

Where but for Caravan Would I?



Issue No.17

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THE DOG WITH THE SMOKING GUN!!!

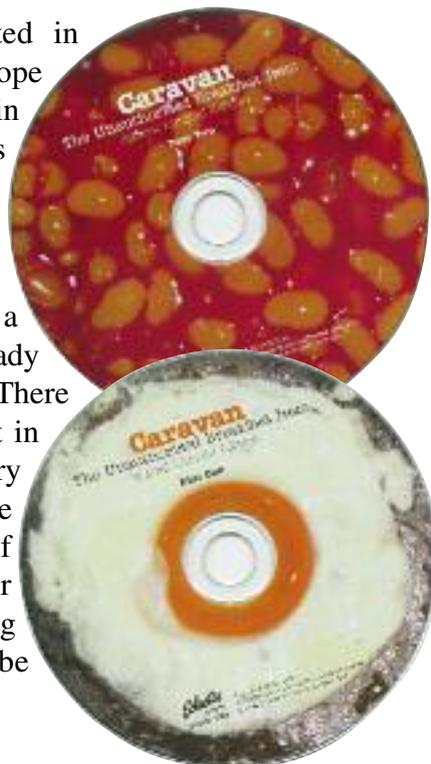
BRUCE DICKINSON "FREAK ZONE": 28 SEPTEMBER 2003

The day prior to the official release of the "Unauthorised Breakfast Item" saw Caravan being interviewed on Bruce Dickinson's BBC Radio 6 programme.

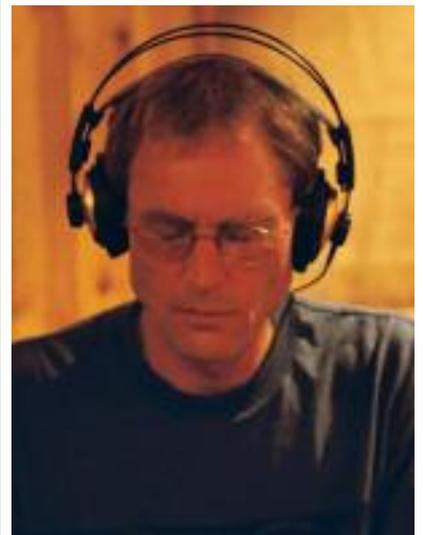
Pye and Geoffrey, accompanied by Mark Powell spent an hour on the programme talking about the new album and forthcoming tour. As a precursor to the interview, "Winter Wine" was played which contrasted dramatically to the new tracks which were to be played. The interview was highly entertaining: both Geoffrey and Pye talked amusingly about the background to the title of the new album, with Pye "naming and shaming" the two band members who had "gone and done a run".

Bruce Dickinson was very interested in Caravan's "new guitarist", which I hope selfishly for our sakes does not result in a future call from Iron Maiden. Tracks played from the new album were: Smoking Gun, Breakfast Item, Wild West Street and Revenge.

The forthcoming tour also received a good mention with Canterbury already sold out, and London nearing sell-out. There seems to be a renewed media interest in the band and Mr Dickinson was very complementary with his remarks. The coming weeks will see a fair amount of advertising in the music magazines for the tour, so get out there and bring along your friends - you won't be disappointed.



Sinclair Stirs in Deepest Kent



It was good to meet a reinvigorated Dave Sinclair, once again full of optimism and ambition. No need to trawl over old ground, suffice to say, but Dave's 'departure' from Caravan in the Autumn of 2002, had initially left him rudderless, lacking direction and unsure of the future. No longer did he have easy access to a live audience and a vehicle for his songwriting skills. In the ensuing period I have witnessed Dave's gradual return of focus and confidence. When I caught up with him in the spring of 2003 here was a man reinvigorated and looking forward to completing a new album consisting of material which had been due to go on a new Caravan album and other songs.



FOREWORD



Welcome to newsletter number 17. Codge and I hope you approve of the new layout.

Congratulations to the band on their **35th anniversary**. A special anniversary show will be held in London on 30th November.

I very much appreciate the contributions to this edition from Ralph Cross, Mark Powell and Rob Adams. I am also grateful to Dave Sinclair for his contribution to a fascinating piece.

Well, the new album is now out. Special thanks to all of you whose purchases made the limited edition a sell-out. I'm sure the formal release will be equally well received. For once in the history of the band, the release has co-incided with the tour which has already received good publicity via the excellent advertising in Record Collector, Classic Rock and Mojo. And the tour posters and flyers are of superb quality. And an added bonus is the media interest to date: An extended and thoroughly entertaining interview with Pye, Geoffrey and Mark on BBC Radio 6 Bruce Dickinson "Freak Zone" and a three page colour spread on Pye in the Kent on Sunday supplement. I'm sure that other positive pieces will follow.

I hope all of you, who are able to, will support the tour - bring along your friends! Shamelessly, I would urge you to support the Edinburgh gig on November 15th. I understand the band last played in Auld Reekie in 1978 - Rob Adams, who contributes to this issue, played in the support band!

Enough, enjoy. - Eric

ODDS and SODS

A number of readers have asked for information on the lady who appeared on the cover of "For Girls". As many of you may know the original intention was to have the lady naked on the cover, but the record company decided otherwise. Pye informs me that in fact the lady was a model friend of John Perry's who was pregnant and not getting much work. John asked if she would be interested in appearing on the cover and the rest is history.

