted their most obvious roots and hopped on the bandwagon. But the coalition was shortlived, even though a percentage of the seventies contemporary country

sounds still carries that hint of good old fashioned rock'n'roll. But that's another story.

Country is Widespread and the Artists Diverse

Before moving on to the Nashville scene—which, in essence, is really the whole point of this lengthy epistle—a quick flit around the other areas of the United States where country has found a welcome home, if not always in the most recognisable form. How about that old favourite stomping ground of ZigZag, the West coast? A couple of thousand words back I had already singled out a few of the bands and, hopefully, indicated that country does play an important role in their musical presentation. Now for a few individual names and I'll start the ball rolling with Linda Ronstadt, an artist who keeps cropping up with fair regularity. I'll not devote too much space to Miss Ronstadt, not because I don't want to, but because her country work has already been well established in ZigZag 50. Therefore I'll simply restate that all of her recordings have featured strong connections with country music—some were even recorded in Nashville—and currently she's riding high with a definitive version of Hank Williams' 'I Can't Help It'. And that's the strange thing with many of the contemporary rock artists and bands: when they get around to country, they lay it down with guts and frequently come up with results that are nearer to traditional sources than the majority of Nashville recordings. The same thing can be said in connection with Emmylou Harris, another artist certainly worthy of her own feature. (Take note Mr Editor—I'll gladly provide such an article if no one else volunteers!). Just take a listen to Emmylou duetting with Herb Pedersen on the

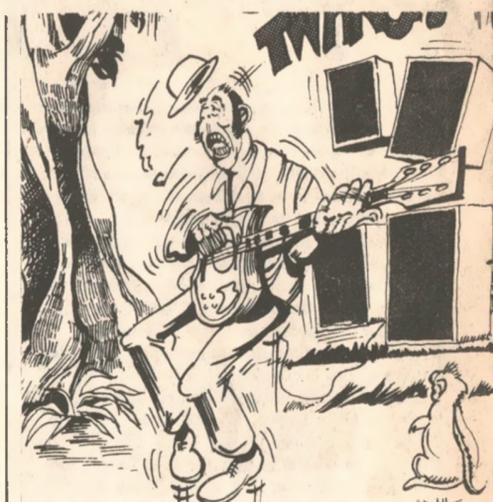
Louvin Brothers' 'If I Could Only Win Your Love', to be found on her 'Pieces Of The Sky' album, and you'll instantly recall those two part harmonies of days gone by. Or, even nearer to modern Nashville, there's 'Coat Of Many Colours' and 'Queen Of The Silver Dollar' whilst the West Coast—country music proper—gets a look-in with Merle Haggard's 'Bottle Let Me Down'. Although Emmylou Harris first got started in the late sixties, and had her first solo album out on Jubilee in 1970, it wasn't until her brilliant back-up work on Gram Parsons' two solo albums that she really claimed attention. Now 'Pieces Of The Sky' shows that all the promises have been fulfilled.

Now let's move on to the country music that all the country enthusiasts would know about and you'll come up with Bakersfield, a town some eighty miles north-west of Los Angeles and, possibly, the most serious rival to Nashville. Bakersfield really became known through Buck Owens, but Owens wasn't the first and he's the least representative of the modern city sound. Country music came out west via the Okie migration movement of the thirties and early forties: the Depression and the barrenness of the Oklahoma Dust Bowl sent thousands of families seeking out a slightly more comfortable existence in California and the West Coast. The exodus reached its peak during the war years when numerous jobs were to be found at the munition plants scattered throughout the state. One such family were the parents of Merle Haggard, one of the music's real superstars and a former convict who had spent seven of his first twenty-three years behind bars. Haggard speaks up for the music's traditions whilst firmly holding his ground as a leader within the contemporary setting. His album releases have included fine tributes to both Jimmie Rodgers ('Same Train, A Different Time') and Bob Wills ('A Tribute To The Best Damn Fiddle Player In The World') as well as to Dixieland Jazz ('I Love Dixie Blues—So I Recorded "Live" In New Orleans'). As a

writer Haggard had been turning out poignant songs ever since he first entered the scene in the early sixties but he didn't notch up massive success until he found himself a (tongue-in-cheek) spokesman for the silent majority with 'Okie From Muskogee', a record that put him firmly in the millionaire class. Among his other songs, there's frequent autobiographical material ('Mama Tried' and 'Branded Man' recall his prison internment) whilst 'Hungry Eyes' tells of the Okie labour camps; 'The Fightin' Side Of Me' is another political number and 'If We Can Make It Through December' combines an attractive melody line with lyrics that underline the nation's economic state. Merle Haggard says a lot of things: personal statements are constant but frequently he's also speaking for his listeners.

With the Okie movement came the country sounds, and the most popular sound of that period was western swing, a musical movement which bore as much allegiance to Dixie and jazz as it did to country music. (The influence on the West Coast 'Okies' is instantly realised: besides Haggard's tribute to Bob Wills, one of the prime innovators of western swing, he's now using a number of western swing musicians in his band's line-up and, undoubtedly, has been a major force in the music's recent upsurge of popularity. At the tail end of 1974 Merle Haggard sat in on Bob Wills' last session—a lavish, enjoyable piece of production and released, by United Artists, as 'For The Last Time'). The strong presence of western swing can be felt throughout the recordings of Commander Cody & The Lost Planet Airmen and—moving eastwards—the Austin, Texas group Asleep At The Wheel has built their whole presentation up upon these sounds. This seven-piece outfit first came to light with UA's 'Comin' Right At Ya' and now, following the release of their second album, seem to be experiencing an on-off relationship with Epic Records. Their material content is widespread and, in the traditions of all good western swing outfits, is selected from a variety of sources: Jesse

ROCK



Diggy Liggy Lo

Ashlock's 'The King Of Love I Can't Forget' and Bob Wills-Tommy Duncan's 'Take Me Back To Tulsa' has as much representation as Count Basie's 'Jumpin' At The Woodside'. Their sounds are infectious and completely good-timey.

And Austin, Texas has built up its own music syndrome. Originally well entrenched in the western swing movement, it now boasts its own brand of progressive country and the movement is spearheaded by such artists as Jerry Jeff Walker, Willie Nelson, Kinky Friedman, Michael Murphey and B.W. Stevenson. Once the group was small but, as the seventies loom more and more towards the eighties, Austin's musical community gathers more and more strength.

Perhaps it was Willie Nelson who really closed the gap between country and rock music. A veteran of Nashville for well over a decade, Nelson gave country music such classic titles as 'Pretty Paper', 'Funny How Time Slips Away', 'Touch Me', 'Night Life' and 'Hello Walls': he then broke the ties and headed back to where he started out. This time he made Austin his home, instead of his birthplace Fort Worth. A recording contract with Atlantic—not holding a country track record—helped matters and the much publicised, though financially disastrous, Dripping Springs Festival of 1972 (which led on to the annual Willie Nelson Picnics) had been the common factor to bind the various musicians' contributions together. The music of the south-western states had come full circle: Nelson, brought up to the strains of Bob Wills & The Texas Playboys and Hank Thompson, was still living the sounds of western swing—just take a listen to 'Stay A Little Longer' and 'Bubbles In My Beer' from the 'Shotgun Willie' album—but reinforcing his statements with the support of musical ideas from all other areas. Plus, of course, his own strength as a very superior creative talent. His forthcoming, and debut, release on Columbia is eagerly awaited.

And All the Rest

Well—by no means—not nearly all the rest! Country is vast and space is limited and I'll have to content myself with just a few regional developments. For instance, Doug Kershaw: although no longer a resident of Louisiana, his music is still very much cajun orientated and much of his material still revolves around family background and bayou life. Only it's much more heavier these days and strongly related with rock. It's on record that he's written over 21,000 songs (which is very difficult to believe—imagine the physical proportions of such a task) and has 'Louisiana Man' and 'Diggy Liggy Lo' among his credits. New York has strong country representation with Chip Taylor, the writer who put 'Wild Thing', 'Angel Of The Morning' and 'I Can't Let Go' into the annals of popular music. More recently he's moved into a solo recording career with Warner Brothers and has come up with two choice albums—'Last Chance' and 'Some Of Us'—which have not only delighted

his own followers but also the country enthusiasts. But that's not really too surprising: Taylor may not be a country boy in the Southern sense of the word but he was always aware of country recordings and made listening to the Grand Ole Opry an essential part of his childhood days. Then there's Chicago, a melting pot of musical directions where the South is felt through both white and black music. Recently a number of the city's musicians/artists/songwriters have come to light, with John Prine and the neglected Steve Goodman among the forerunners. Both have recorded in Nashville and their material is very strongly country orientated, although they're not necessarily aiming for that particular market.

That's a brief survey of the situation and, hopefully, I've made some points that show the connections between country and rock. Next time around we'll be getting down to the real nitty gritty—Nashville, a place where much more is happening than is realised at a casual glance. Just to whet your appetite, we'll be looking at the musicians who are artists in their own right, the songwriters who are providing some of America's most substantial material and an extravaganza of names that include Waylon Jennings, Tompall Glaser, David Allan Coe and Tanya Tucker.

□ TONY BYWORTH

THE STORY OF CARAVAN



THE DETAILS of Caravan's beginnings were very thoroughly chronicled in *ZigZag* 28. The following is an attempt to clarify what has happened to the band in the two years that have elapsed since then, as well as to fill in the background to the earlier events.

Caravan's present line-up—guitarist/vocalist Pye Hastings, bass player Mike Wedgwood, drummer Richard Coughlan, Geoff Richardson on viola, flute and guitar and Dave Sinclair on keyboards—have mostly had interesting individual careers and a collective history that is consistent with the complicated and close network of Canterbury bands.

The story begins in 1964 with the group The Wilde Flowers. Based in Canterbury, the line-up originally comprised Hugh and Brian Hopper, Robert Wyatt, Kevin Ayers and Richard Sinclair. Of these, only Sinclair was to join the Caravan faction and none of that first band are in Caravan's present line-up.

Ayers apparently departed after two weeks and within a year Richard Sinclair had also gone. So in 1965, Coughlan joined, the first direct link with the present Caravan:

"I was playing in Les Payne's Dance Band and one day Hugh Hopper came along to play bass with us. He was with the dance band for six or seven weeks and he asked me if I wanted to join the Wilde Flowers because Robert Wyatt wanted to give up drumming and just take up singing."

Apart from still being part-way through his five year training as a dental technician, Coughlan's own background had been a slightly bizarre one for a rock musician:

"I first learnt to play the mouth organ when I was ten, and when I joined the sea cadets I wanted to be a drummer but had to play the bugle for a while first. Eventually they let me be the drummer and then some mates and I formed a very strange trad band called the Stourside Stompers. After that came the Dance Band and then the Wilde Flowers."

Later on in 1965, Pye Hastings joined and has remained with Coughlan ever since. Having left school at sixteen and spent some time abroad, he had started to play guitar with no particular thoughts of singing. He became involved with the Wilde Flowers through knowing Kevin Ayers and his own earliest months in the band coincided with the first rumblings from the breakaway Soft Machine group.

Coughlan: After Pye had been in the band about six months, Robert started getting into the Soft Machine thing with Kevin Ayers and a few others—David Allen and the guitarist Larry Nolan who nobody's heard of since. He got involved in that, so after a while they needed to be in London and Robert left the Wilde Flowers. When Robert left, Pye took over all the main vocals and we carried on like that for a while. Then Dave Sinclair joined and we carried on like that for another six or seven months and then Hugh left and we got this guy called Dave Lawrence in on bass. We were doing mainly soul things then.

(What happened precisely was that Hugh Hopper started to play sax instead of bass, decided to leave altogether to roadie for Soft Machine, then in February 1969 played bass for Soft Machine. Since then he has played bass with Stomu Yamash'ta and is now with Isotope.)

This version of the Wilde Flowers ran from approximately January to June 1967. They were still playing mainly local gigs around this time.

Although remarkably few of the Canterbury musicians have fallen by the wayside, Richard Coughlan feels there was nothing intrinsically 'legendary' (the epithet usually applied to the Wilde Flowers era) about the area or the talent it appeared to spawn:

Coughlan: First there was Soft Machine who came from Canterbury, and then we happened along a year or more later. Then Kevin split from Soft Machine and got his own thing going. So everyone said Caravan, Soft Machine and Kevin Ayers all come from Canterbury—there must be something going on there. But it was just a myth really.

Then in the summer of 1967, the Wilde Flowers split altogether. The band disintegrated mainly because everyone was frustrated with the type of material they were playing. Those of course were the glorious days of '67 and Pye recalls being particularly impressed by bands like the Pink Floyd whose own material was so startling and original.

So in January 1968, they re-emerged, calling themselves Caravan. This time bass player Richard Sinclair was back in the fold, having spent some time at art college; his cousin Dave Sinclair, Hastings and Coughlan completed the line-up. They had a house on the Kent coast at Whitstable with one room soundproofed for rehearsals, and slowly got things together there between January and June 1968. Their gigs were a little further afield this time around and they began to think more seriously about recording contracts. Because of the somewhat elusive nature of the band, they developed a kind of mystique. The first big London gig, which a friend helped to arrange for them was something of a turning point.

Pye Hastings: We did one gig in May '68, the Middle Earth, which was our-big thing. In those days that was *the* place to play in London but we played badly and went down to the country thinking, well, that's it. But word went around and because we didn't have management or any kind of representation at that time, a kind of whisper campaign built up about the band. Then a lot of people came down and said, "We'd like to give you this and that," and offered us a contract that had two pages of clauses and a blank page that said "to be filled in later". Which we didn't bother to accept . . .!

Eventually they were approached by Ian Ralfini, then with MGM Records: "He seemed a genuine enough bloke. He said, 'I want an

English progressive band to take to America and get an album out. If you give me a good album and everything I'll give you whatever you need—a van, clothes, gear—all the things you need to get by on the road.' At that time we were still using odds and sods of Soft Machine equipment—amplifiers and so on, because they were in America but they were about to come back and reclaim it. Then the deal came along at the right moment."

Unfortunately they were encouraged to move to London after the Middle Earth gig, and this turned out very badly for them.

Dave Sinclair: When we got there we had nowhere to stay and we were really desperate. Some of us slept in the van, others in an empty house somewhere. We didn't want to give up though because we believed in the music we were doing and thought we were good enough to make it. So we went back to Kent and lived in tents at Graveney from September to November, so as to be near our rehearsal hall, which was really out in the wilds. We were getting £5 each a week at that time, from which petrol, hire charges etc had to be paid. Every so often a hired van was sent down from London to take us to the recording sessions. We were given a very short time to get everything down.

Tony Cox produced the album and it was recorded in around the August and September of that year. Entitled *Caravan* (Verve 6011) it was released in October '68 (and later re-issued in June '72 on MGM 2353 058) and a single from it, 'Place Of My Own' was also put out.

MGM folded within a year of Caravan being signed to them and they were released from their contract.

Pye Hastings: This wasn't really too much of a blow because we still wanted to stay with Ian Ralfini; we'd already been approached by Warner Bros, and we wanted to go with him. But because our management had by now been transferred to Terry King, all decisions of that kind were unfortunately taken out of our hands and we didn't lead our own lives in a business sense from then on. Which was a great shame because until then we'd had personal contact with Ian and we hadn't actually needed to do a management deal with him at all.

The plans for a deal with Warner Bros never materialised and instead the band went to Decca, their first album release on that label being in September '70 with *If I Could Do It All Over Again I'd Do It All Over You* (Dacca SKL 5052). The title track was released as a single and made the lower regions of the Top 20. It's a curious, whimsical little song, jazzy in a way, but surprisingly commercial. Caravan had not consciously aimed for a hit record however, and having one behind them did not make any appreciable difference . . . they were not pressured into trying for more hits.

Pye Hastings: It was just that time I think, when you didn't have to do anything you

didn't really want to; you know it didn't have to be hard rock or soft rock or anything. And everybody was doing something different or *trying* to do something different in the formative years.

A second Decca album, *In The Land Of Grey & Pink* (Deram SDL 1) was released in April '71. This sold more copies than anything Caravan did before or since, and still sells. For many fans, it epitomised the whole Caravan feel. Listening to side two, it's easy to see why. There is one lengthy track 'Nine Feet Underground' (by Dave Sinclair) featuring some excellent keyboard work. Side one however comprises four shortish songs that are more in a pop mould with their rather 'cute' lyrics. Of these 'Love To Love You' was released as a single; again, it was fairly commercial with quite a memorable hook-line, but did not get anywhere.

It was around this time that Pye Hastings' brother Jimmy gigged a lot with the band and has in fact been featured on all their albums, playing wind instruments. I can also remember seeing him in action at a session for a Trapeze album, which was produced by Neil Slaven, who was at that time partner to David Hitchcock, Caravan's producer and the other half of the 'Gruggy Woof' combination.

By now Caravan had a good following and were headlining major tours in Britain, as well as France and other European countries.

Dave Sinclair split on August 7 1971, going to Matching Mole later on in that year. Personnel upheavals seemed to be more characteristic of Caravan than most bands. Early on of course, they were only a semi-pro band anyway so perhaps it was inevitable, but Pye Hastings attributes the problems in later years to general frustration with the administration side of things:

Pye Hastings: The thing about the management got in the way of everybody really. It was no longer our lives; it was no longer the same amount of fun. If you worked a lot you always ended up with £30 a week profit, regardless of how hard you tried. In fact however we worked, we were always in debt. We also suffered from a lack of finance at the proper time and a lack of inspired direction.

