

Survival and Other Stories

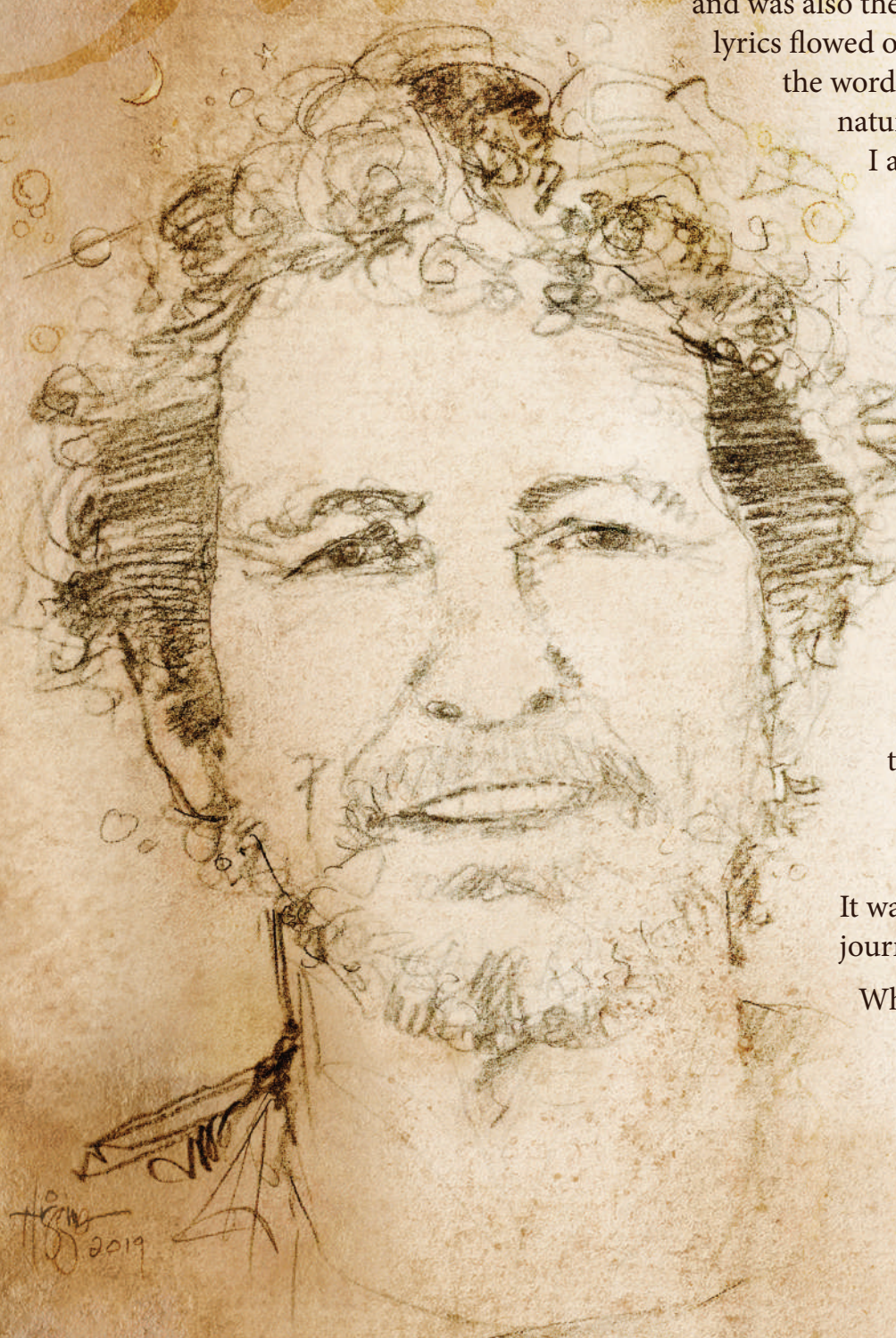
Jon Anderson

1000 HANDS
PAPER CO.

MEMOIRS

YES

KNOW



The song "Survival" is from the first Yes album and was also the first song I wrote where complete lyrics flowed out from my thoughts as I scribbled the words on paper. After watching many nature documentaries on television, I asked myself these two simple questions.

How does nature battle with the elements?

How do we battle with the challenges of life?

We learn to survive. There are no road maps and this is not a rehearsal.

It was over fifty years ago, just as Yes was forming that these thoughts came to me. The egg... so fragile and so helpless, and yet somehow it survives...and then the child is born...

...and we are all going somewhere.

It was really this song that started my journey with Yes back in 1968.

Where was I heading...and why?

SURVIVAL

Sunshine is creeping in
And somewhere in a field a life begins
An egg too proud to rape
The beginning of a shape of things to come
That start the run
Life has begun
Fly fast the gun

The Mother flew too late
And life within the egg was left to fate
Not really knowing how
The world outside would take it when it came
And life's the same
For things we aim
Are we to blame?

Don't doubt the fact there's life within you
Yesterday's endings will tomorrow life give you
All that dies, dies for a reason
To put it's strength into the seasons

Survival... Survival
They take away and they give
The livings right to live,
The livings right to know...

The egg breaks all is out
The crawling bird begins to scream and shout
Where is the parent bird
Loneliness arose and heard it's name ring in
For lives begin
Survival win, Survival sin

So soon the evening comes
And with it runs the aching fear of hate
Could someone still remain
Who thinks he still could gain by escaping fate
It's much too late
Don't underrate, appreciate

Don't doubt the fact that life's within you
Yesterday's endings will tomorrow life give you
All that dies, dies for a reason
To put it's strength into the seasons

Survival... Survival...
They take away and they give
The livings right to live,
The livings right to know...

And we're all going somewhere
And we're all going somewhere
And we're all going somewhere...

Jon Anderson - 1969



SURVIVAL AND OTHER STORIES

*Making music is easy...***...it's the business that's hard.**

In 1953 the Little John Skiffle Band was my first musical group. I was young and I wanted to play washboard. Guitar was out of the question, just too complicated and expensive, plus dad wanted me to play violin. So there I was in Clayton Le Moors, nine years old, four-foot-nothing with my big brother Tony. We hung out with a bunch of other noisemakers in a backstreet garage two miles from Accrington making quite a racket! Screaming out:

"Won't you bet on Stewball 'cos he might win, win, win, bet on Stewball 'cos he might win!"

And other classics like:

"Rock Island Line, it's a mighty good road to ride, eh?"