Apart from his Caravan activities, Geoffrey has been busy recording with Steve Hillage and was also due to record a live album with Jim at their weekly gig in Kent. He is again working with Murray Head on an "exciting project".

Doug has also been busy of late undertaking TV advertising work. He can be heard on the latest Persil advert.

Sinclair Stirs in Deepest Kent



I could hardly believe my luck: my second recording session within the space of a few months, having been present- and involved in- the 'Unauthorised Breakfast Item'. On this occasion, I was accompanied by the ever- faithful 'Caravanner', Codge Barber of 'fanzine' fame. We had travelled down from Norfolk to near Ashford in Kent, to the recording studio in the hamlet of Monks Horton. Conveniently, our arrival on this gloriously sunny day (Friday 30th May to be precise), coincided with Dave's arrival, confirming that we had reached the right place, the studio situated as it was in a farm building along a track.

After warm greetings, we stepped inside the studio*, to be met by the owners, Marcus Bishop and Roxanne (Rozz) Jobling. It transpired that Marcus, apart from his abilities on the mixing desk and co- producer of the Sinclair album, plays drums in a function band and a rock band, who have been laying down material in the hope of releasing it. Rozz herself was no mean singer, her soulful, rich voice being used for guide vocals on the tracks, although Dave assured me she would be on some tracks in the final mix. Rozz, herself sings in Marcus' bands.

Following coffee, we prepared for the day ahead. Dave loosened up his fingers by improvising on a grand piano (worth recording in itself!), followed by body exercises to prepare mentally and physically for the day's challenges. First up was 'Outside Your Love', written at the end of 2001. This recorded ballad featured guide vocals by Rozz, a drum machine and bass by Chris Wong (from Marcus' band). The song was played again and again as Dave played along on keyboards. By the fifth take, Dave had settled on a style and delivery with which he was satisfied. His concentration was intense and he remarked, 'It needs more, another instrument, but I don't know what, maybe a Hammond in the chorus.'

'Peace in Time' was next. Eventually this would be linked with the track 'Sancti', recorded with Canterbury Cathedral choir. The contrast between the calm and tranquillity of the cathedral and the reality of war on- going in different parts of the world, was to be underscored by the tracks being back to back. The plan was to add wartime speeches for additional impact. A girl from Japan was to provide vocals in English, French and Japanese.

Dave explained, 'Actually, 'Peace in Time' started out as 'A Mewsing' which I wrote years ago when living at Robert Wyatt's house in St Luke's Mews in London. We performed it on a French TV rock programme. I played Hammond, while Robert undertook vocal 'doodlings' around the basic tune. Actually I have a recording of this from the actual broadcast.' The recording of 'Peace in Time' proved to be my big moment as Dave asked me to 'play' the 'rain stick' on this. Hopefully it will be considered acceptable for the final mix.

The ballad 'Like to Know' was next, again with a basic framework with guide vocals. Dave experimented with many different keyboard sounds as he tried to find the right one for this song. He tried everything from a 'Keith Emerson' style to string synthesiser. Finally he gave up saying he would have to sort it at home that evening. Midway through playing the track back again, Dave leaned back, playing an imaginary sax break, 'That's where I hope Mel Collins will add his bit.'

'Through the Night' was an example of an upbeat number, vaguely in the mould of 'Nowhere to Hide'. This song was made for a blazing keyboard solo and Dave's smile suggested this was already in his mind. 'The Best Life of All' featured a vocal by Jim Leverton, who is likely to feature on three tracks, and bass by Fred Baker (of 'In Cahoots'). Rozz began to lay a vocal track to complement Jim's rich tones. I remembered this song from the original Caravan recording session. Dave explained, that this song is about the fact that you can still have a rich life without a lot of money.





By this time (5.30 pm), Codge and I discussed the fact that we would happily sit there for as long as it took to record the rest of the album, so fascinating was the whole experience. However a long trip home to Norfolk beckoned, so reluctantly we said our farewells, privileged to have been 'flies on the wall'.

FOOTNOTE:

Fans will, I am sure, understand that this will be very different to a Caravan album. It is an opportunity for Dave to realise his musical ambitions and here is a feast of melody and song. Certainly some of these tracks would have led in a different direction if they had remained within the domain of a Caravan album. Dave made it clear that this album will reflect his mood at the time and a further recording might well be completely different, maybe with a more keyboard orientated style. He is also toying with the idea of recording an album of piano solo pieces, so you can see he is bursting with ambition and there's no doubt it would happen if funding were available. Let's hope his solo project is a success and leads to other openings.

The release and distribution of the album had not been finalised at the time of writing. Dave was intending to fly to Japan in the hope of agreeing a deal. An initial title of 'Nowhere to Hide', became 'Full Circle', although of course this could yet change. Mouth wateringly, Dave was also talking about the possibility of performing live. Most pleasing for me was to hear Dave speak warmly of his 'mates' in Caravan and he wished them well for the future.

*The album was recorded at Absolute studios, www.absolute-studios.co.uk

Ralph Cross September 2003



Review

There's been much wailing and gnashing of gums in the wake of Dave Sinclair's departure from Caravan. To which I have to say: steady on, folks.

This isn't to say that I consider Dave no great loss. I bow to nobody in my admiration for his musicianship and composing talents. In fact, though I hesitate to admit this, it must be over thirty years since I declared him the best organist in rock. In front of witnesses. The wrong kind of witnesses, alas.

