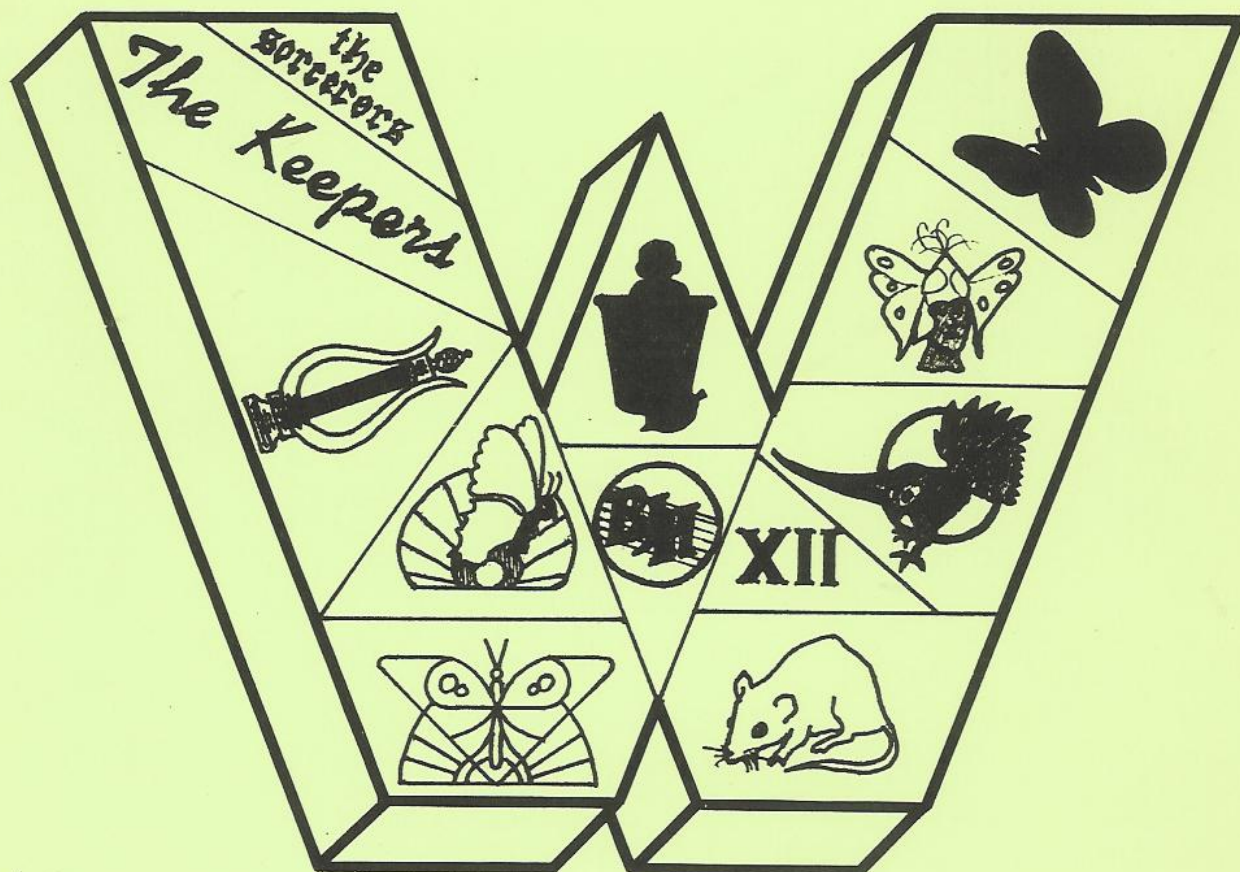


N_OVA

L_EPIDOPTERA

THE INTERNATIONAL BJH FAN CLUB MAGAZINE

November 1988



WOOLLY SPECIAL

NOVA LÉPIDOPTERA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BJH FAN CLUB

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Special thanks to Helen Goodman, who manages to create order out of the chaos which is the club finances.