Well I thought it was bloody great! However, my metal thimbles that I got from my Mom to scrape along the washboard, probably made an irritating noise as well and they kept falling off my fingers making me miss a few scrapes. Being the Little John in the band, I had to be in time with the rest of them. So I came up with an idea to keep the thimbles from falling off. I took a hammer and tapped them very tightly around the tips of my fingers. This sounded like a great idea but in practice it was a bad move! I hit them too hard and nearly split my fingers. Despite seeing blood, I kept playing along and screaming:

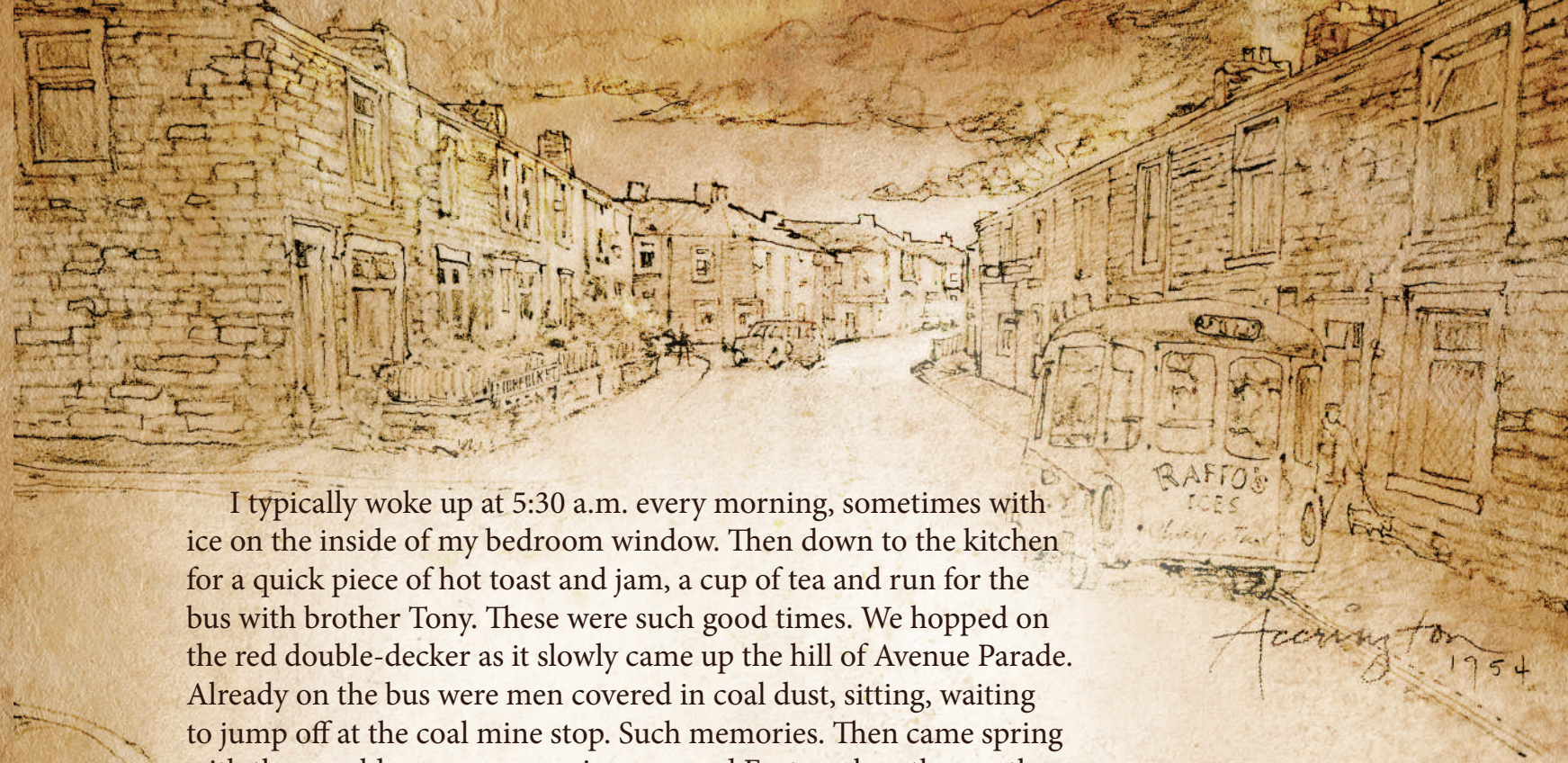
"Won't you bet on Stewball 'n' you might win! Win! WIN!"

It must have been a hell of a noise! Such was my initiation into the world of Rock 'n' Roll, well, Skiffle.

Chasing Cows and Dreams

In those far off days, my work was on the farm. I started early chasing and milking cows, bottling the milk, then delivering it to homes all around Accrington. In my youngest days, working on the Proctor farm was wonderful in many ways. At the tender age of 9 and 10 years old, being able to help Walter Proctor with his wife Annie along with foreman Frank and my older brother Tony was special to me.

The weather could be crazy cold, and the rain; well deluges of rain fell all the time in Accrington during the winter if it wasn't snowing. I think it had something to do with the North Sea. Anyway, climbing over those beautiful giant sunlit snowdrifts at dawn to deliver a bottle of milk and six eggs taught me to be a very deliberate worker. So growing up fast at that age was a must.



I typically woke up at 5:30 a.m. every morning, sometimes with ice on the inside of my bedroom window. Then down to the kitchen for a quick piece of hot toast and jam, a cup of tea and run for the bus with brother Tony. These were such good times. We hopped on the red double-decker as it slowly came up the hill of Avenue Parade. Already on the bus were men covered in coal dust, sitting, waiting to jump off at the coal mine stop. Such memories. Then came spring with those golden sunny mornings around Easter when the weather got better. I was always in a sort of dream world, singing to myself and just never stopping to think about how hard the work was.

Yes, I did have my dreams and like most kids I wanted to play football for Accrington Stanley—nothing more, nothing less. That thought preoccupied my life 24 hours a day, but being only 4 foot 11 inches tall at the age of 13 was a problem. I tried all sorts of ways to grow taller.

"Stretch Luv!" Mum would say.

I must have stretched and reached for the top of every doorway for the next year but it didn't help launch my chances to become a Stanley player or play for England. I did not grow taller for quite a while but even then you would have to agree I had big dreams.

That year the family was on summer holiday at my auntie May's house in Newbury, Berkshire, in southern England. There was Tony, Joy my sister, Mom, Dad, and me. My other brother Stuart the elder was in the army and not with us. Stuart was planning to go to university. He was and still is the brains of the family. Tony was the sex symbol, Joy the wild one and me always running somewhere and daydreaming.

One day Tony went into Newbury and bought a small record player and an LP by this guy Elvis Presley. It was the summer of 1957 and we played that record from sunup to sundown, memorizing all the words and singing along. Tony did a great impression of Elvis and later that year came up with a pretty good Brando, trying very hard to press his nose to his face. Next it was his James Dean: "You just don't understand man!" He said this over and over the time he had a big fight with Dad. Then finally he did a spot on perfect impression of a guy falling off his motorbike at high speed landing him in hospital for weeks!

I hopped on the red double decker with my brother Tony as it slowly came up the hill of Avenue Parade.



Over the next few years, Tony and I would be out in all kinds of weather delivering both pasteurized and Jersey milk, along with cream and eggs from the farm to people around the Accrington area. We sang songs from the Everly Brothers, Buddy Holly, Elvis and the occasional odd romantic ode. We thought we were pretty damn good.