I'd been to see Emerson Lake & Palmer, who having received a standing ovation for the feat of coming on stage an hour late, proceeded to render me pants-less with ennui. Afterwards, some blokes I knew asked me what I'd thought and in the ensuing discussion, when challenged to say what could possibly be better than someone throwing knives at a Hammond, I'd brought up Dave's name.

I went on to describe the Sinclair qualities as being similar to the human voice. I'd actually stolen this from an American reviewer's description of The Band's Garth Hudson, who would have been my next exhibit in the 'better than knife-throwing' debate, and for a while I secretly agreed with my challengers' suggestion that I was a pretentious git.

But I've come to realise that much of the best instrumental work does indeed impersonate the human voice - think of jazz and traditional musicians learning the words of ballads and airs to get the song's meaning - and if the opening sequence of Nine Feet Underground, to name but a few bars, isn't singing, then I don't know what is.

Anyway, it was mere months after my ELP experience that Dave Sinclair announced he was leaving Caravan. I was aghast. Having followed the band's progress through the first three albums, the question I'd been asking since The Land of Grey and Pink had appeared - ie how on earth are they going to follow that? - was being answered. They weren't; at least not the Caravan we'd come to know and love.

With hindsight, band members deserting assumed a weight beyond all proportion in those days. Common room days of national mourning seem a trifle over the top when Dave's departure for pastures

I'm delighted to have received the following article from Rob Adams. Rob is a journalist in Scotland and reviews music for a living, mainly in the Herald. You may recall that Rob wrote the review of the classic Renfrew Ferry gig a couple of years ago. Many thanks Rob.

new resulted, within a wink of an eye, in his reappearance on Matching Mole's first album, on which he co-wrote the best song ever written to a girl called Caroline. It didn't offer as many possibilities of boogie-ing foreplay as Status Quo's (or so I'm told). But I love it still, O Caroline.

Meanwhile, back in the Caravan, other strengths emerged and progressed as the tracks on Waterloo Lily began to filter through John Peel sessions. Richard Sinclair's characterful songwriting and wonderfully inventive bass playing (I recently read an article in which Richard said that he wasn't good enough then - codswallop) were developing apace. Richard Coughlan's superbly directional drumming nailed the whole thing. And Pye produced a classic in Love in Your Eye. Plus, if the band wanted to nick the groove from Miles Davis's Jack Johnson and call it something else, that was fine by me.

If losing one Sinclair could be said to be careless, losing two was, well, not quite the disaster predicted. Especially since, while one was off to Hatfield & the North (a great band, particularly live, I don't care what prog rock detractors say), the other was about to come in through the revolving door.

I can still remember the sense of anticipation as we drove over to St



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Andrews University for the opening of its new students' union at which Caravan were topping a bill including the Sensational Alex Harvey Band, Bridget St John (did I miss the Bridget St John revival; it must have been her turn by now, surely?) and Arthur Brown's Kingdom Come.

As was the way back then, things overran and through no fault of their own, Caravan outdid ELP in the delayed start stakes - and came on stage at about 7am. This was the Plump in the Night Caravan. You know the album. The gig was a cracking appetiser. John Perry offered a very different approach to Richard - ballsier was the term, I think - on bass and vocals. A violist had appeared and would soon prove himself to be handy on a veritable music shop of instruments. And a Sinclair was singing - the keyboard kind of singing - in the band again.

I saw that line-up several times and I played the Plump in the Night LP to death. I now play the CD reissue with extra tracks and as I look at the CDs taking over my flat - I review them for a living - I think, well, the world didn't stop when Dave Sinclair left after Cuning Stunts either. Nor did Dave stop.

In fact, although I love the first three albums especially and I've been known to play the mono and stereo versions of the first one back to back on CD, some of my favourite music by Caravan and its extended family is post Cuning Stunts. Videos of Hollywood? A great song. Richard's A.A. Man and Back to Herne Bay Front are, for me, up there with Ray Davies for English idiosyncrasy (they're also beautifully written) and his Caravan of Dreams, An Evening of Magic - featuring guess who on keys? - and R.S.V.P CDs haven't been allowed to gather dust.

Probably the best surprise, though, of my Caravan listening career - approaching that terrible moment when you realise that the number of years that you've been a fan of someone equals the number of revs per minute the first record you bought of theirs turned at - came when I got sent to review the band at the Renfrew Ferry in Glasgow in October 2000.

It's always tricky when, as a music reviewer, you're confronted with a blast from your past and have to give an objective opinion. I don't hold with this rock stars should retire at thirty nonsense that you read in newspapers



(how old are the people who write that and how long have they been doing their jobs?)

Some musicians may not live up to the memories you have of them; others most certainly do. Brian Auger was killin' when last I saw him, for the first time in years. Michael Chapman still does the business. And as for Jeff Beck, well, how does he manage to keep getting better? (You mean you don't own Who Else!?)

I hadn't really kept up with Caravan post Cool Water, I confess, so I went to see them with trepidation and ... I really liked the gig. They sounded rejuvenated. They had fans who couldn't possibly have been born when The Land of Grey and Pink was released. They had new songs - and new members - which sounded really rockin', and the old stuff still had a magic.