All letters and contributions are welcome, and should be directed to the address below, but we regret that we can only reply personally if you enclose an sae or International Reply Coupon.

THE INTERNATIONAL BJH FAN CLUB
35 Wood End Green Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 2SB, UK

Editorial: Friend Of Mine

"Years may come, and years they go..."

To you, the NL reader, this is the third official issue of your favourite (we hope!) magazine, but to us this issue culminates a year of hard work. This is the story so far:
August 1987: Keith Domone advertises "Nova Lepidoptera" in the magazine 'Record Collector'. Kevin Goodman, a disillusioned member of FOBJH, reads the advert and sends off his money. Nova is just two issues old... November 1987: Kevin 'phones Keith offering to help with the production of NL. After a few weeks an idea is born. January 1988: Madge and Keith visit Helen and Kevin for a weekend. During this time, plans are made... February 1988: Keith and Kevin meet Lindsay Brown and David Walker at Handle Artists in London to discuss the plans to continue the fan club. After nearly three hours the word is given - go!... November 1988: Nova 3 lands on your doormat. After all this time, we still find it amazing that four people can work together the way we do, less than a year after we first met. Long may it continue. But we can say to each other, "You're a Friend Of Mine".

KG

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We were delighted to receive the official seal of approval, in the form of the letter reproduced below:

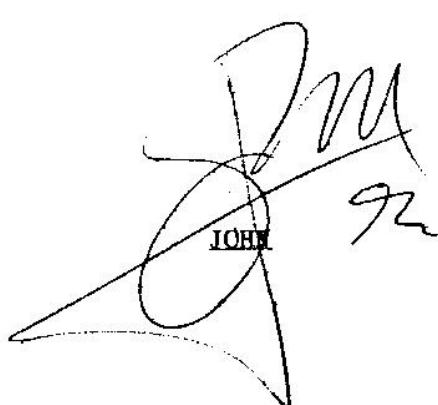
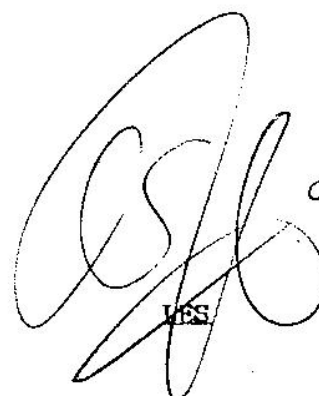

Dear Keith,

Re: INTERNATIONAL BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST FAN CLUB

We felt we had to write to you and express our appreciation and gratitude on receipt and reading of the first two editions of the new Fan Club magazine. It goes without saying how impressed we are. You're doing a great job - keep up the good work!!

Please also express our thanks to all the contributors.

With kind regards,

 **JOHN**
 **LES**
 **MEL**

NEWS

FORBES CAMERON

We were greatly saddened to hear of the recent death of former BJH publicist Forbes "Macaroon" Cameron from a heart attack. Although a Scot, Forbes was based in Manchester for many years. His association with BJH went back to the days when Woolly was with the band, initially for Kennedy Street and later with his own company. The NL team never met him, but I once had the privilege to speak to him over the telephone, and was immediately impressed by his warmth, friendliness and kind but firm, business-like approach. He will be sadly missed.

Kevin Goodman

THE FORTHCOMING ALBUM - PROGRESS REPORT

BJH recently finished recording demos of the songs destined for their next LP at Friarmere. Once a suitable producer has been found, work will start in earnest on the LP, which should be in the shops early next year, with a tour to follow.

COMPACT DISC VIDEO

The latest piece of high-technology, CDV marries digital sound to high-quality video, and requires a new machine which will play CDV discs through your TV and hi-fi. The shiny gold discs come in three sizes, 5" 'clip' discs, 8" EPs and full-length double-sided 12" discs with a maximum of two hours' music & video. The good news is that Polydor are planning to release "Berlin" & "Glasnost" on one disc early next year. Price will be around £20.