But it seemed to me that with their extensive network of friends, relatives etc always willing to fill the breach, they had perhaps come to rely too heavily on an informal approach to the band. Perhaps it was all a little too casual?

Pye Hastings: I think it always works better if you do work with friends. At least you know what they're like, whereas when you audition for people, it takes a long time to get into their personalities. Things would have probably progressed quicker if we'd gone about it in a more business-like way, but it was a very personalised form of playing. We'd all be very close to each other in one way or another and to have someone in it purely because it's a job makes it be-

come much more like a job, and therefore less personal and so you probably lose the initial standpoint.

After Dave Sinclair's rather sudden departure, Steve Miller was brought in on keyboards. He had been with his own band Delivery since 1969 and also a group called DC & the MBs.

An album, *Waterloo Lily* (Decca SDL-R8), was released in May 1972. It had a more jazzy feel than anything the band had done before and featured some nice vocals from Richard Sinclair on the title track (other vocals being handled by Pye). Several other musicians helped out, including Steve Miller's brother Phil on lead guitar, Lol Coxhill on soprano sax, Jimmy Hastings on flute and tenor sax and Mike Cotton on trumpet. Pye commented thus on the album: "As far as our fans were concerned, it was a very different approach and an awful lot of them didn't like it. So we tried to break new ground there which got us a lot of new fans and at the same time lost us a lot. After that we went back to something like our former style with *For Girls Who Grow Plump In The Night*."

A couple of months after the album's release, Steve Miller went back to playing with Lol Coxhill and eventually Delivery which reformed in December '72, and Richard Sinclair left to join Hatfield and The North, where he was once again involved with cousin Dave.

Pye Hastings and Richard Coughlan were again left alone together and set about the formation of Caravan Mark 3, which interestingly enough, necessitated the first auditions they had ever held. From these, ex-Thank You bass player Stuart Evans was found and also Derek Austin who had previously played keyboards with Jimmy Cliff, Gass, and Keef Hartley.

More significant was the discovery of viola player and flautist Geoff Richardson.

Richardson is still with the band and it is therefore worth going into his own musical background and the events that led him to join Caravan.

Geoff started to play the violin between the ages of eight and twelve and then took up the guitar. He played in various folk clubs around Leicester when he was about sixteen, and even had a manager of sorts. When he was at art college in Winchester, he played bass guitar with a semi-pro band for several years. Then he met up with Steve Borrill who at that time played bass with Spirogyra, "and he came down and played with our group at college and it was a big thing. I mean he had a proper amp and a proper bass, which to us seemed quite amazing! Anyway, I met Steve and the outcome of that was I joined Spirogyra for about a fortnight when I was going to leave college. This was in June '72. Through that I got in touch with people in Canterbury (Spirogyra were originally based at Kent University). By this time I was playing viola. Spirogyra split so I was thwarted once again

in my desire to be a musician. But I stayed in Canterbury anyway, and met up with Pye Hastings who suggested I go for an audition once he heard that I played viola." Pye and Richard Coughlan decided that Geoff would be a worthy addition, and once Austin and Evans had joined, they had a complete line-up once more.

At first English fans reacted badly to Richardson, although it now seems hard to imagine a time when he wasn't an integral part of the band:

Geoff Richardson: Audiences are very resistant to change. They can be very reactionary, really; horrifyingly so. I mean when I joined the group there had previously only been four people in it, so I went through about a year or 18 months of people shouting "What's he doing here? Get off!"

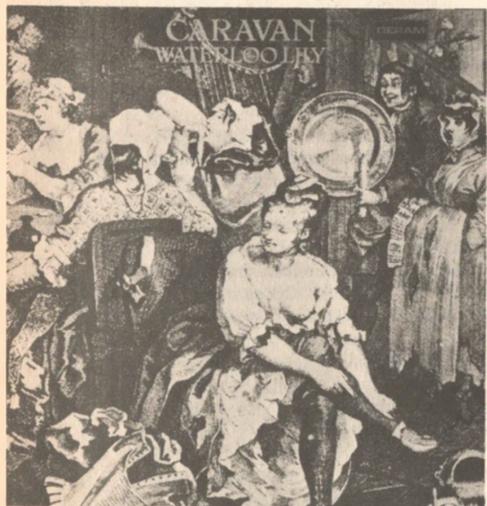
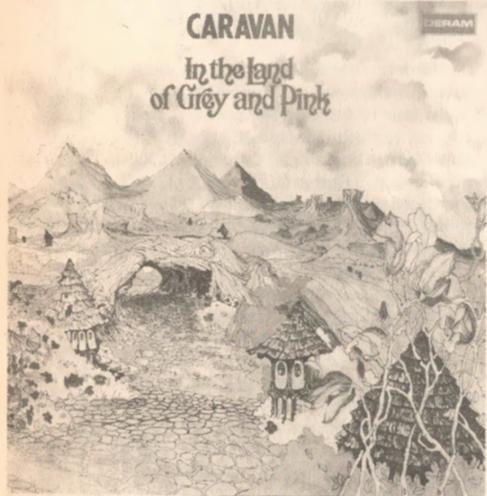
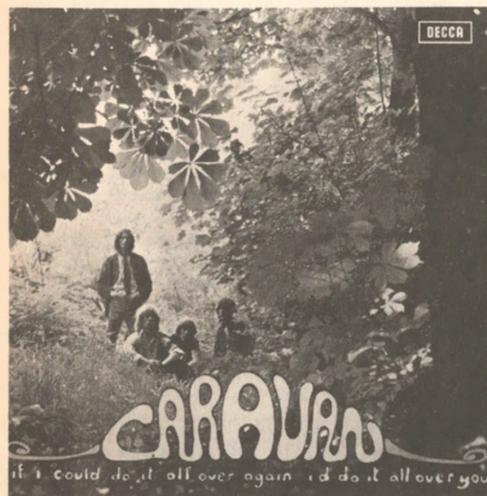
Although initially things looked quite hopeful for the new Caravan, an Australian package tour in January 1973 was sufficiently disturbing to more or less bring about another split. Caravan had supported Lindisfarne, Slade and Status Quo and, for Geoff Richardson, at least, the tour was "Mind-boggling, terrible". A pretty thorough initiation though!

This time, Hastings, Richardson and Coughlan remained together, found John G. Perry (formerly with Gringo and Spread-eagle), and persuaded Dave Sinclair to come back, initially for the purpose of recording. It would be impossible to make a complete documentation of Caravan's story without going through Dave Sinclair's individual career, for his attitude is one that represents one of the most determined and dedicated approaches to music.

At the age of seven, Dave played in a skiffle group formed from members of his church choir and was interviewed on the BBC, who were investigating what was then the start of the skiffle boom. He started to play piano at the age of eight and within a couple of years had discovered the fruitlessness of music lessons as he could play music (mainly classical at this time) so well from memory that he never used to bother to read music. He continued to write it however, till about the age of 16 by which time he had widened his interests a good deal: "Then I bought a Vox Cougar bass guitar and did some work with Richard Sinclair, who was playing lead guitar. I did all sorts of general work, mainly labouring when I left school and joined the Wilde Flowers late in '66 on a semi-pro basis. My original connection was through Richard who knew Pye slightly before I did. I was hanging around with the Soft Machine people a lot in those days, and getting myself generally involved. I think I was one of the first people to say that we should write more of our own stuff, but it was very difficult to do anything in those days because of lack of equipment and we always had to keep doing odd jobs to survive."

Having stuck with Caravan through the

CARAVAN



rough period at the time of their first album and having contributed much to their success since then, Dave left the band on August 7 1971.

Dave Sinclair: I felt the whole thing was going a bit stagnant and that I needed inspiration from different people. I wanted to play with other people but had to accept the fact that with Caravan it was all or nothing. So I had to leave otherwise I might have freaked out completely. Previously I'd had a few talks with Robert Wyatt, who left Soft Machine at the time I left Caravan. We always thought we'd work really well together but about two weeks after that I met John Murphy, who has been my song-writing partner ever since. I really wanted to work with him, and when he went to Portugal on his honeymoon I hitched all the way there to find him! While I was there, Robert Wyatt wrote and asked me to come back. But I got stuck in Lisbon and had to be repatriated. Once I got home, we slowly got Matching Mole together.

But Matching Mole did not really work out for Dave, although he was with them long enough to record one album, *Matching Mole* (CBS 64850) which was released in April 1972, shortly after he left the band.

Dave Sinclair: It seemed it wasn't my scene in the end. I thought it was going to be a rock band, but found it a bit too free in style. But I was still trying to get something together with John Murphy. We approached various record companies but never had the money to do demos so were never in a position to offer them tapes. I was labouring again by this time!

Then I joined Hatfield & The North at Richard Sinclair's instigation in about the October of 1972. That didn't work out either, and I suggested to them that they replace me with Dave Stewart on keyboards, which they did.

So in February '73, Dave Sinclair was on his own once more, but still writing lots of material with John Murphy, and still trying to get some sort of band together with him. But by the Spring of 1973, Caravan were trying to pick up the pieces after their disastrous Australian tour and with a new album imminent, Pye Hastings approached Dave to record with them:

Dave Sinclair: I was quite happy to do that because I needed the money apart from

anything else. Just before that they were due to do a two-week French tour which I also agreed to do. After the tour, I had two days to learn all the music that Pye had written for the album. But I managed it and after that I just sort of stayed in the band. Time went on and I'd really got the taste of being on the road again, although I was still planning to leave as soon as I could sort something out with John. That attitude stuck for a very long time, even till after the States tour in Autumn '74, and in a way separated me from the rest of Caravan. The main problem was that I hadn't written any of the material we were playing at that time, so I still felt like a session musician. But once I began writing again after the States tour, I felt differently.

In fact Dave has written about two-thirds of Caravan's new album, *Toys In The Attic*, which should be out by the time this is printed.

Dave Sinclair: When we got back from America, we had about two months free time because our equipment was impounded by Customs, and I spent most of that time writing with John. It was accepted as far as I was concerned that anything John wrote—lyrics or anything—would go with my music. That caused some problems within the band, but we sorted it out eventually. In fact John and I already have enough material to last the rest of our lives. I certainly don't envisage leaving Caravan again now. I really want to see the band make it, having been with them for so long.

Meanwhile *For Girls Who Grow Plump In The Night* (Deram SCLR-12) had been released in October '73 and if there was any haste made in its preparation, this was certainly not reflected in the finished product, which was by all accounts a very fine album, and won many of the fans who had strayed after *Waterloo Lily*.

Then, on October 28 1973, Caravan played a concert in the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. They were backed by the New Symphonia Orchestra and played predominantly old material. The theatre was packed out and the atmosphere on the night was definitely that of an 'historic' occasion. Most of the audience wore badges proclaiming their affinities and the cultist overtones of Caravan's following was very evident. A good reception could not however hide the gaping chasms in the gig's presentation, and ultimately in the live album *Caravan And The New Symphonia* (SML-R1110), released in April '74.

What had initially been a good idea of David Hitchcock's was by no means an

unqualified success in the end, although it would certainly have been a lot better had there been more rehearsal time and better general organisation.

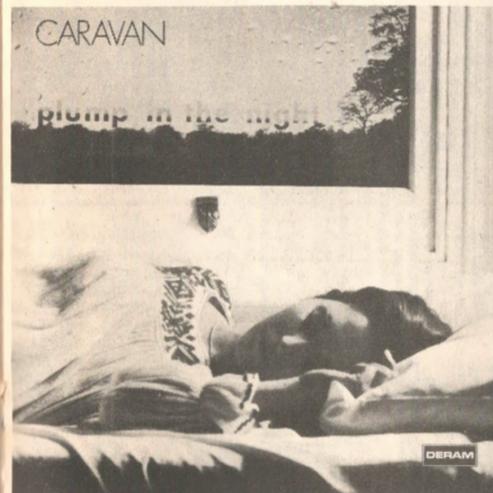
But as Geoff Richardson said: "The idea of doing a gig with an orchestra was quite attractive but when it came to it, it was really heavy going. The gig seemed a bit tense and over-organised. I felt really constrained because it was a performance and didn't have any spontaneity. I don't think I'd really want to do it again."

Richard Coughlan is also not enthusiastic, although he can see possible alternatives: "I wouldn't want to do it again unless there was a lot more rehearsal time to get used to playing with all those people. We did quite well actually; we did better than the orchestra did! But I like the idea of doing gigs with a big brass section and girl singers, something like that."

In the Spring of 1974, John Perry left rather suddenly. He had wanted to go directly before a major tour but agreed (!) to stay till the end of it, after which Caravan had about a week to audition for a new bass player. They found Mike Wedgwood who has luckily been with them since.

Mike had already been with a lot of bands, his own career starting in the choir at Salisbury Cathedral. He was made head chorister at the age of thirteen and was beginning to pick up various instruments and to mess about in local bands.

He came to London in '67 and joined the Overlanders who he stayed with for 2½ years during which time two RCA singles were recorded—'These Are Not My People' and 'Thought Back'. He got friendly with drum-



mer Graham Deacon (now with Entwistle's Ox) who joined the Overlanders about half way through Mike's stay. The two of them left to join Arthur's Mother and cut the Polydor single 'On The Dole'.

Mike Wedgwood: Then I got to meet Nicky James through a friend of a friend and Graham and I joined him. We did a few gigs and one album (*Nicky James* on Philips), for which I also did a couple of string arrangements.

Anyway, it didn't do very well, and as we

weren't really on the road, I answered an ad for Curved Air whom I joined in 1971 and we recorded *Phantasmagoria* after which the band virtually broke up. Sonja and I wanted to form a new group which we would have called the Sonja Kristina Band. We auditioned for some people and got Eddie Jobson, Kirby and the drummer Jim Russell. But once again there were management problems, and we were told we had to call it Curved Air—which seemed to me like a slight on Darryl Way, Francis Monkman and Florian Pilkington-Miksa, who had all been in the original Curved Air. Anyway, that lasted about six months; we did the album *Air Cut*, then Eddie was offered the job with Roxy Music, Kirby went off to join Elmer Gantry and I decided to leave as well.

When he left Curved Air, Mike went back to doing some more string arrangements for Nicky James and also played bass for him.

Mike Wedgwood: Then, about 1½ years ago I was offered a job with Kiki Dee, whom I joined. We toured England with Elton John and did a couple of bits of recording including the Rocket Records single 'Hard Luck Story'. Florian from Curved Air joined us for a while and also Graham Deacon. It was a great band and I really enjoyed it, but they got a new drummer and he and the keyboard player weren't really into what I was doing on bass, so I was asked to leave. By this time I'd joined and left about four bands, so it didn't really upset me. After that I got down to some more string arrangements, including those for the present Ox album, *Mad Dog* (Decca). I was just finishing that when I got a call from David Hitchcock, Caravan's producer who said why didn't I come along for an audition, which I did, and like fools they said yes!

In August 1974, Caravan's contract with Terry King expired and they were signed to BTM Artistes Management. They played a few dates in England before going to America for the first time on a nine-week tour. This was apparently very successful, with only a couple of mediocre receptions. For a first tour it was a little overdue perhaps, although Pye Hastings seems to think that the American market is ready for Caravan's music now, and Mike Wedgwood confirmed that even on their third US tour, Curved Air were less popular than Caravan were.

It's virtually a platitude these days to say that a band's stage presentation improves greatly after a States tour and it was probably inevitable of Caravan who were never among the most extrovert musicians.

As I write this, they are half-way through a long British tour, their first time on the road since before Christmas. The opening night was pretty ropey but interesting in so far as the emphasis in their stage act has shifted (I think as a result of the American tour) to Geoff Richardson who now seems to be the 'front man', instead of Pye Hastings. Whether this will remain so or whether it would be a good thing if it did only time will tell, but they are certainly right at least to try something different.

What little I have heard of the new material at this stage remains reassuringly in the

basic Caravan catchment area and it seems that on the present showing things can only get better for them.

□ LINDSEY BOYD

Much gratitude to the original Canterbury Bands Family Tree, by Pete Frame (ZZZ8)!

CARAVAN DISCOGRAPHY

ALBUMS:

Caravan (Verve 6011; reissued on MGM 2353 058)
If I Could Do It All Over Again, I'd Do It All Over You (Decca SKL 5052)
In The Land Of Grey And Pink (Deram SDL 1)
Waterloo Lily (SDL 8)
For Girls Who Grow Plump In The Night (Deram SCLR-12)
Caravan And The New Symphonia (SML R1110)

SINGLES (no longer available):

'Place Of My Own'
 'If I Could Do It All Over Again ...'
 'Love To Love You'



WITH OTHER BANDS:

Mike Wedgwood
 'These Are Not My People', 'Thought Back'—singles with The Overlanders
 'On The Dole'—single with Arthur's Mother 'Nicky James'; *Nicky James* album on Philips
Phantasmagoria, *Air Cut*—Albums with Curved Air, Warner Bros
 'Hard Luck Story'—single with the Kiki Dee Band

Dave Sinclair
Matching Mole album (CBS 64850)

SESSION WORK:

Pye Hastings
 Rhythm guitar on Hugh Hopper's album 1984

Richard Coughlan
 Drumming on Kevin Ayers & The Whole World single, 'Singing A Song In The Morning' (Harvest)

Geoff Richardson
 Viola on 'You Can't See Me Now' on Kevin Ayers' *Doctor Dream* album (Island ILPS 9263)

CARAVAN

The Flying Burrito Brothers: a name synonymous with the concept of the respected but unsuccessful rock/roll band. For all the trivia and unreality the rock business seems to cling to, they were unacknowledged messengers of substance, of a new era, not to mention a deliverance of sorts. They may have been overlooked, and their message only partly heeded, but they should never be forgotten. So write Jim Beckhart on the sleeve of 'Close Up the Honky Tonks'. Fortunately, the Burritos are back to rectify this situation... don't miss them this time round

BYRDS #1 August 1964 to March 1966
Albums: 'PREFLYTE' (July 1965) Together ST-1000, 'MR. TAMBOURINE MAN' (August 1965) CBS 62571, 'TURN TURN TURN' (March 1966) CBS 62652 (See ZZ 27-28)

THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS

THREE LITTLE (1954) became **THE COUNTRY BOYS** 1958 **COUNTRY BOYS** (from 1958, when Billy Stone joined, left 1960, when Eric White joined). They apparently won a talent contest and gathered momentum from there. Played clubs around Los Angeles at weekends and during school holidays (Clarence was only 10).
More info about members of Kentucky Colonels: Bobby Stone left in January 1965 and The Golden State Boys joined. He now plays with J.B. Clouse and the New Sound.