Sinclairlessness notwithstanding (Scrabble, anyone? - ed) and work permitting, I'm going to catch them on their November tour and listen to them with open ears. Just as long as they don't come on at 7am. Or if they plan to, can someone warn me and I'll set the alarm and get up early.

Full secure cardtaking facilities. All orders delivered within 21 days and all prices include postage anywhere in the world. The site also has a mailing list facility if you would like to be kept up to date with any new Caravan or Caravan related products/releases.

THE UNAUTHORISED BREAKFAST ITEM Can be purchased on line from 3rd November at www.eclecticdiscs.com or via chq or PO or cash to Eclectic Discs, PO Box 868, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2WL. All cheques for new album to be made payable to eclecticdiscs.

All other items cheques to be made payable to Mark Powell-Caravan account.

New album is £11.50 including postage to anywhere in the world.

Prices for other items as follows

All over You/All over you Too/Canterbury Collection £9.50 inc P&P

Nottingham Live 75/Cool Water /A Nights Tale (CD) £10.00 inc P&P

Caravan 1990 Classic Rock Legends DVD £13.50

A Nights Tale (USA 2002) DVD £13.50.



Where but for Caravan Would I?



Caravan - by Mark Powell

The legendary band Caravan was formed in Canterbury, England in 1968 by Pye Hastings (guitar/ vocals), Dave Sinclair (keyboards), Richard Sinclair (bass/vocals) and Richard Coughlan (drums) out of the ashes of The Wilde Flowers, which also at one time or another featured Kevin Ayers and future Soft Machine members Robert Wyatt and Hugh Hopper. Caravan released their eponymous debut album on MGM/Verve in October 1968 which contained a refreshing organ-based psychedelic/progressive pop sound, as represented by the debut single, "Place of My Own". The album recently was voted as one of the forty most important psychedelic albums ever by "Record Collector" magazine.

Late 1969 saw a move from Verve to the Decca label and September 1970 saw the release of 'If I Could Do It All Over Again, I'd Do It All Over You'. This album is widely regarded as one of Caravan's best, featuring subtly humorous songs and the multi-part epic "For Richard". Caravan then released 'In the Land of Grey and Pink' in September 1971, an album considered to be the quintessential Caravan album, and one which MOJO magazine featured as 500 classic all-time albums of any genre. With memorable songs such as "Winter Wine" and the whimsical "Golf Girl", as well as the side-long "Nine Feet Underground", this album went on to be awarded a gold disc by Universal Music in 2001 for sales of over 100,000 up to 1980. The album has since sold around 25,000 copies on CD.

Dave Sinclair decided to leave the band immediately after the albums release to pursue work with ex-Soft Machine member Robert Wyatt and later Matching Mole. Steve Miller then came in as a replacement for Dave Sinclair. This saw a change to a jazzier feel centered on Miller's acoustic and electric piano which dominated the next album, "Waterloo Lily", released in May 1972.

The lineup then disbanded, leaving only Pye Hastings and Richard Coughlan. A change of direction resulted with the addition of Geoffrey Richardson on viola and flute. The lineup was completed by Stuart Evans on bass and Derek Austin on keyboards. No album was released by this version of Caravan, although they toured extensively, including a series of dates in Australia.

In February 1973, another shake-up occurred with the departure of Evans and Austin. John Perry was recruited on bass and Dave Sinclair agreed to rejoin. The next album, 'For Girls Who Grow Plump in the Night', was a return to form, with practically every track written by Pye Hastings. This is an exceptionally strong Caravan album, with the presence of Richardson's viola and standout songs include "Memory Lain Hugh" / "Headloss" and "A Hunting We Shall Go". This album also was awarded a silver disc by Universal Music in 2001 for sales of over 60,000 up to 1980.

The band then got the chance to try something a little different and recorded an album with the New Symphonia, for which Pye wrote a couple of new tunes and Simon Jeffes of Penguin Cafe Orchestra arranged the music. Caravan and the New Symphonia showed the band in full flight and gave



Geoffrey Richardson the chance to show his talents and for him to expand on the earlier versions of the songs, also earning Silver status for sales up to 1980. By July 1974, John Perry had left, to be replaced by Mike Wedgewood, formerly of Curved Air.

With Dave Sinclair firmly re-established in the band, a new album was put together, 'Cunning Stunts', which featured Dave Sinclair's songwriting far more heavily. The album was supported with two tours of America. Once again wanderlust got the better of Dave Sinclair and he was replaced by Jan Schelhaas. The album 'Blind Dog at St Dunstons' focused more on shorter songs but still with the trademark Caravan 'sound'. Soon after this Mike Wedgewood departed to be replaced by Dek Messecar (formerly with Daryl Way's Wolf), and Dave Sinclair returned temporarily to play some live dates.

A change of label to Arista saw the Tony Visconti produced album 'Better by Far'. Geoffrey Richardson decided to go as session work began to come his way, leaving in April 1978. Terry King, the band's old manager, signed them up to his own Kingdom Records and a new album followed in November 1980, simply titled 'The Album'. With Dave Sinclair in tow and Geoffrey Richardson guesting, they managed a few prestigious dates including a full house at London's Dominion Theatre.

All went quiet again however, although a reunion album was released in July 1982 entitled 'Back to Front', featuring the original line up augmented on some tracks by Mel Collins (King Crimson, Camel) on saxophone. No longer were the band members in music full time. The band lay dormant for the next eight years, emerging from hibernation only for an appearance at the Marquee club in 1983 for the venue's 25th anniversary celebrations and a 'final' gig in Canterbury in 1984.