...OTHER SHORT STORIES...

...Berlin radio station RIAS' listeners voted four BJH tracks into their Top 1001 chart; "How Do You Feel Now?" (no.971), "Poor Man's Moody Blues" (556), "Hymn" (508) and "Mocking Bird" (272). Number one was Michael Jackson's "Dirty Diana"...

...EUROCHEQUES. While we are happy to accept these from overseas readers, our bank has refused to accept cheques with no card number on the back. Please make sure that you include the number, and make all cheques out to 'The International BJH Fan Club'...

...TOUR DATES. If you want to be first to hear tour dates as soon as they are confirmed, send us a self-addressed envelope and a first class stamp or IRC. It may be some time before you hear anything, but we want the front rows filled with real fans...

...the long awaited RECORD COLLECTOR article on BJH should finally make its appearance in the November or December issue of the magazine...

Sorry about the lack of news at present, but this is the calm before a storm of BJH activity in 1989. Watch this space!

As I'm sure most of you realized, the British postal strike threw the club into chaos. If you haven't received anything that you should have done, please write to us as soon as possible.

Face To Face

with Woolly Wolstenholme

It's now been more than nine years since Woolly Wolstenholme left BJH to pursue a solo career. In all that time, fans of the band have never really heard his side of the story - how it all began, the highs and lows of life in a rock band, the reasons behind his decision to quit and the traumas of trying to start again from scratch as a solo artist. With this in mind, your intrepid 'Nova' reporter set off up the motorway, braving wind and driving rain to visit Jill and Woolly at their farm in the wilds of deepest Lancashire. There Woolly gave NL the first in-depth interview since he left BJH:

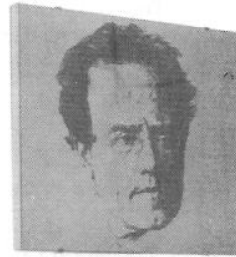


Photo: Keith Domone

NL: CAN YOU REMEMBER YOUR EARLIEST MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

WOOLLY: A vast collection of 78s that my father had - I still have some of them lying around, but I don't play them, because I think the thirties was the thirties and should be left like that; the banjo, bits of experience with playing in a brass band, and really that's it. Then later, of course, The Slab Four came along, and everyone wanted to be in a group. The blues, only because it was the musical vernacular of the time - I suppose that was important, but if it had been trad jazz I suppose I'd have been involved in that sort of thing.

NL: WHAT ABOUT CLASSICAL MUSIC?

WOOLLY: Nothing until...well, I'll go back to school: we had a music teacher that liked Gilbert and Sullivan a lot, and that's

all we got. Every lesson was about Nanki-Poo, and we'd have to enthuse, so now I hate Gilbert and Sullivan. Apart from that, of course, the stock repertoire; The Planets came up in my life, and perhaps a bit of Tchaikovsky. Let's just say I was aware of what it sounded like without knowing too much about it specifically.

NL: GOING RIGHT BACK TO THE SORCERERS, DO YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU FIRST MET JOHN?

WOOLLY: Let's have a think. I first met him at Art School, so he was there before music, if you see what I mean. He was in a sort of group, which I then got roped into as a sort of tambourinist and 'singist', and we did a few things like talent contests at the Empire Theatre in Oldham. As people left the group, which was then The Sorcerers, other people came in and we became The Keepers. Heart And Soul And The Wicked was Les and Mel's band, and John was going to go in them, but he said - I don't know whether to thank him or not! - "Yes, but if you take me, you must have him as well". Kind of, "You must have my pet idiot"! So we both ended up in that band, which at that time was a six-piece. From then on it was just as the history has writ it, which is fame, fortune and age!

NL: WHY DID YOU CHANGE THE NAME FROM THE BLUES KEEPERS TO BJH?