Ladies and gentleman the Beatles!

April 1963 is never far from my mind. It was the day Tony suggested we go see the Beatles in Southport at Floral Hall located just north of Liverpool.

“C’mon Jon, let’s go!” He shouted from his red Sunbeam motorbike.

Tony looked like Marlon Brando from the movie *The Wild One*. Without hesitating I jumped on back and off we went into the pouring rain. Ah! That lovely Lancashire weather—whether you like it or not! We sang all the way to Southport and though the ride took a couple of hours, we never ran out of songs to sing.

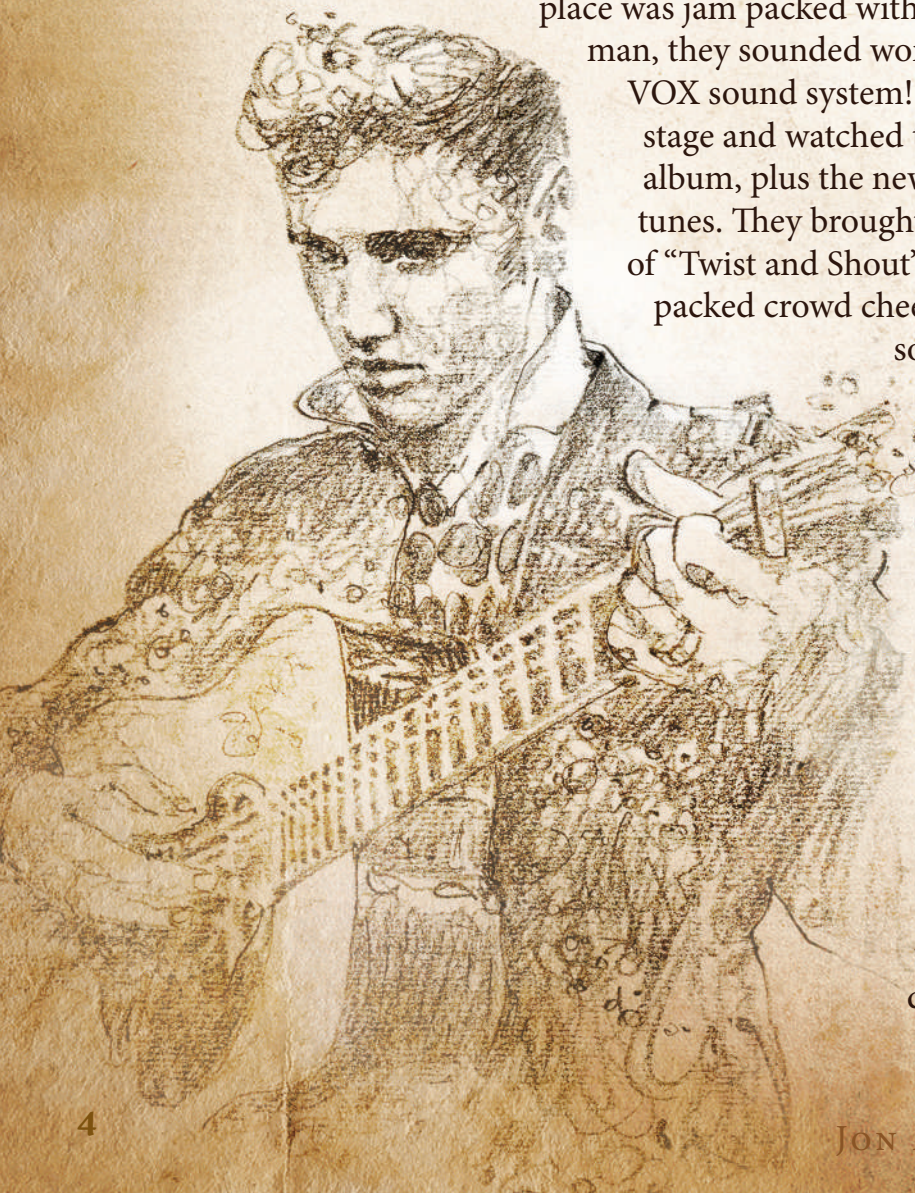
Soaked to the bone we arrived at the hall. The Beatles, who had the single “Love Me Do” on the radio, had just started playing. The place was jam packed with mostly young teens like ourselves; and man, they sounded wonderful with just two mics and a small VOX sound system! We both managed to squirm closer to the stage and watched them perform all the songs from the first album, plus the new single and a lot of Chuck Berry and R&B tunes. They brought the house down and finished with a riot of “Twist and Shout”. It was truly an eye opener for us. The packed crowd cheered and screamed like crazy after every

song and so did we. Everyone was happily going nuts and yet I remember there was no screaming during the songs.

We were all captivated; listening and seeing a performance that was very new. There were even Beatles posters and LP records for sale; all very professional we thought.

Six months later we went to see them again in Blackburn just five miles west of Accrington. We got our tickets and again we bounced and screamed along with everyone all night. There was even more frenzy in the air this time and you could hardly hear the band but we didn’t care, we just wanted to be Beatles.

Tony bought a small record player and an LP by this guy Elvis Presley.



Strippers, Bingo and the Warriors

In 1963 around the same time that the Beatles were about to open up the world for the average working man, Tony joined a band of musicians called the Warriors. I was a very young looking 18 year old, still always laughing and running everywhere. Then out of the blue he asked me if I would like to join them or did I still want to play for Accrington Stanley? I had sort of gone off on being a footballer because the team trainer told me that I wasn’t big enough. I was also fed up cleaning the team boots and being part-time ball boy.