In 1990 Central TV were putting together a series of concerts to focus on bands from the 1970's and the very first line up got back together to record a set. As a warm up, Caravan played the Canterbury Festival in June 1990, followed by the concert recording at Central Studios in July to 400 fans. A small number of successful gigs followed.

The discovery of old tapes left over from a recording session in 1977 (with Richard Sinclair on bass), led to the release of this material under the title of 'Cool Water' in 1994. Pye Hastings and Dave Sinclair agreed to a suggestion by HTD records to record a brand new Caravan album.

'The Battle of Hastings' emerged in late 1995, with the participation of Pye Hastings, Richard Coughlan,

Dave Sinclair, Geoffrey Richardson, plus Jim Leverton (formerly of Noel Redding's Fat Mattress, Savoy Brown and Steve Marriott's Packet of Three) on bass. This marked a true return to form for Caravan, with the songwriting of Pye Hastings back to its very best. A further Caravan recording was released in April 1996, consisting of reworked early classics entitled 'All Over You'. An autumn tour for 1996 was arranged, but Geoffrey Richardson was unavailable. This resulted in the return of Jimmy Hastings on saxes and flutes and the addition of Simon Bentall on percussion and ex-Robert Plant Band member Doug Boyle on lead guitar. It was evident from the first rehearsals that this new blood was giving the band a real kick: Boyle's stunning guitar work was giving Pye a new lease on life. Richardson was soon to rejoin the fold.

Throughout the late 1990s the rejuvenated Caravan performed well-received concerts throughout Northern Europe, often at the renowned annual Canterbury Festival. Numerous archival and current live recordings were released. Positive momentum has continued unabated for this legendary outfit, with the remastering and re-release of their entire Decca catalogue on the Universal label in 2001, with the addition of bonus cuts and extensive liner notes. In addition, an archival live album was released, Live at the Fairfield Halls 1974. Following sell-out concerts in Greece, Japan and Italy and triumphant return to the USA and Canada in June of 2002 (which included a concert with a 40 piece symphony orchestra in front of 6,000 people at the Quebec Festival) Caravan returned to the concert stage in November in the UK and Europe to promote their new DVD release "Live in the USA" (recorded at The Patriot's Theatre, Trenton New Jersey on June 29th 2002).

Whilst commencing recording for their new album wide musical differences became apparent between Pye Hastings and Dave Sinclair which resulted in Dave's departure from the band once more. His replacement being a former Caravan keyboard player, Jan Schelhaas. Jan's contribution to the band both in the studio and on stage, as evidenced on their forthcoming studio album and a tour of France in February 2003 and concerts in Japan and Spain in May 2003, has given Caravan new impetus to move forward into the 21st Century with concerts and festival appearances planned for Germany, Holland and the USA and a British tour, (scheduled to begin with an appearance at The Canterbury Festival on October 11th 2003) to celebrate the bands 35th anniversary and coincides with the release of a superb new album, "The Unauthorised Breakfast Item", hailed by critics as "the finest Caravan album in 25 years".



Dave Sinclair Interview

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to interview Dave Sinclair about his new album, trip to Japan, his past musical experiences and thoughts on the future.

I understand that you have been in the recording studio lately working on your new album. could you provide a bit of background on the album, the tracks, where it was recorded and who has been producing/engineering and playing on it. Does it have a title yet?

I have been in the studio on and off since March this year, up until I went to Japan on 11th September. The tracks were recorded in Absolute Studios, located in the heart of the Kent countryside. Formerly called Astra, the studio has been frequented by many bands in the past, including Renaissance, Caravan and Richard Sinclair's Caravan of Dreams. The studio is now owned and run by Marcus and Roxane, who both feature strongly on my new album. Marcus is also the engineer. The album which is produced by Marcus and me is called "Full Circle".

One of the tracks "And when the sun sets" was recorded in January 2002 and was completed in one hour, including mixing. This was done independently, during the period Caravan had started laying down the tracks for a proposed new album. It is a tribute to my father who died suddenly. Another track "Sancti" was recorded at my home with the basics, and the choir added in June 2002 at St. Edmunds school, Canterbury. The track was completed in August 2003. Apart from those two titles, I have re-recorded some of the tracks initially intended for the Caravan album. The remainder I have dropped.

As I was now in a position of making a solo album, I realised I had the chance of experimenting with different styles of songwriting I had been developing. I was also tending to come up with songs that suited the singers I had in mind. When I had been at Astra sound 10 years previously, I had listened to a tape of a young 15 year old girl singer, Roxane (pronounced Rozane - an old Persian name). I was so impressed with her voice. I remember thinking that one day in the future I would like to work with her on some of my songs. Jim Leverton also does some great singing on 3 of the tracks. Ray Doble is a great live singer, a la, Michael Macdonald. It was a great treat watching him and Rozz record "Thru the Night" together in the live room. My cousin Richard also has a great voice, very English and very Canterbury. He was a must for the album.