WOOLLY: The Sorcerers, when they sort of fragmented, became The Keepers; because it's a new band, you change the name. When it went blues, it became The Blues Keepers, and when we went up to the farm in Diggle, pre-Trafficking Traffic (sorry, I must get that in!), it wasn't going to be the same band, so it had to be something new. I can't really remember the origins of the name, it was very long-winded - we did all sorts of strange things like pulling names from a hat. Obviously at that time, when 'flowerdom' was just arriving, you couldn't really go around being "The Blues" anything, unless you were The Moody Blues, and they didn't do very well, anyway!

NL: WHY DID YOU SPECIALISE IN KEYBOARDS - WAS THAT DELIBERATE?

WOOLLY: No, no, jack of all trades, master of none! I started off being a singist tambourine player, then harmonica - the supply of black, blind harmonica players in Oldham was short, so I managed to fill that gap! Then the folk-rock thing hit, and I got into the twelve-string, and then, following on from that, the keyboard thing happened with the mellotron. Until the end, I still played guitars and I still played harmonica - I played it on "Streets Of San Francisco" - so all the things I'd done at some time came in useful. There was also the other thing, where I remember we were playing our little ensemble within the band, which was things like Les playing cello and Mel playing glockenspiel, when we did our mediaeval numbers. I played tenor horn, 'cos I picked that up in the brass band, and John had an oboe and he played saxophone. I mean, no-one was any good, let's be honest, but at least the ethos was there for having a go at everything.

NL: SOME EARLY REVIEWS DESCRIBE YOU AS THE FRONTMAN OF THE BAND...

WOOLLY: I used to speak more, because I wasn't then quite such a

bibber of alcohol, so if anyone was going to be in reasonable condition in the morning it was me! John didn't speak at all; in fact, in the early days, he didn't used to sing. That's why most of the material in the early days has me very high profile, singing-wise, and then gradually, as people either got more confident, or saw what a bad job I was doing, they decided to do it themselves! Yes, it just happened that I was more up-front, without being the frontman.

NL: WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE SOUTH AFRICA TOUR?

WOOLLY: There weren't any, until we got back. We went out there, did a few scrappy things like playing with the Durban Symphony Orchestra, and it wasn't anything big deal; an audience is an audience, so I don't think anyone asked what colour they were. I think Shirley Bassey's played to more people in segregated halls, and certainly Cliff has been down there a thousand times. When we got back, all the radical people at Leeds University decided to get us through the colleges. We'd do gigs and people would have to come through a row of pickets to get in, and then we'd have about five bomb threats on the 'phone, and every time it happened, you'd have to leave the stage. So, a strange performance, when the band leave after every number.

NL: DID IT SURPRISE YOU, THOUGH, THAT REACTION?

WOOLLY: A little, a little, especially in the light of what other people were doing and getting away with it. Our importance as a visiting cultural experience was minimal, it didn't warrant the attack.

NL: RATHER THAN IT BEING A QUESTION OF YOUR STATUS, THOUGH, SURELY IT'S THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THING?

WOOLLY: Well, all right then, if the principle was right to pillory us, why weren't they pillorying everyone else? It was only because we were a college band. Naivety comes into it - we were less aware of things then, we just wanted to play a few gigs in some funny country somewhere, and then you come back and it's like all hell's broken loose. I'm still not absolutely convinced what to do about South Africa - I don't have that kind of information.

NL: ON "BABY JAMES HARVEST", YOU DEDICATED "MOONWATER" TO 'GUSTAV AND THE COUNTESS'. WAS THAT MAHLER?

WOOLLY: Yes it was, and the Countess was a Polish woman who worked at a publishing company in London - she was actually a real Countess. Yes, "Moonwater" was one of those experiences where I did all of the stuff poring over a piano or an organ for months, then went into the studio and did a demo of it. I then had a couple of acetates cut, which were given to Martyn Ford and John Bell, and they went away and ruined...er, did an orchestral version of it. It's technically all right, but compared with what I felt was happening on my demo - a bad sound, out-of-tune instruments and inept playing - there was more of the essence on my demo. It should have been more like space music, and less like The Black Dyke Mills Band!