EVERGREEN BLUESHOPS 1966 to 1969
Known as 'the Beatles of Topanga Canyon', made one album for AMPS label 'THE BALLAD OF'.

BYRDS #2 (see Zigzag 29-30)
October 1967 Album: 'FURTHER DIMENSIONS' (See ZZ 1967) CBS 62785 and 'SOMEBODY'S TALKIN' (See ZZ 1968) CBS 62990

BEING A FAMILY TREE TO COMMEMORATE THE RETURN OF THOSE INTREPID AVIATORS

KENTUCKY COLONELS #1 1960 to 1962
Gaining reputation and popularity, they began to gig across the States - particularly the folk-conscious Cambridge/Boston area. Bluegrass.

CASTAWAYS From around 1963 to 1965. A monkey suited country honky-tonk playing the Nevada casinos, Colorado and the Pacific North West. Made a few singles but little progress and broke up.

BYRDS #3 (see Zigzag 29-30)
Listed for only 3 weeks in Oct 1967
Album: 'GREATEST HITS' (October 1967) CBS 63007 (See ZZ 1968-9)

KENTUCKY COLONELS #2 1962 until April 1966
Unable to break beyond the limitations of Bluegrass/folk clubs, they split up after cutting 2 albums for World Pacific. One album released here on United Artists was 29514.

CATUN GIB & GENE Early 1966 to late 1967. Based in Palmolive, where they played at 7 nights a week at the Juke of Diamonds club. (Full details in Zigzag 41).

BYRDS #4 October to November 1967
Album: 'THE NOTORIOUS BYRDS GATHER' (April 1968) CBS 63169 (See Zigzag 31 page)

KENTUCKY COLONELS #3 January to May 1967. A vain attempt to resurrect the group, which split when Clarence was offered a gig with Bill Monroe.

NASHVILLE WEST Early 1968 until August 1968
Played weekly at Bakerfield, but mainly at the Nashville club in El Monte, where they had a residency. Played country music for truckers, farmers & ranchers.

BYRDS #5 December 1967 to October 1968. A very shaky line-up. Album: 'SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO' (Sept 1968) CBS 63558. Gram Parsons joined April and the Byrds went country. He left in July on an eye of disastrous South African tour, and Ronnie Carlos had to impersonate him. (Full details in Zigzag 32)

INTERNATIONAL SUBMARINE BAND Very early L.A. country rock group - listed from October 1968 to March 1969 (off and on). One album (see ZZ Home) (April 1968) UA 51200

TRIO WITHOUT ANY SPECIFIC NAME Played some dance halls in El Monte, California. 3 nights a week for 2 months.

SWAMPWATER 1969-1972. One album: 'SWAMPWATER' (Sept 1971) RCA import LP 4572 (with Glen Hardin a Herb Pedersen among guests).

BYRDS #6 September 1968 to September 1969
Albums: 'DR. BYRD & MR. HOBBS' (April 1969) CBS 63745 and 'THE BALLAD OF CRYSTAL RIVER' (Jan 1970) CBS 63795 (See ZZ 41)

FLYING BURRITO BROS #1 December 1968 to January 1969. Album: 'THE GILDED PALACE OF SIN' (March 1969) A&M AM 931. Using session drummers they cut a terrific debut album.

HEADS & FLOWERS 1964-1968. Played the Southern California folk circuit & made 2 albums for U.S. Capitol: 'Now is the Time' (June 1967), 'Of Horses, Kids & Forgotten Women' (July 1968)

BYRDS #7 October 1969 to August 1972
Album: 'UNTITLED' (Nov 1970) CBS 64253, 'SOMEBODY'S TALKIN' (Aug 1971) CBS 64459, 'PARDNER' (January 1972) CBS 64674

FLYING BURRITO BROS #2 February 1969 to Sept 1969
Plugged by bad luck and internal unrest, they ploughed forward but made little impact on the national or international scene. They kept at it.

DILLARD & CLARK #1 AUGUST 1968 - JANUARY 1970
Album: 'THE FANTASTIC QUESTION' (Oct 1968) A&M AM 939. Gene came across Bernie a dog, who was playing guitar, and a group fell together. Acoustic with Mike Clarke arrived.

BYRDS #8 September 1972 to January 1973
When Gene went into the studio with the original Byrds to record 'BYRDS' (March 1973) A&M So 5058, enthusiasm waned.

FLYING BURRITO BROS #3 October 1969 to April 1970. Album: 'BURRITO DE LUKE' (May 1970) A&M AM 939. Gram is edged out and the group displays more professional approach.

DILLARD & CLARK #2 FEB 1969 to MAY 1969
Reverted to acoustic. Bernie took over Bernie's part of the 3 part harmony, and decided to rock his Martin.

BYRDS #9 January to February 1973
Well into its death throes, the group churns out its repertoire like a juke box. They decide to call it a day.

FLYING BURRITO BROS #4 April 1970 to April 1971. Album: 'THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS' (June 1971) A&M AM 939 - a great album, but a commercial flop (like the others).

DILLARD & CLARK #3 JUNE 1969 to DEC 1969
Album: 'THROUGH THE MORNING, THROUGH THE NIGHT' (A&M So 5058) (see ZZ 30) (see ZZ 30)

BYRDS #10 Feb 1973
Did two sessions just to honor contractual obligations; an appalling note on which to end the Byrd life.

FLYING BURRITO BROS #5 April 1971 to July 1971. With Sneaky having left over 'democratic' discrepancies, and with Bernie feeling the same, the Burritos days were numbered.

DILLARD & CLARK #4 JAN 1970 to MAR 1970
Changed in personnel, Bernie, Steve, & Clouse.

THE ADVENTURES OF ROGER MCGUINN Starting again 'from the middle', McGuinn formed this short lived group from May to December 1973. Album: 'ROCK & ROLL' (63)

FLYING BURRITO BROS #6 JULY 1971 to OCTOBER 1971
Album: 'THE LAST OF THE RED HOT BURRITOS' (Feb 1972) A&M 64343. 78 all interests and purposes, the end of a magnificent group, who 'survived only as long as they could stand their own frustration'.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #1 JAN 1971 to MARCH 1971. Originally conceived to take advantage of the Expedition's offloading workload. Evolved into a permanent unit.

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

FLYING BURRITO BROS #7 Decided to rebuild at the end of 1974, when they began to record an album. Signed by CBS Records - album out soon. Toured the States, before coming to Europe this April.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #2 November 1971 to July 1973 (with 2 spells as Hot Burrito Revue). Two albums on UA 'TRAFFIC' So 72, 'DAY JOB' May 73.

COLD STEEL September 1973 to May 1974. A great band (which I saw at the Ash Grove the day before it burned down). Made one album: 'COLD STEEL' (March 1974) Arista 87-756-ET

DOCKED HILL BOYS #1 February to May 1974. We played a lot of gigs... playing guitars and gospel... pretty doggone good!

THE NEW KENTUCKY COLONELS March 1973 to July 1975. Reformed with auxiliary member Alan Munde and did exceptional live work. Replaced 'British' tour split when Clarence died.

ROGER MCGUINN January to June 1974. Deciding to turn full circle, he took to the road and played the kind of club and coffee-house gig he was doing ten years earlier... just him and his guitar. Because of the obvious limitations he decided to form another group (but not to be known as the Byrds).

DOCKED HILL BOYS #2 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

THE ADVENTURES OF ROGER MCGUINN Starting again 'from the middle', McGuinn formed this short lived group from May to December 1973. Album: 'ROCK & ROLL' (63)

HOT BURRITO REVUE WITH COUNTRY GAZETTE November 1971 to June 1972 (off and on). Albums: 'LIVE IN AMSTERDAM' (March 1973) Bumble BEXD 301, 'BLUEGRASS SPECIAL' (Dutch Arista 88-501 HT). Also referred to tour Holland in February 1973.

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

DOCKED HILL BOYS #3 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

ROGER MCGUINN January to June 1974. Deciding to turn full circle, he took to the road and played the kind of club and coffee-house gig he was doing ten years earlier... just him and his guitar. Because of the obvious limitations he decided to form another group (but not to be known as the Byrds).

DOCKED HILL BOYS #4 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

DOCKED HILL BOYS #5 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

DOCKED HILL BOYS #6 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

DOCKED HILL BOYS #7 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

DOCKED HILL BOYS #8 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

DOCKED HILL BOYS #9 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

ROGER MCGUINN BAND July 1974 - still going strong. Album: 'PEACE ON YOU' (August 1974) CBS 60171. No English tour culminating at Hyde Park.

DOCKED HILL BOYS #10 May to Sept 1974. Stevie Gurr (a real good picker with the 'Clouse touch') moved to San Francisco, so they re-shuffled. Recorded an album in Comstock - so far unreleased.

COUNTRY GAZETTE #3 July 1973 - still going strong. Gaining momentum on college and concert circuit, very big in Europe. One album so far: 'Live' February 1975, 'Traffic' Atlantic TA 298

JOHN

CIPOLLINA

IN THE 70's



"Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute."

Friday 4th April 1975

This morning at eleven a.m., I played 'Night-ingle' and then observed two minutes' silence for Brinsley Schwarz. It was five years ago, to the day, that I saw them standing at the crossroads of their career, playing the Fillmore East in New York. If this article were about them, I would now be going on to explain how they went on to become the best band of their type in the world—but we'll go into that when the time is right... like when a Nick Lowe song is topping the charts—which will certainly be this year, or I'll eat my typewriter.

Brinsley having closed their set and sham-bled off the stage, out of the wings came Quicksilver Messenger Service—and though they were already just past their peak, I was transfixed. In spring 1970, for a daydreaming Bucks County yokel, it was like standing on the moon. And if I shut my eyes now, I can still see John Cipollina standing out there on the right, all tall skinny hunched and craggy, smacking fat chords out of his Gibson, spitting the chorus line "poor boy" into the mike, and then whirling away on a solo which had me feeling as though I were being pelted to death with five pound notes. It's all a question of time, place and condition, I suppose... you can read about it in rare and ancient copies of ZigZag 12 if you're interested.

Part One: The Story So Far

A sudden resurgence of interest in John Cipollina, ignited by Deke Leonard and his Man gang and fuelled by sporadic articles and snippets from the *Melody Maker's* San Fran man Tod Tolces, seems likely to result in the fellow actually setting foot on an English stage... the realisation of a life-long ambition for him, and the culmination of many years of wishing and hoping by *ZigZag* readers. As I scratch this, three Man/Cipollina shows have been scheduled at the Roundhouse on May 24-25-26. Are you gonna be there? I've got my invite!

A propitious time, therefore, to scrape the dust off my yellowing interview notes and update the Cipollina saga which began in *ZigZag* 38 (Cowboys and Indians in Marin

ZIGZAG BACK ISSUES

- 1-26 Sold out completely.
- 27 Jimmy Page, Bridget St John, Procul/Traffic Tree, Ducks Deluxe, Kinks, Steve Stills, Byrds Part 1.
- 28 Led Zeppelin, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Kim Fowley, Stealers Wheel, Kevin Ayers Tree, Byrds Part 2.
- 29 Genesis, Everly Bros, Eagles/Burritos Family Tree, Silverhead, Johnny Speight, Beefheart, Byrds Part 3.
- 30 Sold out completely.
- 31 Sold out completely.
- 32 Pink Floyd, Steve Ellis, The Story of Spirit, Clifford T Ward, John Cale, Roy Buchanan, Byrds Part 6.
- 33 McKendree Spring, Robert Plant, Boz Scaggs, Clarence White, Steve Miller/Sir Douglas Quintet Tree
- 34 Sold out completely.
- 35 Sold out completely.
- 36 Van Morrison, Stan Tracey, Kevin Coyne, Grateful Dead Part 2, Byron Berline
- 37 Charlie Watts, Mighty Baby, Nils Lofgren, Grateful Dead Part 3, Country Joe McDonald
- 38 Quicksilver Messenger Service, Richard Greene Tree, Ben Sidran, Loggins & Messina, John Stewart
- 39 Michael Nesmith interview, Steve Miller, ZigZag Poll, Ralph McTell, Evan Parker
- 40 Dave Mason, Michael Nesmith: post-Monkees, Peter Hammill, Macon, Georgia
- 41 Quicksilver, John Martyn, David Blue, Free, Moby Grape, Michael Fennelly, Byrds Story Part 7 (!?!?)
- 42 Nick Drake, Albert Hammond, Moby Grape, Dr Hook, Free, Lovin' Spoonful, John Weider, John Stewart
- 43 Tim Hardin, Jackie Lomax, Bees Make Honey, Man Tree, Love, Sopwith Camel, Townshend, Steely Dan
- 44 Tim Buckley, 10cc, Marc Benno, Townshend, Clapton Tree, Beefheart, Tangerine Dream, Blue Oyster Cult
- 45 Russ Ballard, Bruce Springsteen, New Riders Chart, Dead Sound System, Poco Chart, Bert Jansch
- 46 Phil Lesh, Rick Nelson, Ron Wood, Poco, Kevin Ayers, Leonard Cohen, American Newsletter
- 47 Grace Slick, Rick Nelson, Redwing, Keith Richard, Chilli Willi, Roy Harper
- 48 Jesse Winchester, Butts Band, John Sebastian, Arthur Lee, Neil Young, Curt Boetcher, Tim Buckley
- 49 Gene Clark, Home, Biff Rose, Ray Davies, Jess Roden, Nick Drake, Curt Boetcher
- 50 Linda Ronstadt, Lindisfarne, Nico, Neil Young, Little Feat, Sneaky Pete Kleinow, Arthur Lee
- 51 Dr Feelgood, Wishbone Ash Part 1, Norman Greenbaum, Ian Hunter Family Tree, Gentle Giant, Henry Cow

ROLL UP! ROLL UP! Invest in some ZigZag back issues before we really do go out of stock. Each issue is only 25p inc. p&p + manhandling. Send your name, address, requirements & money to: **ZigZag back issues, 37 Soho Square, London W1.**

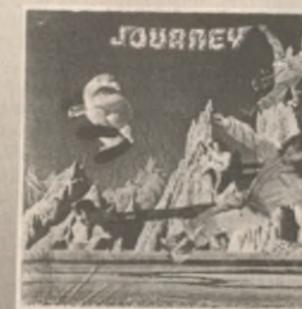
Please allow 3 weeks for delivery... plus a few days (months), to enable us to answer millions of irate letters...

ALL ABOARD FOR THE INCREDIBLE



'Just as the present-day Santana are a development of the earlier band, so are JOURNEY. They're both just as valid—and both just as exciting!'
Melody Maker

'...an excellent debut album...'
Melody Maker



Experience JOURNEY on CBS 80724



the music people

County) and carried on in *ZigZag* 41 (Did they fall or were they pushed?) only to remain suspended in mid-air when I got heaved out of the magazine by O.D. McGuire's thugs. Petty differences having now been resolved, we can continue unimpeded.

As you may recall, we broke off at the point when Cipollina had flown the crumbling Quicksilver coop in October 1970, leaving Dino ("the revolution must be mighty close at hand") Valente to pioneer fresh areas of painful boredom.

Quicksilver, instead of exploding in glory, slowly and eventually fizzled and popped their way down the golden road to obscurity.

I was attacked by a staggering barrage of vitriolic mail and ghastly personal abuse the last time I criticised Quicksilver but I really do feel that they blew it completely and monstrously. For their time, the early albums were magnificent; milestones in rock history, but the last three were for the most part (in my opinion) bloody horrid. The lyric of 'What About Me' could reach into your heart if you wanted to let it (though a feeling of inconsistency pervading Valente's deeds, words and image prevents me from allowing it to) but where guitars should be screaming, you can only hear the Salvation Army. The lyric of 'Long Haired Lady' on the other hand, is a tombola collage of all the worst underground/psychedelic clichés (oh, 'Lucy In The Sky', what horrific offspring you spawned!), with Dino actually having the barefaced nerve to admit that he experiences 'Unicorns prancing in my mind'.

Despite Dino's assertion that 'it would represent the group's finest work', the final effort, 'Comin' Thru', turned out to be no more than a rearrangement of the deck chairs on the Titanic. The new organist, Chuck Steaks, turns out to be San Francisco's answer to Reginald Dixon, and even the sleeve, which is possibly an artist's impression of what the inside of Mr Valente's head looks like, is dreadful. Quicksilver were ready to sink—and now, three years later, it seems that they have. (I'd be interested to know what's happened to them if anybody knows.)