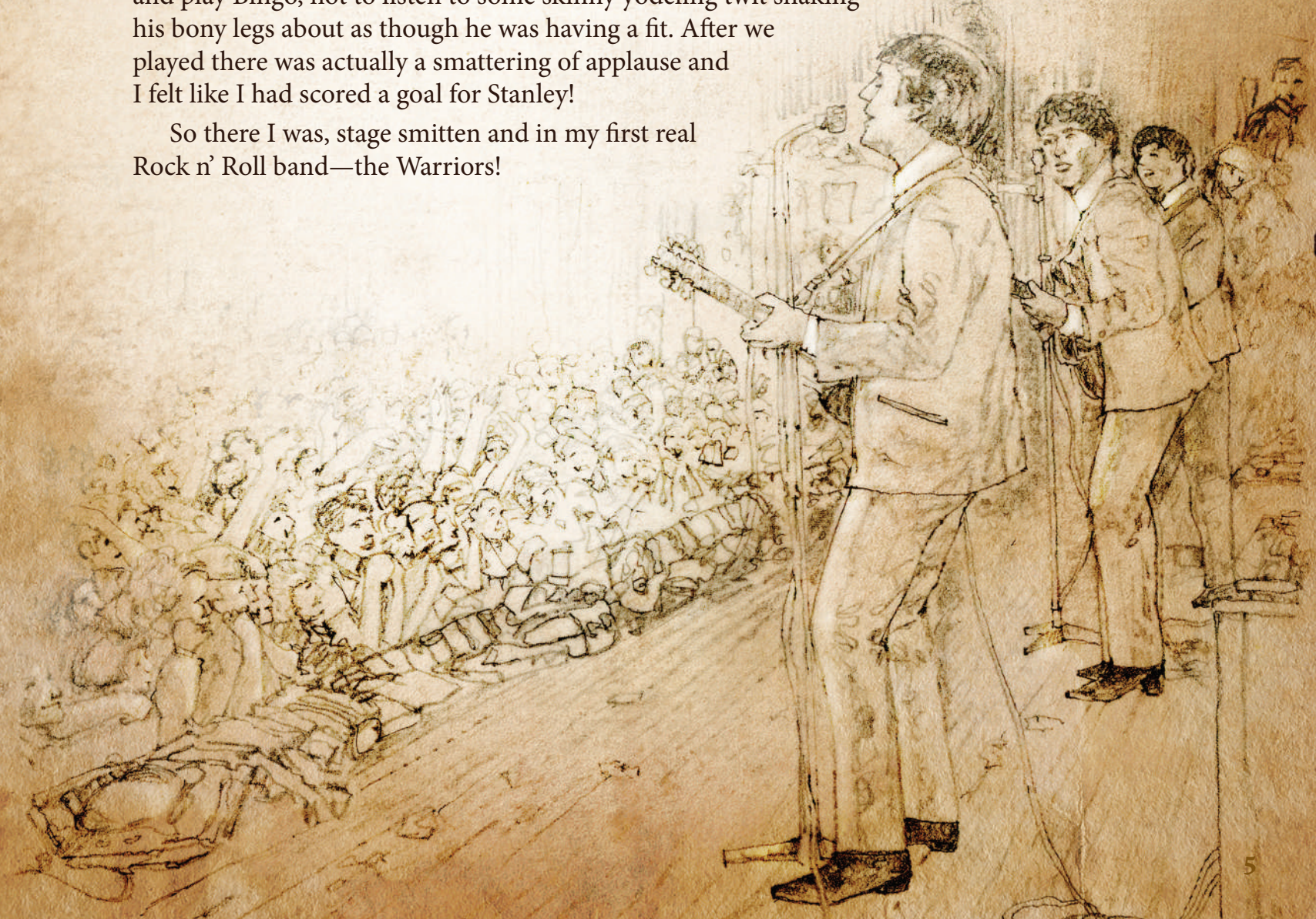
So I said, “Why not? We could sing Everly songs and Buddy Holly stuff!”

Little did I know that within a couple of months, I would be singing “Goldfinger” at the top of my range. This prompted one reporter to say I was the Shirley Bassy of Rock n’ Roll! I could have killed him!

Things happen for strange reasons sometimes. My first show was amazing for me. I learned some songs with Tony and the boys and decided I would sing “Somethin’ Else”, the classic Eddie Cochran song. All I remember was the crowd getting louder and louder ordering pints of Watney’s Brown Ale and Thwaites’s Bitter. It was a working Men’s Club and they had come to watch the two strippers and play Bingo, not to listen to some skinny yodeling twit shaking his bony legs about as though he was having a fit. After we played there was actually a smattering of applause and I felt like I had scored a goal for Stanley!

So there I was, stage smitten and in my first real Rock n’ Roll band—the Warriors!

Tony and I managed to squirm closer to the stage and watch the Beatles perform all the songs from their first album.





Our version of Twist and Shout became a local favorite and suddenly we were Accrington's answer to the Beatles.

I lived it and loved it in a band. It was a real “us against them” sort of feeling. The Warriors rehearsed and got new songs together. We even sounded like the Beatles, well sort of, but we sported Beatles haircuts, dreamed of wearing Cuban heeled boots and talked that strange Liverpudlian accent but very badly. The Beatles were our gods.

Tony by now was imitating everybody whose song he sang—Presley, Lennon and so forth. I was the back up singer and it felt in a way like being a second-class citizen. I was also the van driver, amp lifter, drum setter-upper and general dogs-body to everyone. I think this period shaped me to become as strong and at the same time as frustrated as I would become later. There's only so many times you can knock on people's doors, wait around and shout are you ready before you start asking the question is this the life I really want? Well, I'm still knocking on doors and as you read on you'll find out why.

Despite the frustrations, I loved being in a band! We learned to sing “Twist and Shout” and that song did it! It became a local favorite and suddenly we were Accrington's answer to the Beatles! Little did we know, every small town around the world was sprouting its own version of the Beatles, Stones, or the Animals and we were part of that wonderful innocence.



The Warriors had an old beat up Bedford van. It had two speeds, slow and very fast. As in fast as possible! We would hurtle toward every gig as though we were on a mission, learning songs on the way and traveling at ridiculous speeds. Of course I was usually the driver. One time we were on our way to play a gig in Blackburn and I kept hearing this little click on the front right side of the van. The click got louder and louder, and then really loud and began banging. So before we started down the hill into the town center, I decided to stop and check out the banging. As I pulled over the van suddenly lurched sideways to a stop and the right front wheel just kept rolling down the hill. It had literally ripped itself off the axle! It was a miracle we weren't speeding down that hill or I would not be writing this.

It was now late 1963 and the Warriors were starting to play up-scale gigs. We had a pretty good show happening and a handful of fans, well, maybe just a couple, but they liked the band! We even played at the Cavern in Liverpool. It was just an audition, but it was *the Cavern*.

One day we were asked to do some auditions in Manchester's working Men's Clubs. These were big noisy clubs with lots of drinking. I think we did four or five auditions before we realized we were just being used as cheap labor. We played numerous 10-minute sets in-between the comic, the strippers and the Bingo, but all for nowt

as they say! So we went to the shady proprietor to put our collective foot down and bravely asked to get paid just enough for petrol, fish n' chips and a few beers. Tough negotiators we were! No doubt we should have been paid much more but that was it really. I think we did these shows for the prestige of saying that we played in the big city of Manchester—and of course to see the strippers. Oh boy! Some of them would put you off sex for life! Well as they say, youth is wasted on the young.

Still the Warriors played darn good. We had our van which had now acquired a large set of cow horns, longhorns in fact, perched very dangerously in front on top of the luggage rack. A new coat of bright orange paint covered the van and written on the side was The Warriors with the slogan: Have music, will travel. We were young! We even managed to get business cards and matching blue jackets with a big W on the pocket. Yes, we were young and foolish. Oh to be young and foolish again? No way, no way!

Be the Beatles or bust?

We had a big chance at instant stardom just a few months later. A car dealer from Manchester, a real Jack-the-lad, came to our show in Accrington.

He asked, “Would you boys like to make a record and become famous overnight?”