NL: WHAT HAPPENED WHEN BJH WERE DROPPED BY EMI?

WOOLLY: We had two managers, who were the successors to John Crowther. They were former social secretaries, who set up in business as The White Agency, working out of Manchester. They weren't happy with the deals with EMI Records, and they wanted EMI to sack us so that they could do something else. Whatever plan they had, of course, didn't happen, because as soon as we started getting no gigs and nowhere to make records, we thought, well, we'd better be off. So we ended up having no management, no record company, no agency and some gigs we hadn't completed - one and a half years later we had to do them at discount, and we were only getting seventy-five pounds in the first place, so we were doing them for fifty quid just to fulfil contracts. So we got this thing with Kennedy Street in Manchester, they got a new deal with Polydor and we set off again. There was some kind of vast scheme, I think, that we weren't necessarily in agreement with, and that was why we left EMI; it ended up with us being in limbo-land for years.

NL: WHILE YOU WERE RECORDING "TIME HONOURED GHOSTS" IN AMERICA, DID YOU PLAY ANY GIGS THERE?

WOOLLY: No, another large scale cock-up! Some of the band thought it might be some kind of extra injection of energy or whatever if we went over to The States and made an album there. So we did that, and I wasn't really happy with it. Neil Young-type laid back and spaced out was the order of the day, and you felt a bit like that, I must confess, but we weren't producing English music, so it seemed a bit of a waste of having a natural resource and then trying to do something else with it. We went out again with the idea of making a second album with Elliot Mazer, and we did a short tour then - a lot of territory, but not many dates - and then we went to San Francisco and sat around waiting for something to happen. It never actually happened; we came home and we said "we've got to do an album", so that's when we went into Strawberry. We went straight from Los Angeles to Stockport!

NL: SO, PRESUMABLY IT WAS DURING THAT SECOND SPELL THAT YOU WENT INTO THE STUDIO WITH DAVID SOUL?

WOOLLY: I think it was during the first album in 1975; he was just doing the "Black Bean Soup" track, and we went "soup, schloop, soup, schloop"! We thought, well, we haven't got paid for it, so at least we'll get a mention, and it came out and it says "backing vocals: The Persuasions and everybody"!

NL: WHEN DID YOU FIRST MEET DAVY ROHL?

WOOLLY: On a train. He was collecting the tickets - no, he wasn't! We'd come back from London after doing "I'm Over You" or something like that. We met him on the train, through that we did a few things at a place called Indigo Studios in Manchester, and then by the time we came round to doing "Octoberon", he was ensconced in Strawberry.

NL: HOW DID THE MANDALABAND "EYE OF WENDOR" LP COME ABOUT?

WOOLLY: For Davy to do "The Eye Of Wendor", he had to be an engineer/producer, because it meant his services were free to himself, and he had to be working in a studio, which meant he got all the duff time, which was cheap rates, and he got a lot of musicians in for nothing. There was a thing in NL saying that the project was probably so expensive that it didn't go on from there, but it wasn't - it was the cheapest thing anyone could have done, because everything was free. I worked overdubbing string parts on keyboards, reinforcing brass parts and giving my ideas for arrangements. I even thought I was going to be singing "Florian's Song", but Justin (Hayward) sang that. Some of the stuff had Sad Café on it, and later all of Sad Café were gone one by one, and Graham Gouldman and all of Barclay James Harvest would be on it, and then one of us would be wiped and Eric Stewart would be on it - I mean, if Stevie Wonder had been in town, we'd have all been gone, wouldn't we?

NL: WHEN "THE TALKING PARCEL" CAME OUT, THERE WAS TALK OF AN INSTRUMENTAL ALBUM. DID ANYTHING EVER COME OF THAT?

WOOLLY: No. If it was like Camel did "The Snow Goose", then at least that had Camel on it; when you get to "The Talking Parcel", it hasn't really got anybody on it. You know, there's no band, and on "The Eye Of Wendor" there was no band, it was whoever was best and cheapest and around at the time. So, really, if you're going to be changing personnel, there's no reason for having an extended album.