Due possibly to his never having been interviewed or even quoted more than a couple of times, and his arrogant stage stance in Quicksilver, a lot of people seem to be under the impression that Cipollina is an unapproachable, snarling monstrosity who wouldn't condescend to rub two words together for a journalist... but it seems this misconception is based on the fact that hardly anybody has ever expressed any desire to interview him! I was apparently the first bloke to have the impetus and enthusiasm to track him down since he left Quicksilver. When the press officer from Columbia (who contributed to my air fare in return for my interviewing any ten of their acts) told him that his name was top on my priority list, he was loath to believe it... he had no idea what a reputation and cult following he has in Britain.

The interview came together at the second attempt; after a misunderstood message which left the unfortunate fellow drinking endless coffees while he waited for

me to arrive (I never did), I made about twenty phone calls to various managers, friends and chicks in a desperate attempt to relocate him before I had to fly home. A message eventually reached him at Lake Tahoe, a resort some 150 miles north-east of San Francisco—and in a burst of unprecedented courtesy, he motored back to meet me at Frank Werber's Trident restaurant in Sausalito.

No sooner had we sat down than the swirls of the Copperhead album came over the PA... I guess they appreciate Mr Cipollina, who turned out to be one of the most forthcoming, interesting and cordial people I've ever met.

He'd been up to Lake Tahoe to test out a car he'd just bought—"a 1965 Volvo with the original paint job... not a scratch on it"—and had, inevitably, been waylaid by some nubile young maiden.

After discussing the late sixties at great length (see previously mentioned issues) we got on to his post-Quicksilver activities.

Part Two: The Lost Jim Murray Album

"My first project upon leaving Quicksilver Messenger Service was to produce an album by Jim Murray, who was originally in Quicksilver with me—we were the first two members. The fact that the album never appeared could be attributed to 'record company hang-ups'; United Artists were going to do it, but for some reason decided not to at the last minute... I can't work record companies out—the closer I've been involved with them, the more confused I've become about their mysterious ways.

"We cut at least a whole album, in my living room, as a matter of fact, with a 3M eight-track and a load of other equipment that we brought in... it was kind of a fun thing—we didn't leave the house for over three weeks. We kept the tapes running about 20 hours a day, with two engineers taking 8-hour shifts at the board, but at the end of about a month I'd had enough—I had to get them all out of my house. It was fun, alright, and we got (as you can imagine) a lot of material recorded—with contributions from everyone who happened to pass by the house... like Paul Butterfield played some harmonica (sitting on three cases of beer), Mike Bloomfield was on piano (he'd cut his finger and it was all bandaged up), Nick Gravenites was playing a 12-string acoustic (sitting in a rocking chair), my little brother Mario was playing bass, and I was playing steel and slide guitar. Gravenites' wife and some of the girls that were at the house did back-up vocals, and we got really loose... it was party-time; a lot of indulging, a lot of laughs... staying up forever, with no trouble at all.

"You see, I have this house in Corte Madera, about 6 miles up the road from Mill Valley, and that is just a 24 hour house where I can go and make all the noise I want. I found that if I took all the instruments and recording equipment out of my house in

Mill Valley, and moved them out to my other place, which was looked after by a roadie, then all the musicians would go there to play and I could also have a bit of sanity and peace if I ever wanted it."

Part Three: Copperhead Falls Together

"There was this crazy kid who had come out from Boston with Earl Weinstein (of Copperhead's management) and he was a real red hot—he kept calling me up all the time, and I eventually got to meet him at this annual guitar show that I get involved in every year in Mill Valley... actually it was his old lady that I noticed to begin with—I was talking to her and she kept saying 'You've got to meet my old man—he's a drummer' and I was saying, 'Sure baby—he's a drummer'—and then he walked up and said 'Hi, my name's David—I'm a drummer, and I mean a good drummer'. 'Well,' I thought, 'this guy's really off the wall—I might as well chance it—see where he's



at.' He was saying some real strange things, like 'I've got a garage with egg cartons on the walls' and when the time came that I needed a drummer, I called him up.

"So, round he came, and I stuck him in a corner in my living room; there's a little alcove which is a perfect drum booth, and this floor heater with a rug over it makes a perfect conga stand. So anyway, we started playing and David (his name was David Weber) became a regular visitor to the house... whenever musicians dropped by for a jam or to party, David would come over to drum—and so later, he became a logical choice for Copperhead.

"Well, there I was, hanging out in Mill Valley, playing with Murray and recording albums that were never to come out, jamming a lot with various people, and both the drummer and I were getting tired of just jamming. Now, Pete Sears had just left Stoneground and was about to go back to England to do another Rod Stewart album... Pete and his lady, Lucy, had been living in this sort of communal existence with all the Stoneground family, but couldn't seem to get on with all the American insanities and he quit in December 1970 (after which Mario played bass with Stoneground for a few weeks). Pete came over to see me and flipped out at my den, because I've got a fairly large gun collection... he really flipped out on them all.

"Where was I? Oh yes; around this time (winter 70/71), I had thoughts of producing (this other guy called Mark Unobsky, who's a super guitar player and has shown me all sorts of picking styles—writes great songs and sings and plays... he was later in the original Copperhead, too.

"There was a jam at my parents' house (they have a very large living room)—a sort of rehearsal for a live radio show that a bunch of people were going to do. Mario was playing bass, Jerry Garcia pedal steel, Pete Sears was on piano, Micky Waller on drums and then Mark and I joined in. Well, Mark had never played with other people before but I plugged him in and away he went; whenever he gets excited he plays more precisely and faster and then he gets crazy—and he just began to blow everyone away... and the only person who was able to keep up with the mad pace with him was Pete—they both ended up by laughing themselves to a standstill.

"To stay with Mark Unobsky for a moment; he subsequently became Copperhead's guru, spiritual adviser and weapons expert... taught everybody in Copperhead to throw knives—we're all pretty good knife-throwers now, and he's also improved our shooting—we're pretty good shots, too. If there's an antique piece, or gun, that I'm interested in buying, he's the one that can usually research it and he knows all sorts of stuff about how the new Beretta compares with an old Styer. Him and another guy called Jim Jensen were really the strong influences outside the group—Jim was a crazy wizard/jeweller/sculptor and has helped us with lyrics too... he did 'Kam'i Kazee'.

"Anyway, Pete came round to see me (at Mark's insistence), and we played a lot more stuff together—and he flipped out over my collection of Winchesters and moved in—

said 'OK if I stay here?' and I said 'Sure'. (Nicky Hopkins did the same—fell in love with the same room and ended up staying 14 months.) Pete was there about six months, I guess, and we did a lot of partying, jamming, running around... we had a kind of gang revolving around me, Pete and David the drummer. Pete left and came back—went to play with John Baldry, and to do another Rod Stewart album, then he came back and joined Copperhead.

"David Weber knew this guitarist called Jim McPherson, who he said was really super... he gave me such a hype on him that I called him up. So he came over, we checked the situation out and found we liked each other—he got along with my music, I got along with his morbid sense of humour... anyway, it turned out that he could also play piano, but was really a bass-player. Well, my brother Mario, who was only 16 and was playing bass for us, found it kind of strange playing with all these crazy people at night and going to school during the day, so he decided to divert all his energies into his studying and Jim moved to bass, doubling on piano. Then we brought in Gary Phillippet.

"I'd known Gary for about four years prior to our playing in Copperhead—he and I were managed by the same people when I was in Quicksilver and he was in Freedom Highway—and we did a lot of gigs together. Then I didn't see him for years until one day he hitchhiked over in the rain to give me an old Remington rolling block, which I thought was really far out. Anyway, my then current manager was advising me to check out Gary as a potential group member, and all of a sudden we all came together—five guys, plus Mark... Copperhead was ready!"

Part Four: Copperhead Falls Apart

"We started playing the weirdest gigs; we played a private party in Mexico for Alexandro Jodorowsky, the guy who did *Ei Topo*, and then we did the Crater Festival in Hawaii, and altogether we played a lot of very strange places... we started to get into the club scene and the bizarre private party scene. Copperhead was always a bizarre band and a band of change... it touched on a lot of musicians, and was more of a concept than anything else... it was never a solid group in that sense, even though everyone who's ever been in it remains a lifetime member—I still keep in touch with them all.

"For instance, Pete Sears left, and Jim Hitchinson, a friend of Gary's came in to replace him—but I still see Pete a lot. He and I are thinking of starting a club for fliers; he's got his pilot's licence and I'm trying to get mine.

"We negotiated with Paramount and various other companies, but we ended up signing with Just Sunshine. Copperhead was always a rather unstable unit, however, and

people had trouble understanding us... and somehow there was a clash between our manager, who had the band's interests as his primary concern, and the record company, who somehow weren't clicking or at least, didn't seem to appreciate what we were about.

"So, we reopened negotiations with Clive Davis of Columbia and we signed with them—and, for a while, everything was going great. You see, in the first place, we wanted to play, do gigs—but the whole scene had changed... you couldn't get gigs until you had an album out—and you couldn't get an album out until you had gigs!"

Their deal with Columbia was the culmination of months of negotiation by Copperhead's manager, Ron Polte. His side of the story is detailed in *Fat Angel* No. 10 (copies still available, folks), but briefly he was well aware of their potential, and he wheeled and dealt accordingly. After a series of 'audition' gigs at a Berkeley club called the Long Branch, Polte had whittled down the dozen or so record company offers to the point where only Columbia, Just Sunshine, A&M, RCA and Grunt remained in the running.

Pulling out of a Just Sunshine contract at the last minute, Polte went with Columbia—dealing directly with Clive Davis... a mistake, as it turned out, through no fault of his own.

Their first (and last) album, *Copperhead* (KC 32250), a highly satisfactory waxing which topped the import charts for several weeks (but was never released here), practically slipped out unnoticed in May 1973. Somewhere along the line, the anticipated star-shot ballyhoo had fallen through... but strangely, nobody seemed to care too much.

"We cut the album, which was a party—but there again, it wasn't enough of a party... the trouble was that we were just



JOHN CIPOLLINA

looking for an excuse to go out and play 'live'—that's what we really wanted to do. But the only place we had to play in was the studio, so we recorded 15 tunes and put eight of them on the record . . . but there was a perspective missing, and the pause when we switched labels kind of threw us.

"We felt we were really smart signing with Columbia, because we'd refused to deal with anybody but the president—we were really being cool, getting it together with Clive Davis, Mr Rock'n'Roll . . . and then all of a sudden Clive got his walking orders. Then Jim McPherson, the piano player, disappeared, and everybody was saying 'hey, why aren't you playing?' and then we decided 'to hell with gigs—let's write some more music'. So we wrote some more music.

"All Columbia knew was that we were Clive's boys—and they weren't sure what to do. You see, Clive got us direct from Mike Laing, who had done Woodstock and then formed Just Sunshine, and the people at Columbia couldn't believe the figures involved . . . 'Why did Clive spend so much on these guys? Who are they?' And we were nowhere to be seen! We were out playing some exotic party somewhere . . . and we sort of got lost . . . maybe they didn't think it was a good album, I don't know. They sold every copy that they printed, nevertheless . . . sold them all in four days or something like that—and as far as I know, they don't intend to press and release any more . . . we haven't heard any sales figures since the first week, when they told us 17,000. But you can't buy it anywhere in the San Francisco area—so, like I say, I can't understand what makes record companies tick.

"There are seven tracks still in the can, but I don't think Columbia would go for releasing them on any new album—they think of them as rejects from the first sessions."

Seemingly untroubled by dismal album sales, Copperhead partied on—playing gigs at Winterland in San Francisco, a New Year's Eve festival in Hawaii at the end of 1972, and numerous private functions—lugging massive amounts of gear around with them.

Cippollina: "I use a lot of equipment myself—always have. I'm having my system rebuilt at the moment, and it's prototyping itself into another monster. The one I use now is pretty much commercial amps, but the new one is going to be built from scratch, using Mackintosh power amps. With Copperhead I've been using 2 Standells, which are about 3ft 6ins high, 4 x 15in speakers, 2 x 150w amps, plus 3 cabinets with single 15's in them with 100 watts apiece, for the bass side of my guitar. For the top side, I use a Fender twin and a Fender dual showman wired together—so the pre-amps are wired in parallel and the power amps are on a footswitch—and it runs 8 horns (trombone bells which have been heated so they won't shatter). I run that through an echoplex, a modulux, a Leslie, an Ampeg scrambler, a fuzztone, a Countryman phaser, a Maestro fuzz tone—and I can control the whole lot with my foot. It's really quite simple once you get used to it; they've all got coloured

lights, so I can tell by the light pattern exactly what's happening.

"The guitar I'm using now is a 1959 Les Paul SG, which has been extensively modified; I've put about 3000 dollars into it, I guess. It's been rebuilt and refinished. The fingerboard is the original but is heavily inlaid with mother of pearl, the peg-head is inlaid with ebony and mother of pearl, the back has been shaved and overlaid with rosewood. It has new frets and Shaller pegs with Grover deluxe buttons.

"Dan Armstrong rewired it for me, and a guy called Doc Kauffman, who designed the prototype of the Telecaster, checked the pick-ups, which are original. It's really been through the mill.

"I'm having another one done—just having it cosmetically fixed; it'll be all black and silver.

"That's one of my hobbies, my real loves; I used to be an artist and I love designing. I'm not that good a craftsman, but there are some good ones around and they can build and work to my designs.

Copperhead spent time looning around at Micky Hart's Rolling Thunder Studios—"The only recording studio in the world where the engineers strap on 6 guns before they sit down at the console"—but slowly and surely, the impetus of the group wound down and the band developed into what Cippollina euphemistically terms "a loose situation", though he assured me that it could spring into action at a moment's notice.

"We're even thinking of recording again . . . but this time, we don't go into the studio until we feel right. We've got a lot of songs, but we're still looking for a piano player and a better relationship with Columbia."

Ron Polte's confidence must have received a considerable jolt when he saw Copperhead's chances wither and fade. His pre-deal talk of "guaranteed promotional budgets" and "twenty per-cent artist royalties" doesn't appear to have drawn particularly attractive dividends . . . but then, you never know, do you? Cippollina and Earl Weinstein weren't too anxious to go into details, but when I asked if the rumours of a one million dollar deal were true, they shook their heads . . . "in fact, it was one and a half million dollars".

I assume that figure was spread over five years—but even so, that is equal to 300,000 dollars a year, so who's complaining? Columbia Records maybe?

"Clive always had faith in us. If Clive was still there, we'd have gone all the way; we'd have toured and sold records, I'm sure. But the whole scheme of things has changed since he left and we've become a really elusive band; we can't figure Columbia out, and they sure as hell can't fathom us out. We became branded as "one of Clive's groups"—or else they assumed we were dope write-offs . . . I don't know. I do know that they never ever ran an ad on the album.

"Copperhead has always had this philosophy which permeates all the members, past and present . . . we are a good-time band; we have a good time and cause a good time . . . pleasant troublemakers—so the Columbia situation in no way hangs us up.

"The last time I spoke to the people

there, I told them that one of my biggest disappointments was not being taken out to lunch anymore! I'm not going back into the studio till I get at least two big dinners and a lunch! And some reassurance . . . I mean, it is my business."

So far, it doesn't look as though CBS have sent a representative scuttling out to wine and dine Cippollina, who for this last year or so has been working off his excess energies playing with a Marin County band called Terry and the Pirates.

"The easiest way for me to play is live and loud . . . to really feel the chord ringing through my body—I crave for that, so I go out and play . . . but I'm also very anxious to get to England. I'm half English, yet I've never been there. All my friends have—like the Dead, who seem to delight in torturing me, telling me how good it is."

Dreams come true; all being well, he'll step out onto the Roundhouse stage in late May. Meanwhile, he continues to jam with Terry and the Pirates.

"I recorded an album with them—another abortive project; Warners paid the bill and then shelved it, but KSAN have a copy of the finished mixes and they sometimes play tracks from it."

Strangely, his best efforts remain in the can. "I played on *Shake Off The Demon* by Brewer & Shipley, on Charles Lloyd's *Heavy Water*, Micky Hart's *Rolling Thunder* and a few others, but I did a lot of work on a Fred Niel album for Just Sunshine (which was never released) and a bunch of stuff with Greg Rolie on organ, Mark Ryan on bass, me on slide, Neil Schon, Carlos Santana and Eric Clapton on guitars . . . and we were all going at once! That was done in Wally Heider's in 1971 . . . so it doesn't look as though that'll ever come out! Good fun, though."

So, while Copperhead, "a really dramatic, heavy rock'n'roll band", sit in limbo, John Cippollina has a good time. Let's see what he can pull out of his sleeve at the Roundhouse.