All the tracks on the album have been written in the last 3 years apart from one, which was written while I was in Robert Wyatt's Matching Mole. Hatfield and the North with Robert performed this song early in 1972 on a TV programme in Paris. At that time it didn't have any lyrics, but was a good platform for Robert to experiment with his voice. My cousin Richard happened to play me an old tape of it recorded from the radio. I then had the idea of re-working it for the album. It eventually led me, at a time back in February when there seemed to be much instability in the world, to fight a small corner for peace. Thus "time" was beginning to be an important factor many ways. 31 years later this track now called "Peace in Time" is a circle of 8 chords repeating and set into the rhythm of a ticking clock. It includes sound effects, famous war speeches, lyrics and singing in French, English and Japanese. As the track fades at the end, all that is heard is the beautiful Japanese lyrics sung very simply behind a ticking clock. I couldn't have hoped for a better ending to the album. This track is linked to the preceding track, "Sancti" which I have tried to create, as a celebration of life, and "Peace in Time" as more the reality of life. The fact that this music is still valid after all those years and the importance of unity around the globe, are the main reasons for the album's title "Full Circle". Organising a trip to Japan as far back as April this year gave me a deadline to focus on getting the album finished. Of course, I ended up working right until the time I left in September.

I was really knocked out by the album and still can't stop listening to it.

The album will be sold as a 2 CD pack with the second CD being a bonus one. The album was too long in its original form, so the tracks now not being used plus some additional bonus tracks will form the basis of the second disc. I have also done a reworking of "O' Caroline" with Richard singing, which will be included also. If I can get the album released in early December, I will include the Christmas song that I recorded 7 years ago.

During my time in Japan, I met many musicians, made a lot of friends and did some recording. At the rock garden at the Ryoanji Temple in Kyoto, I sat in the same place that I had done with the guys from Camel in January '79. The only difference between then and now was nearly a quarter of a century.

I gather from others who have heard the album that some of the tracks are more mainstream/poppy and have moved away from the Caravan type extended

keyboard tunes of old. Was this a deliberate intention on your part? Is it true to say that you are developing more of a songwriting role with the hope that others will cover the tracks?

I have always considered myself, even from the early days, as a songwriter. Many of the Caravan tracks would start with a song, but then would be followed by an instrumental passage. Being aspiring musicians, we managed to combine the best of both worlds. But then, in the early days, it was different, as we spent much of our time living and working together. It gave us the opportunity to develop something more unique, and more cohesive.

I am pleased with this album, because it's given me the chance to hone my songwriting skills. I also hope it will be a springboard for me to continue making albums. At the moment, I'm not sure which direction I will take, but I would like to do an album with a keyboard acoustic type approach, and also a more heavy riffy type album, with extended solo work. I have already started writing material for both.

Some of my songs have already been covered abroad and at home. That's always a boost for me, but they are not written intentionally for that purpose.

I believe that you have re-worked "Nowhere to Hide" Can you tell me what that track is all about?

The track is pretty self explanatory really. It's just about the rat race and the fact that if we could have a chance to step outside our day to day existence, it is possible that we could realise more of our own potential. It's all about transformation. None of us can live without change, whether it's our choice or whether it's inflicted on us.

Are you planning any live performances, and if so how do you have in mind to be part of the band?

At the moment I haven't had much of a chance to think about live dates, apart from the meetings I had when I was in Japan. There is a chance of playing the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan with Roxane, next July. Also, the possibility of some dates in Tokyo and Osaka next year, but they would be along more progressive lines. I am also hoping to arrange some concerts in the UK for next year.

I understand that Ralph Cross and Codge Barber visited you one day during the recordings and said that you were very focussed on the new album and are very much looking forward given your departure from Caravan. Would you agree with this?

Yes, I am looking forward. My departure from Caravan has opened up many possibilities for me. It has given me the impetus I needed. It has meant an awful lot of hard work, but I've also had the energy needed to cope with it and be more forward looking.

How did you get started on songwriting and how do you go about composing a song?

As I mentioned earlier, I've always been a songwriter basically. I started playing at the age of 9 in a skiffle group, and was recorded for a programme for BBC radio. I was copying songs from the radio at the age of 10-12 and also starting to compose quite intricate pieces of music.



Where but for Caravan Would I?



I remember at my grammar school in Canterbury one day, playing the grand piano in the music room during the lunch break. Unbeknownst to me, someone had stuck a microphone inside the piano connected to the school hall tannoy. I didn't realise it at the time, but for the whole of the school lunch hour, my music was being piped out to everyone eating their mash, mushy peas and gypsy tarts! I also spent many an evening trying to write songs with my cousin Richard.

I played my first live performance to an audience on piano (one of my compositions) at the age of 15.

My best known composition, "Nine Feet Underground" was written on the upright piano I still have now. It was written in the basement flat (basically one room, nine feet underground) of the celebrated jazz musician Tony Coe's house in Canterbury where I was living at the time.

Songwriting can be a very personal thing. For me, I not only need the inspiration, but the space and time in which to deal with it. It's basically translating your emotions into musical form. I think that it is only something you could really understand if you were to experience it yourself. Once I've locked onto a musical idea that appeals to me, I will continue working on it day after day. In fact, it carries on sorting itself out in my head overnight and during the day, even when I'm not sitting at the piano. It actually takes months before I'm completely satisfied with it. On rare occasions, it can be a lot quicker: the track "That Day" was written in four days.

For the anoraks out there, how many and what type of keyboards do you own?