Well Tony the boss did a very bad imitation of being a boss when Jack-the-lad asked if we could drive down to Manchester next Thursday and do a show in front of a few money-type people.

My big brother responded, “Sorry Jack, we have a prior engagement at the local Padiham working men's club that night.”

Jack quickly replied, “So cancel!”

“We can't, I've given my word.” said Tony, our boss.

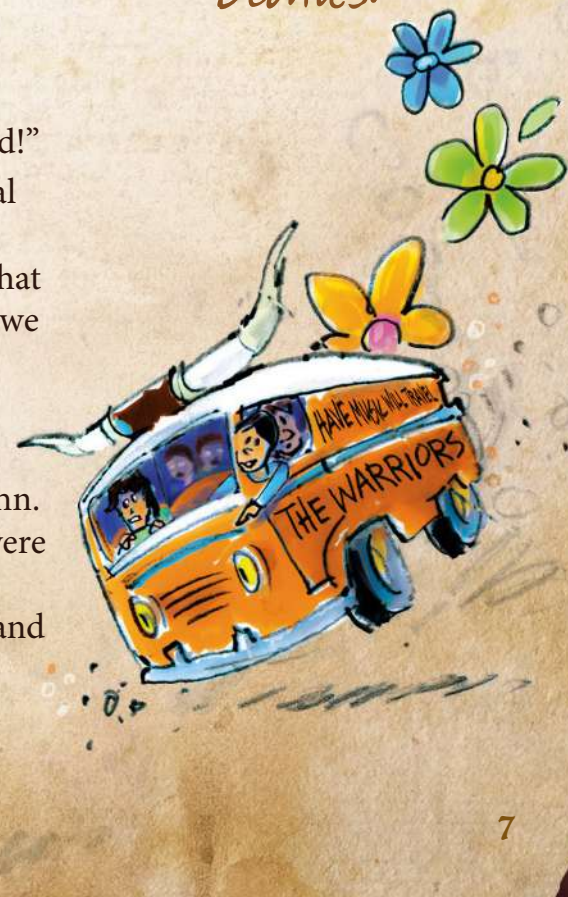
“Okay, then screw you.” said Jack. “I'll go and find another band!”

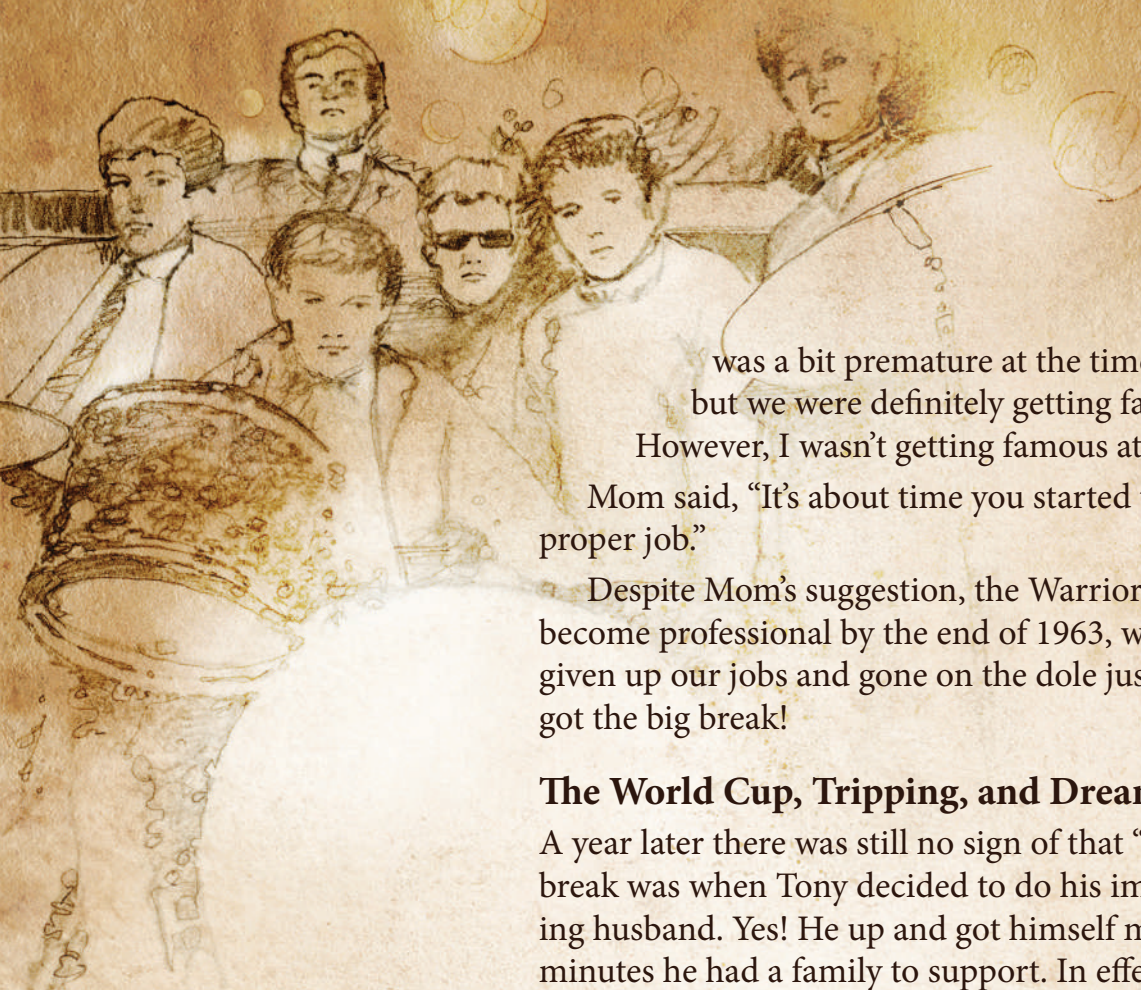
The very next day Jack went to Blackburn and signed the Lional Morton Four, one of our rival bands, and three months later they had a #1 hit and became famous as The 4 Pennies! It was around that time that my brother Tony learned how to laugh at life, and laugh we all did really. What the hell, why not?



We learned to play all the Beatles hits. I was Paul and Tony was John. Collectively, David on bass, Doug on drums and Mike on guitar were George and Ringo with Rodney on rhythm guitar and always smiling. We had just played the Cavern Club in Liverpool and even had a residency there with security. Talk about making it! Getting security is all a musician really wants. Hmm, a musician. I guess for me, it

Little did we know, every small town around the world was sprouting its own version of the Beatles.





was a bit premature at the time to say that of myself, but we were definitely getting famous in our own world.

However, I wasn't getting famous at home.

Mom said, "It's about time you started thinking of getting a proper job."

Despite Mom's suggestion, the Warriors had decided to become professional by the end of 1963, which meant we had given up our jobs and gone on the dole just to survive until we got the big break!