□ PETE FRAME



LIMITED EDITION

AVAILABLE ONLY APRIL, MAY, JUNE

ON CHARISMA RECORDS

GENESIS COLLECTION VOLUME ONE

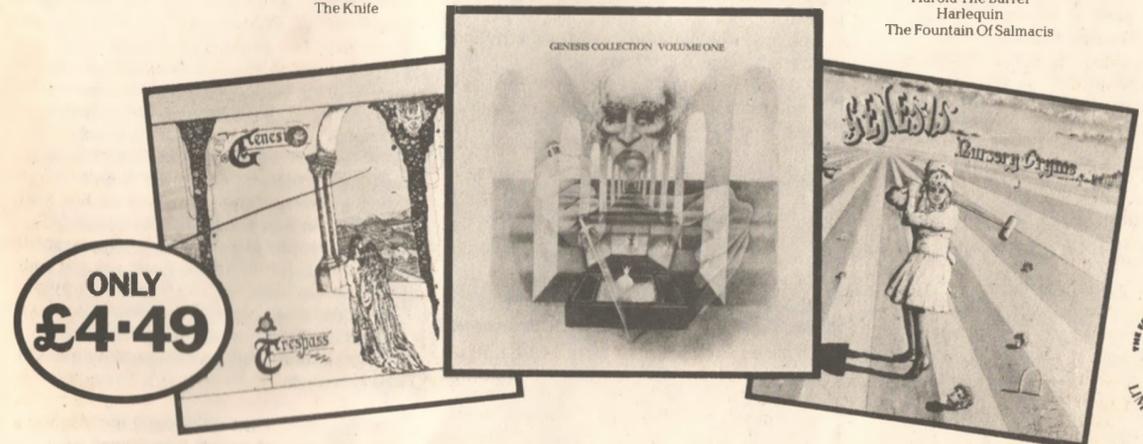
CONTAINING TRESPASS AND NURSERY CRYME

SIDE ONE
Looking For Someone
White Mountain
Visions Of Angels

SIDE TWO
Stagnation
Dusk
The Knife

SIDE ONE
The Musical Box
For Absent Friends
The Return Of The Giant Hogweed

SIDE TWO
Seven Stones
Harold The Barrel
Harlequin
The Fountain Of Salmacis



ONLY
£4.49



GENESIS COLLECTION VOLUME TWO

CONTAINING FOXTROT AND SELLING ENGLAND BY THE POUND

SIDE ONE
Watcher Of The Skies
Time Table
Get 'Em Out By Friday
Can - Utility And The Coastliners

SIDE TWO
Horizons
Supper's Ready

SIDE ONE
Dancing With The Moonlight Knight
I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)
Firth Of Fifth
More Fool Me (Vocals Phil)

SIDE TWO
The Battle Of Epping Forest
After The Ordeal
The Cinema Show
Aisle Of Plenty



ONLY
£4.49

EXCLUSIVE COLOUR POSTER
OF GENESIS
IN EVERY ALBUM PACK

GET YOUR COLLECTION NOW!

MARKETED BY B&C RECORDS LTD., 37 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON W1

Ten Years of the STRAWBS

From Donegan to Dali in Five Easy Stages

PART ONE ~1965~1970

THROUGH A ten year period that has seen them frequently underrated, and a time when they probably least deserved it the subject of mass adulation, the Strawbs have forever remained innovators in the face of change.

In answer to the inevitable question why the Strawbs had remained together as long as they had, Dave Cousins once voiced that it was because he and Tony Hooper were still together. Well that's no longer true and yet despite wholesale team change the Strawbs—later—still show no signs of calling it a day. In fact right now they are arguably at their most stable with a line-up that most punters wouldn't have fancied for five minutes together, particularly faced with the task of building up a new momentum after the departure of Richard Hudson and John Ford.

And so with twelve LPs, a hastily arranged (and much postponed) interview safely in the notebook, memories of concerts as far afield as London's South Bank and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and recollections of nine or ten earlier interviews with Dave Cousins, I sit down to write a fairly faithful chronicle of events which has seen a complete transmutation from the Strawberry Hill Boys, bluegrass group, to the Strawbs, progressive rock band and chartbound dilettantes.

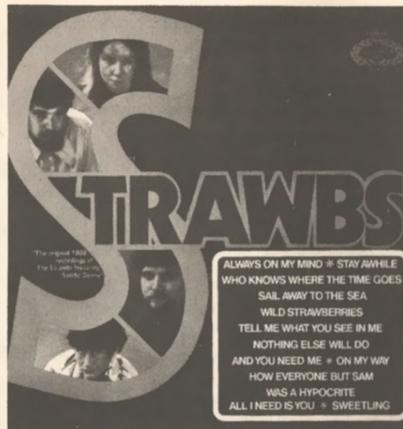
IT'S HARD to pinpoint when the Strawbs actually began because nobody ever really said 'Let's form a group,'" mentioned Dave Cousins, although his recollections of the early sixties seemed surprisingly vivid as we set out to sketch the early picture.

"As far as music was concerned Lonnie Donegan's 'Rock Island Line' was a major revelation after Frankie Laine. I remember reading in the *NME* or something that he was supposed to sound like Leadbelly so I went out and bought 'Backwater Blues'. From there I started to get interested in people like Muddy Waters, and in fact I really hated rock 'n' roll—the more disenchanted I became with Lonnie Donegan the more I got into the blues.

"I learnt to play Leadbelly stuff and then I became interested in sifting through the stuff at Cecil Sharp House. I started to listen to 78's by Jack Elliott and I used to see him play down at the Troubadour. By the late fifties I was playing guitar flat pick style like Jack Elliott."

But Dave Cousins had scarcely developed his musical style with any great precociousness. He was fifteen before he first started playing guitar, and after a sound initiation he went to Leicester University where any form of musical contact was at a premium—in fact, says Dave, it was virtually non-existent.

Cousin's early testing ground had been the



folk clubs of South London. He'd shared an interest in music with schoolfriend Tony Hooper from the age of thirteen and they'd started listening to records together, venturing down to Eel Pie Island and the London Apprentice at Isleworth. When they started to pick guitar together, Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly songs would be the order of the day.

"I remember Ron Kane and Don and Audrey Leatherbarrow who eventually got together as the Messengers and were much admired/envid because they got a recording contract. Then there was Hazel who went to Brazil and Suzie Shahn, who was a banjo player, and Arthur Phillips, Tony and myself.

"Through Suzie I became very interested in playing banjo, and after I'd got a banjo I listened to a lot of Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger records, and became obsessed with the idea of playing banjo like Peggy Seeger. I developed this further at university where I heard Earl Scruggs' style from an American banjo player and the whole MacColl doctrine which had influenced me so much suddenly went out of my life. So after university I got together with Tony Hooper and Arthur Phillips, who was a mandolin player, and we became Britain's first bluegrass band. It must have been terrible although I've still got some tapes."

SO BY the middle sixties the Strawberry Hill Boys were effectively launched, and for Cousins' growing expertise on banjo there was a sympathetic foil in Arthur Phillips who, Cousins recalls, was "a great mandolin player who could also frail banjo and pick a guitar better than most". He had also been taught by Ralph Rinzler and Peggy Seeger and had collected a song from a Scottish tinker which appeared, with appropriate credit, in Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger's definitive British folk song collection at that time.

"Eventually we rehearsed up a few songs

and decided to try our luck at a folk club run by Russell Quaye and Hilda Sims in the back room of their house in Clapham (Quaye was better known as the leader of the New Lost City Ramblers) and we plucked up the courage to play two songs, Tony singing and playing guitar, Arthur on mandolin and me on five-string banjo. We went down pretty well and to our surprise somebody came up and asked us to play a club in Brighton. He asked us what we called ourselves, there was a moment's silence because we hadn't thought about a name, but since we had been rehearsing in Strawberry Hill and our heroes had been groups like the Foggy Mountain Boys, the Stony Mountain Boys and the Rocky Mountain Boys etc, the Strawberry Hill Boys seemed appropriate—so there we were. We played that gig in Brighton for £2, went down extremely well and things have gone well ever since."

DAVE COUSINS remained obsessed with bluegrass and old timey music—Reno and Smiley, Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Monroe, Bill Clifton... "It was Bill who took me off on a tour of American air force bases and he introduced me to Pete Roberts, who played with the Country Gentlemen at one time. Pete Sayers and Pete Stanley were also around, but as far as I remember I never sang much in public before 1964-65 because I was too shy.

"Anyway, soon after that I started to write my own songs and gradually that began to take over—I remember 'Ever More' was the first song I ever wrote.

"So we started to play a couple of gigs a month—mostly in Brighton, in fact we never really got further north than Hull and we only ever played Scotland twice.

"We did one gig on Blackpool Pier with Gerry and the Pacemakers and the promoter didn't like the name the Strawberry Hill Boys so we were billed as David and Anthony."

By this time Arthur Phillips had left the band—more to the point he fell out with Dave and Tony, largely because it was his land rover that was conducting the band to and from gigs and he was getting a raw deal on the petrol so he just packed up and went. In his place came the unlikely Talking John Berry, whose speciality was the talking blues of Woody Guthrie, and he remained a Strawberry Hill Boy for some six months.

"The main problem with John was that he was primarily interested in the Lime-lighters so for a while we were doing all this harmony stuff, wrapping ourselves round one microphone and harmonising to our hearts' content. I remember John even refused to go onstage with us once until we'd eaten a packet of peppermints because we'd just had a meal heavily spiced with garlic."

Loudon Wainwright 'Unrequited'

Loudon Wainwright is acclaimed to be the Charlie Chaplin of rock. A very apt description if you consider the hilarious titles of some Wainwright compositions; 'Dead Skunk in the middle of the road' for instance or 'Rufus was a tit man' from his new album 'Loudon Wainwright III. Unrequited'.

Loudon's humour is infectious. Catch it today on his new album 'Loudon Wainwright III. Unrequited'.

"Wainwright is the most original talent to have turned up in the 70's"

—LORRAINE ALTERMAN, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"A truly unique performer."

"Wainwright has unquestionably been one of the best songwriters to emerge in the last two years. His biting, austere lyrics are often so precise they actually cause the listener to gasp."

"Loudon is willing to admit everything. He is a comic genius who has it in him to become the Chaplin of rock."

—STEPHEN HOLDEN, ROLLING STONE

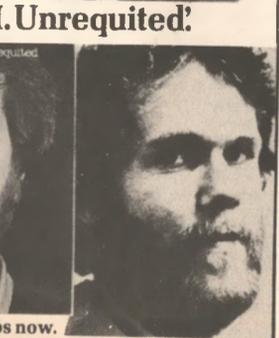
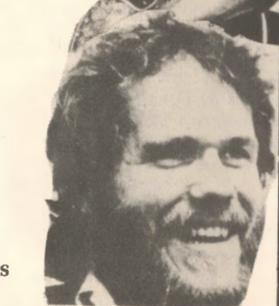
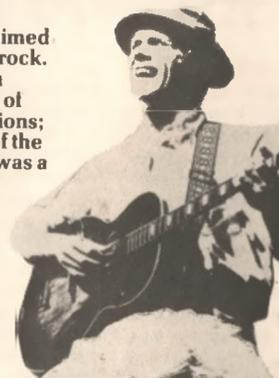
Look out for Loudon Wainwright's Forthcoming National Tour

'Loudon Wainwright III. Unrequited'



the music people

A new album on CBS 80696 In your shops now.



"It's the best rock album this year.."

—Jon Landau
Rolling Stone

"Nils Lofgren, in his first solo attempt, has come up with a smashing album that restores him to the forefront of rock & roll, '70s style."

—Ken Barnes
Phonograph Record

"One of the year's finest albums..."

—Billboard

"With the exception of 'Blood on the Tracks,' this is the only recent album I've heard that sounds like it's the product of a single person's imagination. I'm convinced... it's the best rock album this year... As far as I'm concerned this is one boy whose time has come."

—Jon Landau
Rolling Stone

AMLS 64509



"NILS LOFGREN"

His solo debut.
ON A&M RECORDS

STRAWBS

Needless to say the relationship soon ended and the Strawberry Hill Boys were searching for a bass player. But in the meantime Cousins and Hooper had found a fair bit of success as promoters/residents at the legendary White Bear in Hounslow—a club that Dave insists was always well ahead of its time and specialised in being one of the first Arts Labs to present people like David Bowie, mime artists Tony Crerar and poet Pete Brown. "It really used to pack them in," he says.

THEN ALONG came Ron Chesterman, and eight years ago the Strawbs sampled their first taste of any real success. "Tony knew Ron from the Enterprise Polk Club in Hampstead and I remember he was an extremely awkward looking character but he played alright and he could only go on stage with eight pints of beer inside him which suited us fine; also he had a van so he was well in . . ."

"About the same time we started to include more of our own songs alongside the hillbilly tunes but we couldn't get anybody to record us—I remember taking tapes to Decca, Pye and Philips but nobody wanted to know at that time.

"Well anyway we carried on doing our own tunes and the most notorious was one called 'The Man Who Called Himself Jesus' which was very popular at the poetry and folk sessions run by Sonja Kristina at the Troubadour in Earl's Court. The song was written after a Danish friend told me about a man who had walked into this record shop and declared himself the Messiah. The song was considered quite shocking at that time and when it was eventually released as a single the BBC were extremely cautious which made me indignant because the equally controversial 'Jesus Christ Superstar' was being played heavily.

"It was then that we realised that songs like 'The Man Who Called Himself Jesus' and 'Tell Me What You See In Me' didn't really fit with the Strawberry Hill Boys, and as people were already referring to us simply as the Strawbs, the Strawbs we became."

Enter Sandy Denny. "It was downstairs at the Troubadour that I first heard Sandy Denny. She looked startlingly attractive in a white dress and hat, and she sang like an angel. I thought she was the best thing I'd ever seen and immediately after she'd finished her couple of songs I asked her if she fancied joining a group and I was quite surprised when she said yes, although we did have a fair reputation on the folk scene by then.

"We cut some demo tapes with Sandy after rehearsing with her for a couple of weeks. I remember it was at Cecil Sharp House and Trevor Lucas (who eventually married Sandy), put down some rhythm on the back of a guitar case. At that time Tom Browne, who is now a BBC DJ, was doing folk programmes on Danish radio, and he took the tapes over to Copenhagen in order to fix us up with a couple of weeks' work at Tivoli. He also played the tapes to Karl Nudsen at Sonet Records, who said he'd like to record us, and since no one in England wanted to we agreed.

"Karl thought we wrote songs as good as the Beatles and I think 'Nothing Else Will Do'

was one of the most popular songs at the time. Anyway I knew Alex Campbell had gone over to Denmark and done an album for £100 and I thought we could."

(A quick digression: 'Nothing Else Will Do Babe' is the only time Dave Cousins wrote 'babe' into a chorus. He became acutely aware of the indiscretion immediately he'd written it but that song remains one of the earliest songs identified with the new-look Strawbs.)

FOR TWO WEEKS the Strawbs played their season in Tivoli, recording by day and appearing at the club at night. The 'studio' was the stage of a cinema and the equipment was two-track stereo although like good folkies, the Strawbs recorded the entire set 'live'. "There was no masking for sound, it was just straight down onto tape and I realised at that time we really needed a drummer—on that album we used a Danish drummer (Ken Gudmand)."

Yet this was far from being the start of an auspicious recording career. Dave Cousins' efforts to place the tapes were frustrated and it took a whole sequence of events before the Strawbs—minus Sandy—wound up with A&M Records.

"I was supposed to come back and play the album to Polydor but they wanted us to re-record it and Sandy said 'oh no'. Then Tito Burns wanted to take us on and in the confusion Sandy got tired of waiting and left. Sonja Kristina then did a couple of gigs with us but it didn't work out so we were back to being a trio again and still with no prospects of getting the record out.

"Anyway, somewhere along the line Polydor said 'yes' but they wanted a single so we went in with Gus Dudgeon, a recording engineer at Decca who lived in the flat downstairs from Tony Hooper, and he'd just produced his first album (the first Ralph McTell album with arrangements by Tony Visconti). So we went in and recorded 'Or Am I Dreaming' and 'Oh How She Changed' and Karl said it was the best production he'd ever heard."

By chance Karl sent the finished tapes to Dave Hubert at A&M Records in Los Angeles and by a remarkable quirk of fate the Strawbs not only became the first UK act to be signed to the mighty A&M label but back in the UK A&M product was being pushed out by Pye, one of the companies who had turned down the band. "When we walked into Pye everyone assumed we were American," recalled Cousins wryly.

THUS PLANS to renovate the album with Sandy Denny were abandoned and it was not until eighteen months ago that the album came out on the budget price Hallmark label under the title *Sandy Denny & The Strawbs: 'All Our Own Work'* (Hallmark SHM 813). I assume it is still available and I reckon D.C. made a good move in

allowing the tapes to be put out on a cheap label five years after recording (how many other bands would give a vote of confidence in the accomplishments of their first recording exploits?). There are a lot of people who still remember these songs doing the rounds, particularly this first recording of Sandy's immortal 'Who Knows Where The Time Goes' (who says the Strawbs, or to be more precise Sandy and Dave, weren't ahead of their time, vintage 100mph banjo picking and all?).

Back to the story. 'Oh How She Changed' and 'Or Am I Dreaming' was released as a single on the A&M label and on the strength of that the band played a Southern Television show with Tony Blackburn, a well known beat singer of the day.

"The single became David Symonds' record of the week and generally did us a lot of good, although by this time I kept getting these ideas for more meaningful songs. 'The Battle', for instance, was just a game of chess, obviously it was also about the futility of war, but suddenly I started to get a bit ashamed of some of my early songs." ('The Battle' was a 22-verse epic, the highlight of the band's first A&M album and could, had the phrase been coined then, have made Ben Hur look like an epic.)

"'The Battle' and also 'The Man Who Called Himself Jesus' were the turning point, and since then every song I've written has always had a very definite and positive reason."

BY THE MIDDLE of 1969 *Strawbs* was in the shops and being hailed as a masterpiece of contemporary folk music at a time when the Al Stewarts and Roy Harpers were trying to prove that the emerging British folk writers were every bit as good as their American counterparts. They weren't, of course, but whilst Harper and Stewart went to their respective, rhetoric extremes, Cousins had found not only a new form of polemic but a totally unique musical setting. His recollections on the recording of that album speak for themselves—small wonder it was a prototype.