The keyboards are listed on my Japanese website: <http://www.iris.dti.ne.jp/~yutayuta/ds/index.htm>



At the time of Grey & Pink, you were regarded by the music critics as being up there with Keith Emerson and Rick Wakeman, and Caravan were regarded as at the forefront of progressive music. Do you think if you had remained with the band at that time Caravan would have ended up as one of Britain's biggest bands? Any regrets?

Well, obviously my style was very different to K.E. and R.W. I'm lucky in a certain way now, as I don't have to compromise.

Who were your main musical influences when you started playing?

There were many influences to start with. I listened to Borrodin, Elgar, Greig and Holst and then went onto the 60s charts: Carol King, Hendrix and the Beatles. Following that there was Wes Montgomery, Miles Davis and not forgetting Brian Auger. Then there was Chic Corea, Billy Cobham and of course George Duke. I was also a big fan of Gino Vanelli (preferring the wafer to the cone - sorry!). It always amazed me how Segovia could play those incredible runs with fingers like 50 year old bananas!

How did it feel to get the belated gold and silver discs?

It was good to see our success had been recognised at last. It also confirmed our suspicions that someone had been making some money out of it!

You then moved into a more freeform jazzy style of music with Matching Mole and Hatfield. Was that a deliberate decision or a result of the musicians you were now playing alongside?

After I left Caravan in 1971, I hitched down to Southern Portugal on my own to eventually seek solace with a few Agua Calientes. Having, I thought, told no one of my whereabouts, I was amazed to get a message from Robert Wyatt saying "come back, your country needs you!"

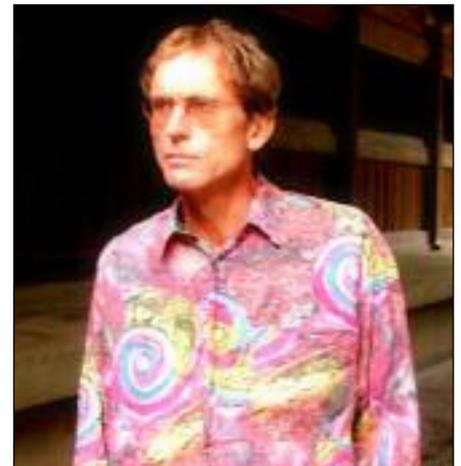
Once I had been repatriated (having lost all my money, all £6 of it) I spent a day playing through many of my songs to Robert on the piano. He asked me to join a new band he was forming called "Matching Mole" (a pun on the French for Soft Machine, the band he had just left). He also wanted to use one of my songs for an album track that was eventually recorded in '72, and called "O' Caroline". The massive studio was freezing cold with only a single bar electric radiator, which we all huddled around in between takes, as we tried to complete the album. One night, after putting down the basic piano etc. for "O' Caroline" we all trundled off leaving Robert behind. When we came back the next morning Robert was still there. He'd worked right through the night and had completed the track on his own. We were all knocked out when we heard it.

It was after doing a series of concerts with the band that I started to feel a bit uncomfortable, not sure of my direction. I had originally thought it would be more of a song band, but of course the musicians were far more capable than that.

I also joined Hatfield for a while, but although the music was diverse and interesting, I wasn't comfortable about my role in the band. Having played in both bands, I now realise what an extremely valuable experience it had been for me.

You also spent some time touring the world with Camel with your cousin Richard Sinclair and Jan Schelhaas? Was that an enjoyable experience?

Yes, a very good experience for me. Although playing about 69 concerts in 70 days on the European leg of the tour was a bit draining. But it was great to get a regular wage! It was also good to play with Richard again. For years we had got on well musically. In fact some people have considered the Sinclairs as the essence of Canterbury music.



Have you any particular interesting experiences you can tell us about when on the road with Caravan or other bands?

I remember one time in the south of France after a gig with Camel. A local was entertaining us in a bar playing rather bad piano. After a quick discussion by the roadies, they proceeded to lift up him and the piano and carry them outside onto the street while he was still playing!

A long shot, do you recall your best ever live gig?

Although I can't recall one in particular, no doubt it was probably during the early days with the original line up, and probably in a small club.

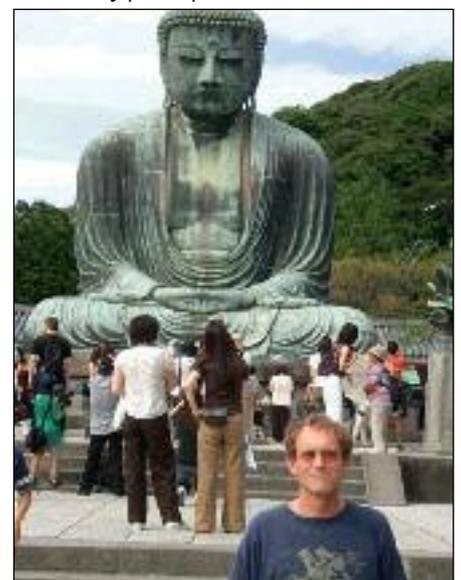
Were you ever offered any job opportunities with other bands?

Yes. Immediately after my first professional gig at the Middle Earth in London, I had quite a few offers. I was also asked on another occasion to audition for a new group called Led Zeppelin, but never went as I was happy enough being in Caravan at that time. A few years ago I also had the opportunity to rejoin Camel for a world tour.