The World Cup, Tripping, and Dreaming

A year later there was still no sign of that "big break". In fact, the break was when Tony decided to do his imitation of an honest working husband. Yes! He up and got himself married and within five minutes he had a family to support. In effect, he had left the band. Doug our drummer and Mike our lead guitarist were soon to follow. Wow! Being professional ain't too easy! That just left David, Rodney, and me. It wasn't long before we found a drummer; his name was Ian Wallace from Bury. Then a new young keyboard player from Bolton joined the group, what was his name? Oh yeah, Brisum Chattslob! Oh boy, what a guy. Brisum could play Green Onions—so he was in! He was mighty handsome and over the years I've never laughed as much as when I was in his company.

The Warriors were a band again but we had no idea at all what we were doing in terms of business or where we were going, yet we did have a charmed life. We enjoyed the chaos and carefree life of traveling around in an orange van with longhorns while making music, creating a little mayhem, and generally making a nuisance of ourselves on the road.

Over the coming months I learned to play the maracas, shake my bum around while shouting and screaming songs until I was hoarse. I chased the girls and got drunk a lot. Life was a party and following the Beatles' path on the road through Europe was the next goal. We began to travel the world, well Scotland first, then Wales, and finally to Germany. It was there in Germany, in 1966, that we played eight daily shows, each an hour long, for two weeks in a row. We were playing in speakeasy clubs in Koln, Frankfurt, and Munich. It was slave bloody labor! Crazy and maddening! We were taking speed to keep going. Can you imagine we had to play the afternoon shows in Germany on that special Saturday back then when England won the World Cup against Germany! Dammit! We missed seeing it but we also got our first taste of anger from the German fans in the club. Their game was throwing bottles of half full beer in disgust over the

loss, but we were still so happy and drunk.

Then came drugs. We tried hash, grass, and eventually LSD. Wow! I thought if Paul took LSD, then so would I! It was as simple as that. Those were amazing years 1966 and 1967, because music was everywhere. There was great mind-blowing music from Frank Zappa, the Beach Boys, Jimi Hendrix, and then *Sgt. Pepper*—the greatest event in modern music. These were unbelievable times! It was late 1967 and I was a full-fledged hippie. Peace, love and all that stuff. Always smiling, spaced out, and hiding my fears.



I left the Warriors one morning because they wouldn't rehearse anymore. They had lost interest in making it I suppose and they told me to piss off. I told them I have musical dreams and their reply was piss off Jon we're sleeping.

So off I went to Munich and lived in Nora's cupboard for two months. I had fun, but felt lost. I even sat with Jimi Hendrix on the floor at a party there one night. We smoked a joint together and I told him my dreams. He just smiled a beautiful knowing smile.

At one time, I seemed to have lost all of my dreams. In fact, I had lost most of my brain because I was too high. I was *out of it*, a big saying in those days. Yes, I was out there somewhere. Lost, alone, and chased by a nagging constant thought; What's it all about? Why? Why am I here? I wandered around, a hippie without a clue. I pretended to be happy but nobody was buying it.

So there I was, lost to the world.

Lost to the world and then...

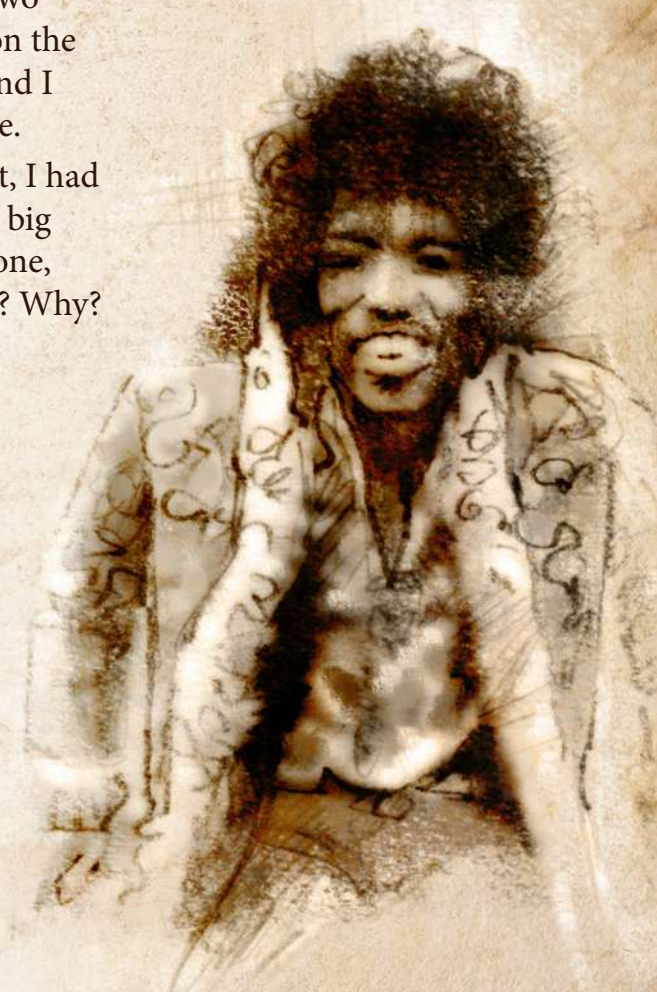
One summer afternoon I found myself sitting in the English Garden in Munich picking daisies and wondering yet again why? Why was all this here? Why was I here? Then right out of the blue a voice spoke to me.

Jon, nothing really matters. Nothing really matters!

And then there was silence. I looked left. I looked right. There was nobody around and yet a voice had spoken to me! Wow. I jumped up leaving the daisy picking behind and ran back to Nora's apartment. I opened the door and there on the floor was a telegram. I picked it up. It was from my Mom and it read:

Hello Luv, there's a band trying to contact you. They live near Frankfurt and they want you to sing for them! Call them right away!

Talk about a message from the Gods! Somebody wanted me; needed me! That had really been my problem all along because I had felt useless and very lonely. Now these guys in a band wanted me no less! I quickly packed my stuff and was on a train within the hour.



Despite Mom's suggestion, the Warriors had decided to become professional by the end of 1963.

The next three months were just amazing. Despite the fact that I had to sleep in a barn while they all slept with their girlfriends, the guys really welcomed me. We rehearsed and they asked me what they should play. They actually wanted my ideas! Amazing! They listened, and we got on great. We put a show together and started gigging around Germany playing R n' B—but progressive-like. I was even playing the alto sax, maybe not very well, but it was fun none-the-less. Then I got a call from of all people, Brisum Chatslob aka Brian Chatton. He had landed in London and told me to come on over.

“Jon! Things are really hot!”