"We set out to do the album with Gus Dudgeon and the prime requisite was a thirty-six piece orchestra closely followed by a genuine five piece Arabian band found in the Omar Khayyam Restaurant who spoke no English and thus all instruction had to be conveyed in the only common language—French. Then there were other noted celebrities such as John Paul Jones, Nicky Hopkins and Ronnie Verrell from the Ted Heath Band. In fact almost the entire Ted Heath Band were re-created for one title which, needless to say, has never appeared anywhere.

"With pride we played the finished product, complete with specially recorded spoken links, to a vice-president of A&M who announced with a gasp that it wasn't quite what they had expected from the two tracks which were the basis on which we had been signed. We were asked to replace the less compatible tracks with some additional titles, and as these were more recent songs anyway we were quite in favour, so with less

CHARISMA ALSO MEANS GOOD READING

Just Out

TONIGHT WE WILL FAKE LOVE Steve Turner
Heralded as London's lyric-writer, NME journalist Steve Turner has produced a collection of poems that have revolutionised the art of verse. 75p

Old Favourites

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BROWN BUFFALO Oscar Zeta Acosta
A riotous 'hippie' autobiography from Raoul (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*) Duke's attorney. 75p

SELECTED POEMS Irving Layton

"Here are the poems of my friend and teacher Irving Layton. We met in Montreal back when there weren't any prizes for poetry. I didn't mind him being so good because we were a generation apart. I was working in a clothing factory at the time. I taught him how to dress. He taught me how to live forever." Leonard Cohen 80p

THE STAN CULLIS BLUES Martin Hall

Another in our collection of 'rock' poets, from a lyricist whose work you should watch. 75p

NAKED IN GARDEN HILLS Harry Crews

A super-crazy tale of modern America. Funny, horrific, and a great read by an author you ought to watch. 75p

KILLERS, ANGELS, REFUGEES Peter Hammill

A unique collection of lyrics, poems and short stories by the most talented 'rock' writer around. 80p

THE MOCKING HORSE Alan Hull

The best-selling collection of poems by Lindisfarne's founding member is still a bit hit. 75p

NO ONE WAVED GOOD-BYE ed. Robert Somma

Joplin, Hendrix, Jones, Epstein: the casualty report on rock and roll that everyone ought to read. 70p

SMOKESTACK EL ROPO'S BEDSIDE READER

Tales, tips and trips—roll up and buy one! 70p

THE LONGEST COCKTAIL PARTY Richard DiLello

"Fascinating reading" *Music Week* "An absorbing book of gossip about Apple" *The Observer* "Not many satisfactory or even entertaining books have been written about pop music. But this is one of them . . . An immensely readable book . . . I couldn't put it down" *Melody Maker* £1.90

If you can't find any of these at your local bookstore, just tick the titles you want and we'll send them to you post-free.

CHARISMA BOOKS, 37 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON W.1

'SOUNDS ahead'



No. 5
MARLBOROUGH
COURT,
off CARNABY ST., W.1.
(The very tiny shop up
the alley opposite the
Flea Market).

10 - 20%

DISCOUNT ON ALL RECORDS

WE STOCK US & CONTINENTAL
IMPORT LPs & SINGLES
(mainly rock)

LENNY BRUCE

—As LB's records are sometimes very hard to find we try to stock all that's available

ALSO

SECONDHAND LPs BOUGHT AND SOLD

20 Rockabilly Classics from the archives of American Decca Records.

Including

Peanuts Wilson. Cast Iron Arm/Johnny Carroll. Hot Rock/Roy Hall. Three Alley Cats/Don Woody. Bird Dog/Jackie Lee Cochran. Ruby Pearl/Jimmy and Johnny. Sweet Love On My Mind/Webb Pierce. Teenage Boogie.

All in original mono
MCFM 2697

MCA RECORDS
Marketed by EMI Records
20, Manchester Square, London W1A 1ES.

STRAWBS

lavish orchestration we recorded 'The Battle', 'I'll Show You Where To Sleep', 'That Which Once Was Mine' and 'Pieces of 79 And 15' which was centred around Tony Hooper's bizarre experiences in his several extremely seedy London flats."

The new assembly was eventually issued in May 1969 as the Strawbs' first album and the abandoned tracks have been preserved for posterity, though one title 'Ah Me, Ah My' surfaced on the *Grave New World* album.

To compare the changes the Strawbs underwent in that year, listen to the captivating innocence of Sandy Denny singing 'Tell Me What You See In Me' and then follow the course of that song through its modal changes on *Strawbs*, dominated by the male voice of Cousins and the frenetic work of the Arabic band who threaten to take possession of the song totally, although there is quite a degree of compatibility with what the Strawbs were into at that time.

"Looking back the main criticism of our first album was exactly that—our folk fans maintained that it hardly sounded like us on stage and that was quite valid as we were still an acoustic trio at the time. We did several live radio and TV shows though on which we augmented with other musicians. On BBC's *Colour Me Pop* we were joined by Paul Buckmaster on cello, Terry Cox of Pentangle on drums, Roger Coulam of Blue Mink on organ, Tony Visconti on recorders and David Bowie, who was recommended by Tony Visconti.

THE NEXT THING was that Tony (Hooper) and I produced a group from Shrewsbury called Paper Bubble and we got Hud and John along because the Velvet Opera had played at the White Bear quite a few times. Rick was on keyboards and I thought then how remarkable that band could be without ever imagining that six months later it would all come true and John, Hud and Rick would join Tony and I in the Strawbs."

American singer Tony Visconti was to exercise further influence on the band in the coming months, and since the Strawbs hadn't hit it off too well with Tony's partner Gus Dudgeon (he and Cousins had argued continually during the mixing of *Strawbs*, mainly about the relative level of the vocals), the band asked Visconti if he would produce the following album and he agreed to do so.

Prior to that there had been another significant step when Dave Cousins had approached Joe Boyd with a view to producing. The latter couldn't meet the commitment but in discussing the nature of the album Dave said he wanted to add cello and Joe recommended Clare Deniz, the principal cellist with the Sadlers Wells orchestra whom he had used on the first Nick Drake album *Five Leaves Left*.

"The arrival of Clare coupled with Tony's classical style arrangements triggered off a new approach to the music, and Tony also encouraged me to read *The Tibetan Book Of The Dead* which inspired 'I'll Show You Where To Sleep' and 'Vision Of The Lady Of The Lake' (another 28-verse epic)."

Clare Deniz contributed greatly to the new 'group' sound that manifested itself on *Dragonfly*, an album that was far more



faithful to the group's stage show at that time and was thus in complete contrast to the first album. It is easier to see why Clare's stay in the Strawbs was so short than it is to say why *Dragonfly* failed to win the same acclaim that had been bestowed on *Strawbs*. 'The Vision Of The Lady Of The Lake' was augmented by Rick Wakeman, Paul Brett (another long time associate of Cousins and member of the Velvet Opera) and Danish drummer Bjarne Rostvold and aside from that there was very little overdubbing.

On Clare Deniz: "She was a vegetarian who didn't smoke, drink or go in pubs which imposed a great strain. I wrote out the cello parts myself which took me hours. I bought a book called *The Rudiments Of Music* and it was all very laborious, in fact I had to re-write the parts because I'd written them all in the treble clef."

On the album itself: "We blew all our advances on the first album, which was astronomical at the time, so the next album cost us £1,500 instead of £6,000. We decided to record in Denmark because we knew it would be considerably cheaper, and although the studio was still in the cinema it had at least gone eight-track. The only problem was that we couldn't use the studio while the audience was in during the evening. It therefore became fairly exhausting as we were recording from mid-day to five and from midnight onwards.

"Tony Visconti was producing and *Dragonfly* turned out to be our least popular album of all time probably because it was so different from all the others—I honestly don't think anything went wrong as such, and 'Vision Of The Lady Of The Lake' I still think is a colossal song—on and off it took me a year to write. The basic track was put down in Copenhagen and the overdubbing was done at the newly opened Morgan Studios.

"The problem with that song is that the boys got bored with it and I could see their point of view so I did that song on my own onstage.

"No, I think *Dragonfly* had some nice songs on it—they were mostly new songs although 'Josephine For Better Or For Worse', written for Dominic Behan's wife, was a new version of one of the rejected songs from *Strawbs*, having originally been recorded with nightclub piano from Nick Hopkins, and a breathy trumpet solo, an unappreciated tribute to Herb Alpert. *Dragonfly* itself was a song about an attractive Swedish girl and was the first song to be written on a newly acquired dulcimer—as for the remainder of the songs they were largely descriptions of the beauty of the English countryside.

"But I like that album—I was trying deliberately to write English folk songs at that time and I still sing a couple of songs off that album."

BUT IF COUSINS was consciously aiming at writing 20th century balladry then his singing found the contrivances to match. Indeed the timbre and tonal qualities of the Cousins vocal chords caused many a purist and erstwhile Strawbs fan to recoil in horror. "OK, I was trying to sing in that English folk idiom," Dave concurred. "The wavers in the voice were deliberate but that's now developed into a style more than anything else although my voice was being heavily criticised in those days. It still sounds the same although now it's become distinctive."

In any event *Dragonfly* didn't set the world alight and as a result Dave Cousins and Tony Hooper decided to give themselves a year to make the band successful failing which they would throw in their hand. A complete change of approach was called for and suddenly the most logical permutation of all fell into place—Cousins, Hooper, Ford, Hud and Wakeman. Cousins and Hooper drew £15 a week to sustain themselves and paid the other three musicians £25 each.

In the meantime another musician had come and gone—Lindsay Cooper, who had been brought in as a replacement for Clare Deniz, and it was he who proved to Cousins that there was no longer room for acoustic instrumentation in the band. Another victim of the new Strawbs' outlook was their faithful bass player Noddy Chesterman who quit during the same period. Missing the more homely environs of the folk scene he joined Noel Murphey and Shaggis (Davey Johnson) in Draught Porridge.

"Lindsay had switched from cello to bass but he had to go because string bass just didn't fit anymore," explained Dave.

Thus the Cousins, Hooper, Cooper, Wakeman line-up survived only a few months and suddenly a huge paradox was created. Clare had left because, quite apart from the vagaries of life on the road, her cello playing was falling below par deprived of the usual 'x' hours per day practice sessions to which classical musicians are dedicated. Meanwhile another keyboard wizard who had been formally trained, was itching to get his rocks off on a bit of rock'n'roll and live a life of debauchery. Thus the clash with acoustic bowed stringed instruments became insurmountable and Wakeman proceeded to wear his new role like a king.

"Rick wrote and said he really liked *Dragonfly* and he said it was the first time he'd ever had his name credited on record. I had a drink with him and it turned out he was only working in a pub at that time so I offered him the gig. The problem was that he was planning to get married a week later and we had a gig in Paris—so we took him to Paris for his honeymoon."

THAT PARTICULAR gig was the Rock'n'Roll Circus, and Wakeman must have wondered what he'd let himself in for as he spent much of his time backing circus acts and then discovering that Salvador Dali was also on the bill. The band became firm favourites with Dali, a relationship that has been maintained

Continued on Page 40

SUBSCRIBE!

TO THE WORLD'S MOST AUTHORITATIVE ROCK MUSIC MONTHLY



SUBSCRIPTION RATES

12 issues	...	...	£4.20
Europe	...	...	£5.50
US surface mail	...	...	\$16.00
US air mail	...	...	\$27.00

RECORDS

Nils Lofgren

NILS LOFGREN



Nils Lofgren
A&M SP-4509 Import

THE FATE that was thanklessly bestowed upon Grin's fourth album 'Gone Crazy', is fortunately, and perhaps miraculously, not to apply to this record, i.e. it will be released in this country. Any conceivable argument for it not coming out would seem to me quite groundless because Lofgren is not only one of America's most gifted exponents of the 3 minute rock song, but also a large majority of his compositions are so honestly 'commercial' (in the most tasteful sense of the word), that if given half the chance they could raise the standard of the pop charts way above the blatantly trivial state they're currently wallowing in. Lofgren's songs cry out to be heard on pop radio but so far nobody seems willing to give him a chance.

The story of Lofgren's previous band Grin has been well documented in ZigZag 37 and their tragic demise, which was typically under-exposed elsewhere, chronicled in ZZ44. Let it be said though once and for all that Grin were a great band, as important to American rock 'n' roll tradition as any contemporary band could be, and so unique in style that even now there is no band to effectively replace them. Of course Nils Lofgren himself wrote all their material, handled most of the vocals, played guitar and keyboards, and most definitely defined the personality of the band, so it's no surprise that the exuberance, quality, and infectious melodies that Grin displayed in abundance are present on this, Nils Lofgren's first 'solo' album.

If however, judged against the very highest standards, Grin's albums had their weak spots, then so does this one. But these weaknesses are nowhere near large enough to mar the overall quality, and the many great moments provide overwhelming proof that Lofgren is a major talent. On this album he sensibly enough sticks to a relatively sparse back-up group with Wornell Jones on bass and the excellent Aynsley Dunbar on drums. The sound of the album is anything but sparse though as Lofgren sings lead and backing vocals, plays acoustic and electric guitars, acoustic piano and organ.

Whether it can be coincidence or design I don't know, but nearly all the great tracks

are on side one . . . in fact everything on this side is fabulous starting with a very short piece of guitar virtuosity called 'Be Good Tonight' and leading into the album's natural pretender for single status, 'Back It Up'. This song has just about everything that I admire about Lofgren's work - a classic but completely original riff, an equally memorable melody to match, great lyrics, and a simple yet devastating guitar break that crowns it all off. All that in 2.23 secs and surging with power and urgency . . . a beautiful cut. Next comes 'One More Saturday Night' with typical teenage punk lyrics about making out on Saturday night and more clean melodious guitar work. Most of Lofgren's songs seem to concern themselves with the frustrations, disappointments and pent-up anger of adolescence particularly in respect of the question of teenage love; not a very original theme I must admit but Lofgren handles it with sensitivity and imagination so that it never becomes trite, slushy, or even worse, boring. The next two tracks on the album, 'If I Say It, It's So', and 'I Don't Want To Know' illustrate what I mean and they're both totally convincing as well as being musically outstanding. One of the best tracks on the album is the last on this side, 'Keith Don't Go (Ode To The Glimmer Twin)', which is apparently about Keith Richard. Again the musicianship is superb with a very Neil Young-ish guitar passage at the end, and at 4.21 it's the longest cut on the album although it could easily sustain itself for twice as long. The lyrics are basically aimed to dissuade Keith Richard for any intention he may have of leaving the Stones and to confirm his position as one of the key figures in rock music . . . maybe someday someone will do the same for Nils Lofgren.

The second side of the album, by comparison with the first, is disappointing. It doesn't really spring into life until the fourth number, 'Rock And Roll Crook', which is both melodic and powerful with a rivetting chorus and another one of those memorable riffs. The momentum is maintained through the next track, 'Two By Two' which opens with a most beautiful acoustic guitar passage and unfolds into one of Lofgren's best love songs . . . the sort of song that would have considerably enhanced the 'dreamy' side of Grin's 'I+I' album. Lastly, to close out there's the album's only non-original composition, Goffin & King's 'Goin' Back'. I can't say that I prefer this version to the Byrds', but it does have a certain charm and some great piano work.

In summary I feel confident in recommending this album to those who know and respect Lofgren's past work, and also to those who have remained sceptical over the years falsely believing that Nils Lofgren's greatest claim to fame was a credit on 'After The Goldrush'. His talents are numerous and quite considerable . . . he's an excellent rock 'n' roll singer, a very gifted songwriter with a great sense of melody, a tasteful, lyrical guitarist with a real feel for rock 'n' roll, and a pretty neat keyboard man. Sounds too good to be true doesn't it? Well the record's out there waiting for you to make up your own mind.

□ Andy Childs

Ian Hunter



Ian Hunter
CBS 80710

ON THE back page of 'Sounds' dated 12/4/75 there's an ad for this album which includes a quote apparently taken from ZigZag, saying simply "a masterpiece—stunning". Profound words indeed, but I can't seem to remember reading any such thing in last month's family tree or any other issue for that matter. Still, not to worry . . . as long as CBS don't go and quote us on the new Wombles LP I won't complain.

Pete intimated the quality of this album at the bottom of his chart last month, and now that I've had the opportunity to listen to it constantly for a couple of weeks and been to see the Hunter Ronson band twice, I can only reaffirm Pete's remarks. In his new band Hunter has emerged as a very able front-man, while Ronson, sharing a good deal of the limelight, often provides an equally diverting focal-point for an audience which, on the occasions I've been in attendance, seems to comprise a curious mixture of Bowie/Ronson freaks (who all scream and go bananas when Ronson takes the lead), and old Mott fans (who have a strong loyalty towards Hunter). If the band then is ideally mostly equal parts Hunter and Ronson, this album is obviously much more Ian Hunter. Mick Ronson does however play lead guitar, organ, mellotron, mouth organ, and bass, and he also arranges and co-produces everything, but all the songs except 'Boy', which was co-written with Ronson, are Hunter's, and it's his personality that shines through above everything else.