I was constantly in touch with many other musicians, including Robert Palmer, whose death I was very sad to hear about. His voice always knocked me out, especially the first time I heard him singing with a local band at a gig up North, when they were supporting Caravan. We kept in touch and he'd often sit up behind me on stage when we played, but somehow we never worked together.

Daves website: www.dave-sinclair.co.uk

Japanese photos: © Kowki Takahara 2003



Where but for Caravan Would I?



Letters & Emails...

I just had to write, to ask you to pass on to the band, my thanks for a great night out at the Gulbenkian on Saturday night. I had not seen the band for over twenty years and my wife who had never seen the band, although I constantly play all the old albums to her, thought they were brilliant. Unfortunately we could not get a ticket for my 10 year old son who really loves Golf Girl. It was great hearing the old stuff played live once again and we shall look out for more gigs in Kent in the future. I bought the new CD and have played it a couple of times and we both really like it. Many thanks once again

Stephen and Diane Owen

Hi All, Just wanted to say thank you for a splendid evening at the Gulbenkian. I was spellbound from start to finish and I am absolutely serious when I say I can't ever remember enjoying any concert, anywhere, more than last night. Truly fantastic, thanks to you all and don't stop playing.

David Bridgeman (aged 47 and a half)

I was sitting here in sunny California @ work listening to Waterloo Lily, reading the liner notes and ran across your website. I am, as they say on the radio, a long time listener of Caravan, (25 years) first time e-mailer. Wow what a great website, I can see I have a lot of catching up to do. Caravan was a great discovery for me, only one other band did I discover so wonderfully, The String Cheese Incident band out of Colorado. Well, have a good day compatriot, keep your ammo dry and all that. ...and thanks again for the website.

Don Nelson

I've just discovered the Caravan Info Website (the address was written on the nice flyer announcing the UBU Rennes gig (Wednesday, February 5th). Congratulations! Your site is great! The UBU gig was wonderful, the band played 2 hours with a real pleasure for us and... for themselves. It was the second time I saw Caravan on stage, but the previous one was in Amougies Pop Festival, October... 1969. Best regards, (sorry for my poor english but I'm french ...)

Claude DEFER

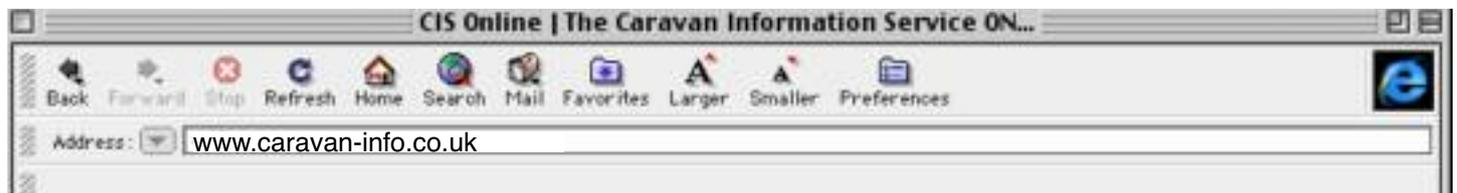
I saw Caravan in Six Fours les Plages last week. I have very difficult to speak english (everytime I try, I look for words...); in English, I'd better write, that's why during the interview I have just been trying to understand. Born in October 1967, I have known Caravan since a long time (first album, In the land of Grey and Pink, Waterloo Lily...), but it was the first time I saw Caravan in concert. Before Six Four, I was afraid I would never see Caravan in concert. Then I wish I saw Caravan again: it was really a great performance. Thanks for all: your music which give me a lot of pleasure, your kindness, your humour (for example, title of next album). Friendly thoughts from Nice.

JEAN

Hi!...my name is Max..I'm a classic pianist from Genoa, Italy. My age is 40, but I love Caravan music since the age of 17! I only want to say "Hello boys, carry on your (travelling) way... it's always awesome... and I'm just looking forward your forthcoming new album"...Why it's so difficult to find your '77 album "Better by Far" here in Italy? With all my love and appreciation for your wonderful work!

Max

PS a particular greeting for Dave Sinclair, who is still my favourite keyboardist!!



Jasper Smit Continental Caravan Campaign* and European Information Services. Kleingouw 34A, 1619 CB Andijk Tel: 0031-228 59 35 25 - Fax: 0031-299 42 99 85 (copies of the double CD Back On The Tracks - Live in Holland are available by contacting Jasper)

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

Calyx, Canterbury Website:
calyx@club-international.fr

I get lots of people saying how difficult it is to find Caravan's material in the shops. Try the following:

Piccadilly Records of Manchester. Tel: 0161 839 8008

GFT of Surbiton Tel: 0181 339 9965

www.kelkoo.com An excellent source for material supposedly unavailable elsewhere: in addition this web site searches out the cheapest copies from a variety of suppliers.

Many thanks to Codge Barber who is helping compile this Issue of the Fanzine - I couldn't do this mag. without you.

The latest Newsletter remains FREE i.e. all that is required is an S.A.E. in a decent sized envelope or International Reply Coupon for Europe and The World (any donations are welcome however, simply to defray costs of production which are down to Codge and myself).

Back copies i.e. combined issues 1/2 and issues 3-16 as well as the booklets for the 1990 and 1991 concerts at Old Buckenham can be obtained for 2 x 1st class stamps per issue as well as a stamped addressed envelope (2 x 1st).

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Photos or memorabilia to be sent to:
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