The guys understood and so after a big hug to everyone in the band, I got on a train from Schweinfurt Germany to London England. It was now early 1968 and riding that train into Waterloo Station felt like being in one of those old time movies. I remember standing there on the platform with my alto sax playing “God Save The Queen”, waiting for Brisum and his friend Jackson County, the owner of La Chasse Club, to come and find me. I must have looked strange. My hair was very long, I was still wearing my old kaftan, beads, and everything else to complete the classic look of a wandering hippie. London in the late 60s was the place to be! I had been on the outskirts of the universe for long enough, and now here, back on my home turf, I felt uplifted and very confident of what I wanted to do. I would be productive and sing in a band—any band. I did auditions and even one for a pop group. They said I was good enough but could I come back next Tuesday for an image test? Forget that I thought! I was not interested in image. Music is the place I was at then and music is where I remain to this very day.

The Gun

I actually started with a band before Yes. Funny really; they were called The Gun and they were pretty good too. We played some interesting songs from Bob Dylan, Buffalo Springfield, and the great Beatles song, “Day in the Life”. All the covers we played sounded great at our first show in London at a hippie place that might have been the UFO Club. When we came to do “Day in the Life”, the DJ at the gig turned up the record at the same time and lo and behold, we were in the same key, tempo, and everything. We sounded amazing from where I was standing! I was really pumped up during the gig and we went down a storm. That night, the band Family were the headliners and they were wonderful. On the heels of that show I managed to land The Gun a gig at the Marquee Club, a favorite club of musicians. Not being one who is able to leave well enough alone, I begged the manager of the club to let us open for The Who! Sure, we weren't going to get paid, but I

was thinking about the great exposure we would get. Right? No. Wrong! The Brothers Grim who played and sort of headed The Gun were furious with me! They never said anything that night, but they basically fired me. It was two weeks later when I saw that The Gun was playing a function in south London and I was supposedly in the band but knew nothing about it. So I thought, what the heck-a-thump Jon, onwards and upwards.

Leaving The Gun behind, I carried on with my job at La Chasse cleaning up the glasses, getting free grub, and learning to dance the funky chicken with Brisum. We were so damn funny! We were 'mates.

A Very Tall Chap

It was during the same month that I got sacked from The Gun and was still working my night time bar-cleaning gig, that my friend Jack, owner of La Chasse Club, suggested I meet this very tall chap by the name of Chris Squire. He just happened to be sitting at the other end of the bar. Jack introduced us and I was off to the races rambling on and on about what was missing in the London music scene and Chris listened. I assumed he was just putting up with my rant, but to my utter surprise he agreed with me! No one else I had spoken to up to that moment had shared my opinion. It was a revelation to find a like-minded soul! Even Brisum listened, but he was not really listening, rather just smiling that daft smile of his, bless him. Anyway, Brisum was on his way to stardom with a band called Flaming Youth with Phil Collins and a bunch of other stargazers. Their debut album, *Guide Me Orion*, was even recorded in a planetarium; talk about stars in the making! However, stardom was not for me. It was really not part of my plan.

So where do I begin with Yes? This band of musicians; this band of galactic warriors; disciplined and yet an overindulgent band of characters. They have danced around me in so many, many ways. Ever musical, sometimes funny, sometimes sad, crazy, angry, and sometimes very happy. Yes, most of the time in harmony—most of the time. On stage we were always happy and harmonic for sure. To say Yes was a collection of different souls is such an understatement. Yes redefined the word yes to so many people all over the world. I have always called it a wonderful chaos. Others have their own words, but I can only speak from my own point of view.

So off I went to Munich and lived in Nora's cupboard for two months. I had fun but felt lost.

I assumed he was just putting up with my rant, but to my utter surprise he agreed with me.

Hans Christian

So here goes.

After meeting Chris at the club, him and I were now joined at the hip. That first evening back at his flat, we talked, smoked, sang, and played music together, conjuring all sorts of ideas. We wrote a few songs that night and planned so many things. We were both emotionally hungry to express our thoughts and for many years we were always able to push each other's buttons in so many ways. Our relationship is what kept Yes surviving.

To avoid rehashing things that other writers have covered, I will skip around the reasons, the whys, and the wherefores and instead shed a little light on what has kept Yes viable all these years.

Yes on the Horizon

In the beginning, the band was Chris' band and his name for the band was Mabel Greer's Toy Shop. There was Chris, myself, Peter Banks on guitar, Tony Kaye on keyboards, and a young drummer. Our first gig consisted of four songs and an epic one-hour version of Wilson Pickett's two minutes and forty seconds hit, "Midnight Hour". It was a memorable performance but soon after the gig our young drummer left for France to join another band that were offering more money than our *no money* salaries. We really had no money to get going. The big plan was to rehearse, get gigs around London, and at the same time check the music press for a manager who had money to put into the band. I was still cleaning up at the club and keeping my ears open. La Chasse Club was smack dab in the middle of the music scene on Wardour Street and situated next to the legendary Marquee Club.

Chris came into La Chasse one Friday looking very glum and saying if we don't get some money soon we will not survive. One of us found a phone number for a possible "manager type" in the music tabloid *Melody Maker*. So off we went riding the Tube with Tony Kaye to meet this guy somewhere up in north London. We arrived to find this very strange man in a bed-sit sitting over a gas fire proclaiming his love for music in general. He went on to assure us how he was going to invest his savings in the band and make us all millionaires. His savings at the time I believe was 36 pounds sterling. Furthermore, he hated the name Mabel Greer's Toy Shop and "it needed to be changed." So, other than that prophetic observation, there was, as they say, no there there. We left the sad little one room apartment dejected and slightly bent out of shape. Once back at the club we began to drown our sorrows and bemoan our unfortunate lot. Here in our time of need, who was out there?

"Who is out there?" I shouted and banged on the bar.

"Eh," replied this old geezer who I had barely noticed sitting right next to me. "You sound like you're from up north laddie." He spoke in a similar dialect as my own.

Off we went riding the Tube with Tony Kaye to meet this strange manager-type guy up in north London.



"Eh?" I said.

"Well," he replied, "I'm from Settle!"

"I'm from Accrington, so what!" I took another gulp from my nearly empty pint.

"You all look like musicians."

"Man, it's a musicians bar!" I said, thinking this guy has had a few too many, but he rambled on.

"Hey!" he said, slurring slightly and declaring to anyone who would listen, "I was going to put money on a pop band from Accrington a few years back!"

"Wait," I said, "not the bloody Warriors was it?"

"Yes!" He blurted out, "Yes, it was the Warriors! How'd you guess?"

As history often proves there are no accidents—just fate. This guy sitting next to me was John Roberts and in time he was to become a big fan of the band. Amazingly, right there and then, he agreed to send me a check for 500 pounds and of course we all had a drink on it! Yes was now on its way. As karma would have it, I was able to repay John with my first publishing check three years later and apparently it saved his company. Life is like that.