The album opens in typical brash arrogance with as stunning a celebration of rock as Lou Reed's classic 'Rock 'n' Roll', the Who's 'Long Live Rock' and others of that ilk. It's called 'Once Bitten Twice Shy' and it's quite the most ferocious thing on the whole record. It's also been released as a single which would seem to be a very sensible decision to me. There's very definitely a deliberate touch of Bowie and Reed in Hunter's vocals on this track although his own distinctive style of singing is fully evident elsewhere, and the album as a whole is a very sensitive pot-pourri of rockers and ballads which illustrate Hunter's versatility as a writer and performer. 'Who Do You

Love' and 'Lounge Lizard' on side one both rock along forcefully, while the other cut on this side, 'Boy', is an epic ballad quite possibly directly at D. Bowie but in any event a very powerful and dramatic piece of work.

'3,000 Miles From Here' is a beautiful sad acoustic ballad that starts off side two, followed by 'The Truth, The Whole Truth, Nuthin' But The Truth', 'It Ain't Easy When You Fall', a bemusing but effective piece of prose called 'Shades Off' (Hunter revealed at last?), and a finale, 'I Get So Excited' which would be ideal for Gary Glitter's next single.

As an album it does stand up to repeated plays, and when you go and see the band (which I hasten to add also includes Geoff Appleby on bass, Pete Arnesen on piano—although Blue Weaver played when I saw them—and drummer Dennis Elliott), you'll hear most of this album, some of Ronson's solo stuff, and a few old Mott favourites as well. As Pete said last month "some 'super-groups' just don't happen—but the Hunter Ronson hook-up has undoubtedly magic". Well there's a healthy slice of what could quite conceivably be magic on this album, and I only hope it can sustain itself for the future.

□ Andy Childs

Jonathan King



A Rose In A Fisted Glove
UK UKAL 1010

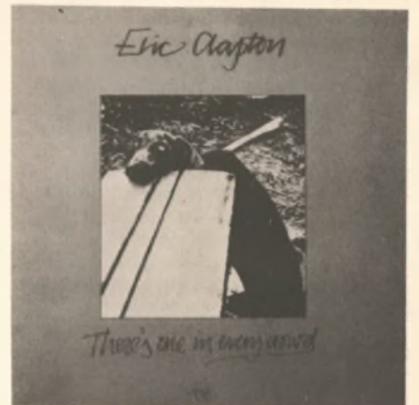
THIS'LL CAUSE a few complaining letters from old Childs' Grateful Dead freaks, I'll bet. "What's Jonathan King doing in ZigZag? Cancelling my subscription, mutter, mutter, getting *Let It Limp* . . ." Well, the truth is, chaps, that I think Jonathan King is a genius, and he is one of the few people whose records I can rely on to (1) confirm my taste in songs, and (2) give me a smile and something to think about. Admittedly the last part of (2) is quite often tempered with "is he serious?" or "what a ludicrous riff", but I still think he's great. So what have we here? Let's start with the non-originals. 'A Free Man In Paris' by Joni Mitchell and 'Come Monday' by Jimmy Buffett, apart from being good songs, both have a little hint about them that Jonathan might consider them biographical. In the former, there's

the thing about "stoking the star-maker machinery behind the popular song", and in the latter, "I guess I never was meant for glitter". Pardon me, Jonathan, if I'm wrong, but I love that second one. Then we have 'I Can't Stand The Rain', which is as much a travesty as was 'Mother Country' on a previous album. The vocal is fascinatingly terrible, but there's a J.K. trade mark in a repeated instrumental phrase which has occurred with similar prominence in an earlier record. The reasons for 'Brand New Morning's inclusion only became clear to me today, when I discovered that UK have just re-issued 'Abraham, Martin and John' by Dion, and it was in fact Mr DiMucci who wrote 'Brand New Morning', which was on his 'Sanctuary' album. Now get this—when Dion's record is a hit, which it will be, mark my words, Jonathan will be interviewed somewhere, and when he's asked why he picked on Dion, he'll be able to gratuitously plug his own record, after the style of, "Well, I've been into Dion for years, now. On my latest album . . ." Brilliant, but then I could be wrong again. Oh, and it's a neat song too.

Next is 'The Way You Look Tonight' by Jerome Kern strained probably through the Lettermen. This boasts a viciously obvious backing phrase which makes me hesitate at his audacity, but then that's another J.K. trademark, and one which I've learnt to love. 'Lover's Prayer' by Randy Newman, and 'Fallin' In Love' by Richie Furay from the SHF band album are just nice songs, although maybe I've missed some little nuance pushed in there. Right, that's seven. And now for the originals. 'Here's Lookin' At You, Kid' is Jonathan's boogie number, but seems a little lightweight. Mind you, to have said that probably means I'm missing something somewhere . . . 'Let's Not Get Dirty' has an instrumental pinch from 'All Right Now', and a faintly humorous lyric. 'The True Story Of Molly Malone' has an instrumental pinch from 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart', and a more serious tone than the lightness of the tune might lead you to believe. Which brings us to 'Mental Diseases', in which another King trademark is displayed—that being the dominant acoustic guitar. I think Jonathan composes with an acoustic guitar, because he certainly likes to feature them strongly, as in his version of 'Satisfaction', which was on an earlier epic. Lyrically, it could only be Jonathan who describes an affair with an older person of unspecified sex as giving one "mental diseases". Then we get to the finale, 'A Very, Very Melancholy Man', which has a ludicrous pinch from Alfie which threatens to undo Cilla's nose job in its blatancy. The song is semi-serious, semi-sick, semi-spoken and semi-sung. What more can you say? Don't write Jonathan King off as a looney, because he sure isn't that. There are very few people in the music business more deserving of respect, and if some of you bother to listen to this LP, a percentage will buy it, and get some of his other stuff too. I'm already looking forward to the next one, but this'll do fine for a few months. Thank you, sincerely, Jonathan.

□ John Tobler

Eric Clapton



There's One In Every Crowd
RSO 2479 132

A NEW CLAPTON album is a treat at any time, and this is no exception to that personal rule. It's obviously very good to see that Eric is back on the road, making good sounds as he should always have been, and perhaps this may be an example to other one time heroes who aren't too sure what to do next. The Clapton of the last two albums is a very different man to any of the previous Claptons, and it must make him feel pretty pleased, as well as us, that he's not lost in a cocoon of people shouting for 'Crossroads'. Would you like to hear a 'Crossroads' soundalike on every Clapton LP? I wouldn't either.

Which brings me to a point. 'Don't Blame Me' is a track on this album which bears rather more than a passing resemblance to 'I Shot The Sheriff', although it fails somewhat desperately on impact because the original is so well known now. In fact, it's a little difficult to reconcile the two sides of this album—the first side is vaguely disappointing, sort of held back and trying to escape from bondage, while the second side, four-fifths of which was written by Eric, is joyfully free, and contains for my money most of the good things. The first song on that side is the only intruder, Mary McCreary's 'Singing The Blues', and after the anticlimactic feel of the first half of the record, it's immediately more promising, with infectious rhythms and the first sign of a wail from Marcy Levy, who comes close to equalling the first lady of the larynx, Jeanie Greene. And there's a guitar part as well, just as there is on 'Better Make It Through Today', where the build-up can only be to a guitar solo which follows just like you knew and wanted it to. 'Pretty Blue Eyes' starts with shakers and guiro percussiveness, and has a Caribbean flavour, but much less obviously than the two first side white reggae items, 'Don't Blame Me' and 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'. Then comes a perfectly contrasting middle eight, with oozing vocals embellishing a melodically satisfying guitar phrase. And it just keeps getting better. 'High' is just a great song, with a light vocal laid against a tough instrumental sound, followed by a vintage guitar

RECORDS

outro, and 'Opposites' is the song whose lyrics I quoted in the concert review of a few issues ago. Waiting for the recorded version has only heightened my enjoyment, let me say, and this is a masterpiece, fit to stand alongside the very best that has emerged under Clapton's name. Carefully, tightly constructed instrumentals, with simple yet effective words make a haunting song, where the rest of the band shine through more than anywhere else on the album. Just check out the little keyboard touches that Dick Sims provides, which equal the similarly effective guitar bleats from the man. A great track, and a fitting end to an album which seems to be just a bit like a plane taking off, he said, searching desperately for something intelligent to say. You know, it starts off slowly, without too much excitement, then gradually moves through the gears (do planes have gears?) until some speed is achieved, then zips off the ground until it's moving so well that it eventually disappears into cloudland. An album that gets better all the time it's playing, and one which finally reaches the class that the name on the cover made you know it would achieve. Buy it.

□ John Tobler

Turtles

Turtle Soup
White Whale WW7124
More Golden Hits
White Whale WW7127
Wooden Head
White Whale WW7133

IT WOULD not have been unreasonable to expect a review of the new Turtles album that Phonogram have just put out, but in view of what I'm about to write, you might understand why that review is absent. The three LPs titled above are all in stereo, are all shrink-wrapped, and cost a less than princely thirty bob each. Bear in mind, please, that I'm not talking about one-offs—the place I got these has plenty of them, together with a whole basement full of albums like 'The Association Live' (a double for £1.99), the first four Michael Nesmith RCA albums at £1.50 each, and a selection of items by ZigZag heroes like Tom Rapp, H.P. Lovecraft, Fever Tree, Randy Burns, Norman Greenbaum, Crazy Horse, the Flamin' Groovies, Tommy James, and in the latest advertisement I've seen, even the Rockets, which is one of the great rare albums.

Where is this place? is the obvious question, and what do I do if I can't get there? Right, the emporium in question is Quinns Records of 137 Lee Road, London SE3, which is near Blackheath and Lee Green. The telephone number is 01-852 9234, and the gent in command is called Gary. He is well aware of ZigZag, and if you're polite, he might even listen to your suggestions as to what he should try to stock in the way of desirable black and shiniest. For those who can't visit or phone, Quinns run a flourishing mail order business about which I have heard no complaints at this point. With the bulk discount offered, you can get the three albums listed at the top for £4, including post

and packing. At the moment, Gary advertises in Melody Maker (page 42, issue 5/4/75), but we're hoping that he might show us what he has in the pages of ZigZag in future, so if you should check out Quinns, don't forget to mention ZigZag, and we'll all hopefully have a nice new list of availabilities each month.

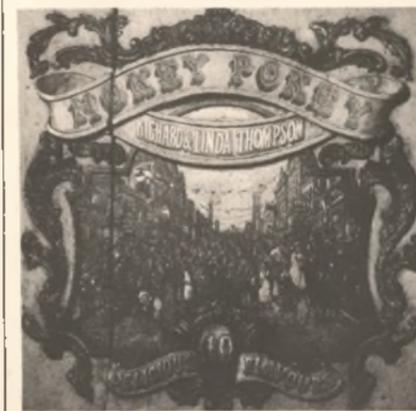
It has to be said that the Turtles albums listed above are quite indispensable, as is the Phonogram thing, although in a different way. I'm sure you all knew that anyway. This has been another ZigZag Public Service Announcement for sufferers from vinylitis, a disease common among readers of the mag. On this particular expedition, I carried the fast diminishing cheque book, while riding shotgun, and buying the first round was Tom 'Superfly' Sheehan, Britain's number one alcoholic photographer and Dan hic-hic-Hicks freak.

□ John "Bargains" Tobler

Footnote: At the risk of apparent out-Toblerisation, I've just found the four above-mentioned Mike Nesmith albums for £1 each—great jellyfish, the artwork alone's worth more than that—at Mr Fox Records, 34 Station Road, West Croydon, Surrey (01-681 2080). Many other goodies too, as well as the most comprehensive stock of Kraut-rock I've found anywhere, if you're still a Kosmic Kourrier.

□ Nick Lumsden

Richard & Linda Thompson



Hokey Pokey
Island ILPS 9305

THE SINGULAR most remarkable aspect of this album is its manifestation of Richard Thompson's capacity to absorb. And if that sounds a long winded way to launch a review then it's only fair to add that since the Thompsons have become a very fashionable commodity and reviewers have been heaping their praises capaciously on this album, then there has to be a reason for it somewhere.

You see ever since I can remember, Richard has always been the listener, the observer. By the time everyone had realised he was one hell of a flat picker and were urging him to get out front of Fairport Convention and kick arse and make like he really was Clarence White, Amos Garrett or James Burton, he

was quietly allowing Tyger Hutchings' hysteria of English heritage to rub off on him.

Similarly whilst they were telling him that 'Crazy Man Michael' and 'Meet On The Ledge' underlined his claim as one of the best new rock writers he was bestowing a unique brand of humorous prose across the liner of 'Full House'.

A few years on and the taciturn Mr Thompson (now supplemented by a Mrs Thompson who, for good or bad, has oft been compared with Sandy Denny) has been duly recognised, the talent which has been quietly screaming from within all these years acknowledged. The songs aren't necessarily any better than on 'Henry The Human Fly', which either makes that an underrated album or this an overrated one judging from the huge differential in media assessment. It's just that the synthesis of styles is so great—genuine music hall stuff with help from the Manchester CWS, genuine English melody with help from the impeccable Morris man John Kirkpatrick, a re-creation of English comic book heroes of the fifties (you can keep your Marvel mags, what about *Hotspur* etc; the saga of 'Smiffy's Glass Eye' could have run a series in one such comic). Then again, 'Georgie On A Spree' sounds like the title of a bizarre Hogarth seascape but is in fact a fond nod in the direction of music hall. 'The Egypt Room' is a piece of pure atmospheric imagery and wouldn't the opening line 'Hobnail Kelly and the Beefcake Kid' sound like a crib from Bruce Springsteen if it weren't so utterly Richard Thompson.

Two years ago three names were being bandied about as the best of the new wave of English songwriters—there was Thompson, Steve Ashley and Lal and Mike Waterson (I'm counting them as one). It's significant therefore that the only non-Thompson song on 'Hokey Pokey' is Mike Waterson's 'Mole In A Hole', a great closing number for the entire ensemble to leave the stage by... and that's the way I see this entire album.

Thompson's retiring innocence betrays a great wealth of inspiration—or perhaps it is this quality that nurtures such a wide range of colours and summons forth flashes from his childhood.

There has to be some explanation for the fact that two years ago Richard Thompson was a dilettante in the field of English music and yet today he's left them standing so that the plethora of young pretenders has apparently vanished without trace. I don't think at the time anyone made allowances for a little syncopation or maybe some breathing space between all that wordy rhetoric or carefully positioned grace notes.

It was all too blinkered. I could talk forever about 'Hokey Pokey', taking that delightfully metaphorical double entendre (it's ice cream really, when Blind Boy Fuller sang about it in 1935 it was custard pie—just a different sexual metaphor!) It's just that Thompson has this exquisite, non-contrived way with words.

So to Richard Williams or whomever it concerns: how about a 'Best Of Richard Thompson' album to further emphasise the contribution he has made to English rock music in the past five years?

□ Jerry Gilbert

Other Releases In The Past Month

- STREET RATS—Humble Pie (A&M AMLS 63282)
JOURNEY—Journey (CBS 80724)
RIGHT OR WRONG—Stealers Wheel (A&M AMLH 68293)
DANCE—Arthur Brown (Gull GULP 1008)
SLOW DAZZLE—John Cale (Island ILPS 9317)
WHEELIN'N'DEALIN'—Sassafra (Chrysalis CHR 1076)
BETWEEN THE LINES—Janis Ian (CBS 80635)
ORCHESTRA LUNA (Epic EPC 80725)
SERIOUSLY SPEAKING—Clancy (Warners K56103)
RUBYCON—Tangerine Dream (Virgin V2025)
REUNION—B.J. Thomas (ABC ABCL 5109)
RAINDOG—Yamashita (Island ILPS 9319)
GOT MY HEAD ON STRAIGHT—Billy Paul (Philadelphia International PIR 80446)
THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK RECORDING OF TOMMY—Various (Polydor 2657 014)
UNREQUITED—Loudon Wainwright III (CBS 80696)
SISTER SLICK—The Cliris Hinze Combination (CBS 80271)
JET—Jet (CBS 80699)
TIME—Time (Buk BULP 2005)
SNAPS—Des Parton (Buk BULP 2004)
BLOW BY BLOW—Jeff Beck (Epic EPC 69117)
KATY LIED—Steely Dan (ABC ABCD-846)
A FOOT IN COLD WATER OR ALL AROUND US (Elektra K52011)
IT'S TIME—Bonnie Braumlett (Capricorn 2429 125)
BLUE GOOSE—Blue Goose (Anchor ANCL 2005)
TRAPPED IN THE SUBURBS—Dennis Linde (Elektra K52013)
CHANGING WOMAN—Buffy Sainte Marie (MCA MCF 2594)
FLYING START—The Blackbyrds (Fantasy FT 522)
SUPER SOUL—Various (Atlantic K40559)
YESTERDAYS—Yes (Atlantic K50048)
DESPERATE STRAIGHTS—Slapp Happy/Henry Cow (Virgin V2024)
NEW YEAR NEW BAND NEW COMPANY—John Mayall (ABC ABCL 5115)
FOGGY MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN—Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs (Philips 6336 255)
AUTOBAHN—Kraftwerk (Vertigo 6360 620)
HAPPY TOGETHER AGAIN: THE TURTLES' GREATEST HITS—The Turtles (Philips 9299 425)
ROSKO ROADSHOW VOL. 3—Various (Atlantic K50119)
FEEL LIKE MAKIN' LOVE—Roberta Flack (Atlantic K50049)
RONNIE LANE'S SLIM CHANCE—Ronnie Lane (Island ILPS 9321)

- LAST TANGO—Esperanto (A&M AMLS 68294)
STRAIGHT SHOOTER—Bad Company (Island ILPS 9304)
THE WINKIES—The Winkies (Chrysalis CHR 1066)
V—Sampler (Virgin VD 2502)
SWEET DECEIVER—Kevin Ayers (Island ILPS 9322)
WIDESCREEN—Rupert Holmes (Epic EPC 80323)
HEAR & NOW!—The Butts Band (ABC ABCL 5117)
COLE YOUNGER—Cole Younger (Anchor ANCL 2008)
LIVE—Lou Reed (RCA APL1-0959)
ON YOUR FEET OR ON YOUR KNEES—Blue Oyster Cult (CBS 88116)
ALPHA CENTAURI—Tangerine Dream (Polydor 2383 314)
LEMMINGMANIA—Amon Duul II (United Artists UAG 2973G)
NUTHIN' FANCY—Lynyrd Skynyrd (MCA MCF 2700)
FISH RISING—Steve Hillage (Virgin V2031)
RARE ROCKABILLY—Various (MCA MCFM 2697)
OASIS—A Band Called O (Epic EPC 80596)
COUNTRY MATTERS—Various (CBS 22002)
KANSAS—Kansas (Epic 80174)
LOST IN A DREAM—R.E.O. Speedwagon (Epic EPC 80175)
SUN GODDESS—Ramsey Lewis (CBS 80677)
BUNDLES—Soft Machine (Harvest SHSP 4044)
YOUNG AMERICANS—David Bowie (RCA 1006)
THE SNOW GOOSE—Camel (Decca SKL-R 5207)
PIANO MAN—Billy Joel (CBS 80719)
THAT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD—Earth, Wind & Fire (CBS 80575)
ANDY FRASER BAND (CBS 80731)

Wishbone Ash

Continued from Page 12

a piano in the bar, an Englishman, and he had a really shakey twitch, I mean the guy was playing so many wrong notes, you probably couldn't play like that if you tried. Well, it got to be very funny, and we were asking him if he knew anything by people like Jerry Lee Lewis, and every time we threw something at him verbally, he would stand up and scream, "Can you do this? ... CAN YOU DO THIS?" and then play a few notes, or a few wrong notes. And from that moment onwards, "Can you do this?" just stuck. Needless to say, we had a glorious time that evening, we were falling around on the floor it was so funny, and Andy ended up swinging on the chandelier, and dancing on the piano while this gentleman was playing his tunes. He had some great riffs this guy. I mean we had a very drunken discussion afterwards and he came up to Bill Szymczyk, who's about six foot three, and this guy was a short, fat, dumpy Englishman, and he called Bill a

six foot two jelly moron—"You six foot two jelly moron you!" Yes that was quite an experience.