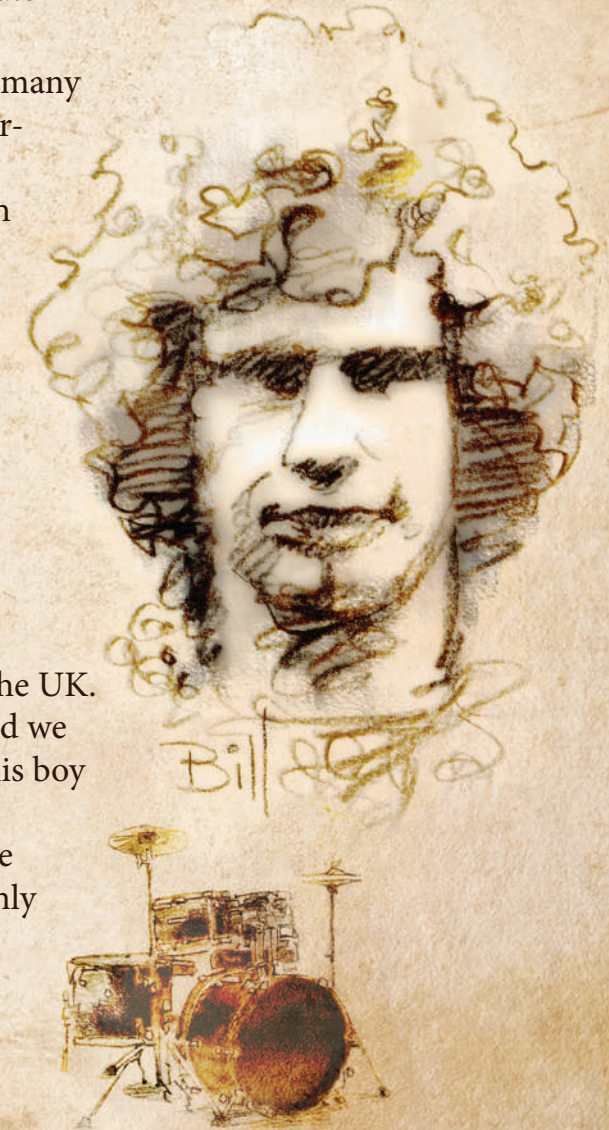
What a crazy circumstance it was that got things going. In many ways, when my brother Tony rejected the offer to have the Warriors audition for those record executives back in Manchester, the wheels were set in motion that would now lead to the birth of Yes. The angels must have been watching over the guys and I, in fact, I'm sure they were. Angels, such is the way of things and I will write more about them later.

From that moment on, I woke up every morning in a new light. I had this strange confidence that all would be well. I had a band that would work hard and gain respect and become as well known as Family or even The Nice. That was my goal in 1968.

Bill Bruford

As I said before, *Melody Maker* was the main music paper in the UK. There were always adverts from music folk looking for gigs and we needed a drummer. So we looked and found the number of this boy Bill Bruford and gave him a call. Not only did he have a black Ludwig drum kit, that only a real drummer would have, but he also had a car. A car was another blessing! Up until then we only had foot power and that can only take you so far. Bill joined the band and little did we know, until after the fact, that the impressive black Ludwig drum kit was actually a very nicely painted cheap sonor kit and the car was a mini-van made for mini people—not many. Certainly not for five guys and their gear! Oh well, we were very gullible in those days and we would

Not only did he have a black Ludwig drum kit, but he had a car!





do anything to get the band rolling.

Bill was and is a great player and all-round musician. He was very proper and very jazz. What does very jazz mean? I promise to tell you sometime.



Mabel Greer's Toy Shop was not the name we needed. It had to be short and fast to roll off the tongue. Like The Who, The Nice, Family, or the Irish band Them.

As the story goes, we were rehearsing in a club called the Lucky Horse Shoe Cafe and I was anxious to get a new name. I suggested we each write one down, put them all in a hat, and one of us will randomly pick one. Instead, we carried on rehearsing. So again, not being one to let go, the following day I finally said,

"Why don't we call the band Life?" I thought even a rejection would start a conversation. Chris spoke next.

"Hmmm. I like World!"

Then Peter Banks, bless him, said, "Yes."

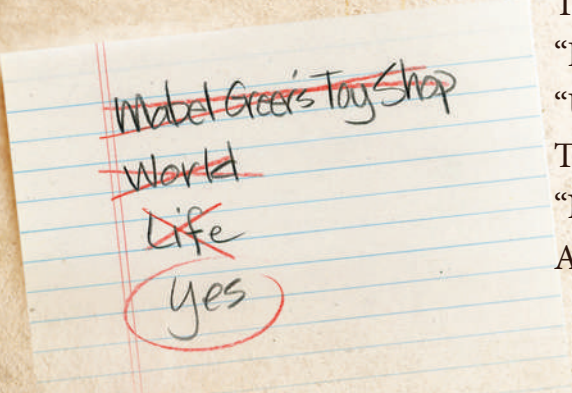
"Hold on," said Chris, "you mean you like World?"

"Uh, no." Peter said. "Just Yes."

The room went silent and then we all said, "What?"

"Not What!" Pete replied. "Yes! We call the band Yes."

And that was that.



A funny cigarette story

The first time I smoked a funny cigarette, for that's what they were called in 1966, was while playing with the Warriors up near Newcastle. We had got to the club early and I heard this band doing a sound check. These guys were from Birmingham and were called Listen. Their lanky singer with curly hair was wailing away a great R&B version of "Dancing in the Street". Most of the band had Beatle cuts, so it was interesting to watch him. I didn't speak to them because it was well known that blokes from Birmingham would break your legs! Such was the knowledge going around those days.

The headliners that night were a famous Liverpool band called the Undertakers. They were more than famous for being a wild bunch of drinkers. The Undertakers staggered in as we finished our sound check. They had obviously been next door in the boozier refreshing themselves. Very rock 'n' rollin' around I thought as they locked themselves in a dressing room and apparently passed out.

That night the show was great! Listen performed a fantastic set and so did the Warriors. Then the Undertakers came on stage looking bedraggled to say the least. Their big start to the show was to bring on a coffin and their singer would jump out and start singing. Well, that night it seemed he had got so drunk he fell asleep in the coffin! Then to make things even more interesting, some bright spark nailed him in! (I think it was the sax player.) So there they were on stage, raving away and waiting for this guy to do his thing—but nothing happened. Then the coffin started rocking, fell off the stage, and smashed open! Screaming was heard as the singer jumped up and never missed a beat as he began belting out "Blue Murder". Well, that's what the song sounded like. Anyway, it was a riot and they went down fantastic.

After the show, I was packing up the drums, the mics, the cords and being a general dogs-body, when the lanky singer from Listen came over and asked me:

"Hey mate, would you like a smoke of a funny cigarette?"

"What's that?" I asked.

"It's grass." The young lad said.

"Oh!" I replied. "No I'm okay, we've got plenty of grass on the farm."

"No, no, it's *marajawanna*."

"Really?" I said, not knowing what he meant. So I smoked a bit, felt a tad dizzy—but nice.

Then friendly like, I asked him, "So, what's your name?"

He said, "Robert. Robert Plant, what's yours?"

Hmm, I thought for a moment and replied, "I don't remember."