IN OCTOBER 1974 Wishbone toured Britain, and despite their long absence, there was still an enormous audience waiting for them. Laurie instantly proved his worth, and it seemed as though he had been in the band for years, such was the confidence and ease with which he played.

Laurie: On the first night at the Rainbow I was a bit self-conscious, because Ted was there and anyone who was anyone came up, and I don't really dig all the bullshit much, I just wanted to go on and have a good time. The northern gigs were best I would say, Sheffield, Newcastle, Liverpool, Glasgow, all the gigs up north were incredible.

After the British tour, they spent a couple of weeks in Europe and then returned to Britain for a brief stay, before going off to the States in the middle of November. Since then they have been touring in America, Hawaii, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, and are now back in the States preparing for a new album.

Owing to the high rate of taxation in the U.K., Wishbone have now decided to join the growing number of British bands that are based in the States (must we lose all our best bands this way?) but the decision does not mean that they will be deserting Britain. Obviously, if they are recording in the States, as well as touring, it makes much more sense to stay out there and pay less tax, only coming into Britain for tours and the like. There's not much point in sitting around over here while you're not playing to anybody, and paying 85% tax for the privilege.

So what have we got to look forward to? Well for a start there's the album they'll be recording (again, produced by Bill Szymczyk). Then there's the possibility that they will be playing a gig or two in Britain this summer, although nothing has been definitely planned as yet. But whatever happens, you can rest assured that there are some good things on the way. "The last album was good," said Laurie, "but the next one will be a lot better". I have a feeling he's right.

FINALLY, A WORD about Ted Turner. For the past few months he's been in Peru with a bunch of friends, but I've just heard that he's on his way home so by the time you read this he could well be back. Maybe we'll be hearing more of him soon, if he gets a band together. Also, there's a couple of Wishbone albums floating around that I haven't mentioned in the article. The first is called *Milestones* and is an EMI import, but all it seems to be is *Argus* and *Pilgrimage* put together as a double package. The other is not an official album at all. Called *Live From Memphis*, it is a recording which was made in America and only intended for radio promotion, but a few copies seem to have found their way into the second-hand shops. All it consists of is three tracks—'Jail-bait', 'The Pilgrim' and 'Phoenix', and the quality is not very good.

□ TREVOR GARDINER



L-R: Hudson, Weaver, Cousins, Lambert and Ford.

through the years. In fact on their last American tour the band were booked into the Beacon Theatre on Broadway and Dali, hearing that the band were in town, showed up much to the delight of the New York gossip columnists.

But amidst the general confusion fortunes began to turn for the Strawbs, and the catalyst was undoubtedly the new management that the band had acquired. Towards the end of 1969 they met Mike Dolan and his brother and business partner Jim Dawson. "They really believed in us and helped us out of our problems. They were willing to invest money in us and I suppose that's why we've remained with them over the years (they are frequently to be found at all hours in the pub over the road in Homer Street though Cousins enjoys a better dart-board than business relationship with Mike Dolan these days I understand).

In 1970 Hud and Ford happened along and made up parts four and five of the most commercially successful band to date (or at least laying the foundation work for opportunist Dave Lambert to jump in on the crest of the wave).

"I knew that the Velvet Opera was on its last legs and we all got together at the White Bear one night—that was how Hud and John joined.

"But the problem was we had this Queen Elizabeth Hall concert scheduled and it was our first major concert. We'd also agreed to play it solo and we had only five weeks to rehearse—well that really put the pressure on."

It was July 1970 and the band, under-rehearsed, their first major solo concert ahead of them, decided to record the set for their next 'live' album *Just A Collection Of Antiques And Curios*. Against all odds fortune favoured the brave, the band went down a storm and next day Rick Wakeman was being hailed the pop find of 1970 (patronised by Keith Emerson, front page of the *Melody Maker*, etc, etc).

THE CONCERT ALBUM contained the stirring 'Martin Luther King's Dream' which took over from 'The Man Who Called Himself Jesus' in terms of polemics and popularity, the brilliantly sequenced four-piece 'Antique Suite' (life, death, the ages of man, Herman Hesse inspired); five minutes' worth of keyboard magic with Wakeman throwing in every trick. Side two: the mystical 'Finger-tips' with Hud playing some haunting sitar, the beautiful 'Song Of A Sad Little Girl' and the marathon 'Where Is This Dream Of Your Youth', which appeared on *Dragonfly* and deserved another chance. All in all it was the most disparate and unlikely album the Strawbs had yet made but for some reason it hung together superbly well.

"It was quite daring I suppose," says Cousins modestly, but by the time the album was released in October 1970 the momentum was such that either Cousins or Wakeman could have carried the band single-handed.

Antiques And Curios received rave reviews and it seemed that while the youthful Wakeman was at the controls, his long blonde hair making him a rivetting figurehead, the Strawbs could do no wrong.

The problem, as Dave Cousins knew too well, was how long could the Strawbs' expansion keep pace with the mercurial outbreak of Wakemania?

Part Two next month.

□ JERRY GILBERT

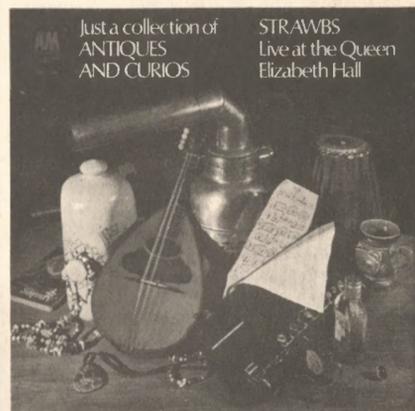
Discography

Sandy Denny And The Strawbs: All Our Own Work (Hallmark SHM 813)

Strawbs (A&M AMLS 936)

Dragonfly (A&M AMLS 970)

Just A Collection Of Antiques And Curios (A&M AMLS 994)



The Early Clapton

Some vintage early Clapton tracks, with the urgency and power still coming through as strongly as when they were first issued. Among the other artists featured are John Mayall, Otis Spann and Champion Jack Dupree. Some of the finest recordings Clapton has ever made —and only £1.29 on disc, £1.89 on tape.

The Blues World of Eric Clapton



SPA 387
KCSP 387 cassette
ECSP 387 cartridge

Marketed by
DECCA

BLABBER'N SMOKE

As the afternoon sun arcs its way slowly across the clear blue sky and the dog flops down in the shade of the plum tree at the top of the lawn, I collect my pile of random notes, sit myself down on the steps outside the french windows, suck the end of me biro in calm and studied concentration, and wonder what the hell I'm going to write about this month. Today I'm playing truant from our luxurious West End office to enjoy the peace and tranquility of suburbia and to try and get some work done. I've just come back from my local where, over an ale or two with a mate of mine named Eddie Gaines (drunkard, college drop-out, and music loony), we've been discussing the magnificence of the Flamin' Groovies single, the genius of Viv Stanshall, how Dr. Feelgood are gonna conquer the world, the brilliance of Little Feat, and vole hunting in Plymouth.

More to the point though, Genesis have a new single out which is deserving of your undivided attention. It's called 'The Carpet Crawlers' and for me it's the best track on their LP 'The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway'. I'll freely admit that I'm not the world's most fervent Genesis fanatic but this single has been on my turntable constantly for the last week or so. It's tuneful, devoid of any clever clever instrumental pyrotechnics, and has the most ear-grabbing sing-along chorus I've heard in a fair old time. I went to see them at the Empire Pool the other week but found it all a little too much for my delicate senses. Their stage show was of course very dramatic and some of the music I found most agreeable, but it all tended to drag on for a wee bit too long and left me exhausted at the end. Everybody else loved'em though.

Another concert of note that I attended last month was Michael Nesmith at Victoria Palace. I went expecting something a bit special and came away in a state of euphoria. What an artist! The place was packed out and he had everybody spell-bound for an hour or so while he performed a hatful of songs - quite a few off 'And The Hits Just Keep On Comin'' plus a couple from his new album 'The Prison', and strung them together with amusing philosophical raps which were a pure delight. I hope that by now you're all die-hard Nesmith freaks, because if you're not, you're missing out on an awful lot of very fine music.

And talking of Zigzag heroes, the good Captain's former back-up group, the excellent Magic Band are back in business again. You'll remember that they mysteriously left Beefheart just before his European tour last year, and not surprisingly he's been wallowing in the artistic doldrums ever since. Well it's now known that the band were sacked by Beefheart's managers, and after a tortuous spell of trying to make a go of it alone they decided to call it quits. Ed Marimba (Artie Tripp III) went to work as an insurance salesman in Massachusetts and Rockette Morton became a forestry officer. But like all musicians who have something creative to say, they couldn't stick that for long and so they got back together again. Old mate John

French (Drumbo) worked with them for awhile and they've acquired a new singer by the name of Sam Galpin. A real change of fortune came however when a group of English admirers (who wish to remain nameless for the moment) provided them with the money to come over here and make an album which they are now doing somewhere down in the West Country. All this info was provided by Connor (naturally) who has spent a week-end with the band (Rockette Morton, Ed Marimba, Zoot Horn Rollo, and Sam Galpin) and is now writing a full account of the proceedings for our next issue. Incidentally, not content with one budding guitarist in Rocky McKnight, Connor's wife Cathy gave birth some months ago to another protege, Micky Ryland McKnight. . . . and I'll leave you to guess who he's named after.

More changes in the Zigzag staff. Unfortunately Anthony has now left us and has taken with him his enthusiastic and knowledgeable appreciation of rock music. Among other things, he was our resident Who expert and he knows a lot more about rock'n'roll than ninety-nine percent of the people you meet in the music business. Hopefully he'll find a more beneficial use for his talents than dealing with subscriptions and mailing out magazines. In his place comes our new secretary, Cheryl, who seems to be coping magnificently and although she doesn't know it yet, she will soon be answering the huge pile of letters that have accumulated on my desk.

And on the subject of letters, I've been in correspondence with Greg Shaw who, as you're no doubt aware, is now looking after the Flamin' Groovies. In one of his letters Greg says: 'I'm very close to an American deal both for the single ('You Tore Me Down'/'Him Or Me') and the group's future recordings, which if it comes thru means we'll all be coming over, to record with Dave Edmunds at Rockfield'. Now wouldn't that be something! Keep your fingers and toes crossed. Also, the latest issue of Greg's magazine 'Who Put The Bomp!' is out now and it contains articles on... wait for it... the Flamin' Groovies, Beatle novelty records, Hollywood Stars, the Rockabilly Revival, Cameo Records, and Michigan Rock. It really is a fabulous magazine, and a must for all Zigzag readers. Its content is always interesting and authoritative, and it's beautifully laid out. Send 50p to Bob Fisher, 16 Central Close, Whetstone, Leicester LE8 3JB and be sure of your copy folks.

What with Pete Frame and Jerry Gilbert working in the same building as us, Zigzag is quite a closely-knit unit; and now CBS Records and John Tobler have moved to their new offices on the other side of Soho Square - well within abusing distance, I can pester him all day long. Every time I go up there I'm greeted by a host of lovely ladies and John's bodyguard Tom 'Flying Frog' Sheehan who's nearly as big as John and twice as mean. No actually Tom's a great bloke, a true Zigzagger (especially when he's had a couple of pints), and an ace photographer. We went to a press reception recently at some Polish gaff where

large quantities of vodka were consumed by all. (Thought you'd like to know that).

I finally got to see 'Tommy' which I found most entertaining. Couldn't understand all those weird reviews it got in the national dailies though. . . they were obviously written by people who don't know the difference between the Bay City Rollers and The Flying Burrito Brothers. I still don't know what to make of Ken Russell either. . . a very strange man.

Rock music on TV (or what little there is of it) is pretty disastrous don't you think? Top Of The Pops is quite unspeakable and 'The Old Grey Whistle Test' is just plain boring now. Surprisingly enough though, there is one programme that is worth checking out every week because it usually features one or two good acts. It's called 'Rock On With 45' and is presented by Kid Jensen. One week I switched on and they had the Jess Roden Band, and the following week featured no less than three numbers from the Feelgoods and an interesting film of Billy Swan playing his new single with a 'publicity only' back-up group of David Essex on drums and Roger McGuinn on guitar. Interesting. The Feelgood's numbers were the best thing I've seen them do on TV. . . they played 'I Don't Mind', 'She Does It Right' (their new single), and 'Route 66'. Great stuff.

This month promises to be a relatively quiet one in the Zigzag office as Fred Munt and String Driven Thing have just embarked on a six-week tour of the States which promises to be highly successful for them. Fred's promised to check out all the record stores for me over there so with a bit of luck he might come back with an armful of rare goodies.

Keep your eyes open for a new album from Darien Spirit which will hopefully be in the shops in the not-too-distant future. They're basically two guys, Jack and Harry, who have tastes in music that run surprisingly close to my own, and what's more they're good guys and they write good songs. Don't say I never told ya.

Hands up all those of you who've heard of the Pure Prairie League. Now take one step forward all those of you who've got both their albums. Well if you haven't, don't on any account pass them by if you see them in the import shops or even the second-hand racks. Those of you who do have them will know why. Peter O'Brien of 'Omaha Rainbow' fame has had the foresight and good taste to track down their producer Bob Ringe, and has come up with a fascinating interview which will appear in the next issue. He talks enthusiastically about the Pure Prairie League, their fight against obscurity, and those two magnificent albums on RCA. Not to be missed. Also in next month's bumper edition (52 pages this time, I hope), there's Genesis, part two of The Strawbs, Jesse Colin Young (at last), Alberto Y Los Trios. etc, Simon Stokes (another of Tobler's epics), Camel (apologies to Jerry Floyd for the delay), Connor's piece on the Magic Band, and lots of other goodies besides. Should be a good one. So until then. Andy.

Status Quo Live!



New EP Release Featuring
**ROLL OVER LAY DOWN
 GERUNDULA
 JUNIOR'S WAILING**

From The Makers of



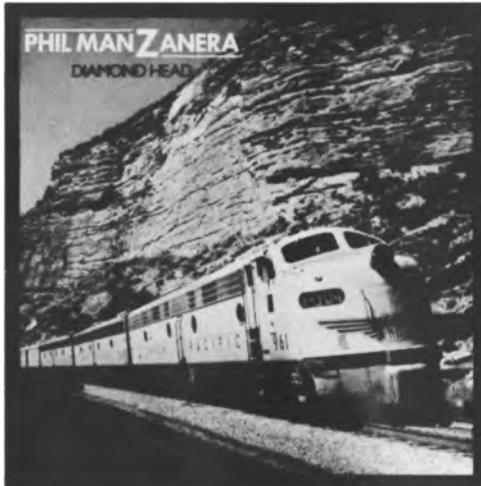
marketed by
phonogram



PHIL MANZANERA



DIAMOND HEAD



ILPS 9315 ALSO AVAILABLE ON CASSETTE
Produced by Phil Manzanera for E.G. Records.

Vocals by:

DOREEN CHANTER
ENO
BILL MacCORMICK
PHIL MANZANERA
ROBERT WYATT
JOHN WETTON



island records