NL: WHEN YOU STARTED RECORDING "XII", THAT WAS WITH DAVY ROHL ORIGINALLY - WHY DID HE GET THE BOOT?

WOOLLY: We had a preamble to the stage performance, which involved Mel playing some rototoms, and if you listen to a track called "The Tempest" on "The Eye Of Wendor", there's a vast amount of rototom work, which is the very same piece! That was really the end of it; he'd obviously decided that his project solo was more important than working with us. Martin Lawrence was around at the time, so he was sort of drafted in and finished it. I don't think fundamentally there was much different about "XII" - it was very much like it would have been if Dave had finished it.

NL: JUST OUT OF INTEREST, IN THE POLL WE DID, "XII" CAME FIFTH IN THE 'BEST BJH ALBUM' CATEGORY.

WOOLLY: There's some extremely flavoursome stuff on it, it's got loads of character. It's got "The Closed Shop", which I like very much, and "Streets Of San Francisco". There's some interesting material on it, and I think that's why it's popular.

NL: AND YET, SHORTLY AFTER THAT, YOU DECIDED TO LEAVE BJH. WHY?

WOOLLY: I think, generally, there'd been a bit of a peak; it isn't always easy to sustain things when you reach some kind of plateau, and I certainly thought that with "Gone To Earth" and, to a degree, with parts of "XII", they were good things. When we went into a huddle to produce the material for the next album, I think we were

just beating the same drum. I'd never been satisfied with my involvement with the band - I'd always felt that I was either trying to maintain old values musically, some sort of classical English-sounding thing, or, on the other hand, I felt I was a lead weight, I was holding people back from doing what, apparently, they must have wanted to do: that is, to be more West Coast or whatever. So we went into rehearsals, and we started to trot through "Capricorn" or something, and it just...the bottom went out of it all, it just felt so pointless. It had been something, perhaps, that I'd been running up to for a while, and my heart just wasn't in it any more. It had been tested several times, after twelve years or something I was in the band - we'd had ups and downs all along, but suddenly it became too much, it became a bit like a nine-to-five job, and I just didn't want to go on.

NL: WHAT WERE THE SONGS YOU PRESENTED FOR THE FOLLOW-UP TO "XII"?

WOOLLY: "Lives On The Line", "A Prospect Of Whitby" - "Maestoso: A Hymn In The Roof Of The World" had been around since 1973, and it had actually started to be done for "Time Honoured Ghosts", but never actually achieved it, and I had loads of stuff like "White Sails", "Gates Of Heaven" and "American Excess".

NL: WHITE SAILS? - DOESN'T THAT GO BACK TO ABOUT 1970?

WOOLLY: It's an orchestral track, yes, that was a "Once Again" non-eventer. There's been a few like that. As you go along, you're looking at things which are five years old, sometimes, and saying, well, this is the best thing that's come up this time. So I had all these tracks lying around, any one of which could have made an album. John had the chance to go ahead and do his solo album with tracks he didn't feel other people would have been happy with, and so I was really presenting what became certainly a third to a half of what became my solo album.

NL: HOW MANY SONGS WOULD BE PRESENTED AT THAT SORT OF GATHERING?

WOOLLY: In my case, probably about eight, at that last one, and John might come out with ten or twelve, a lot of which you'd probably heard before - he had a vast output, but you'd have to sift through it to recognise some of them. Les, perhaps, five or six, maybe more, so there was a lot of material to listen to, and you ended up having to select four of John's, four of Les's and two of mine, or some other combination, to keep the balance there. Sometimes I only presented one song, and that became "The Woolly Song" - I remember I did this thing called "Open", which was semi-churchy sounding, and the comment wasn't "fab" or "poor" or something, it was just "very Woolly"!

NL: DID YOU EVER FEEL STRONGLY THAT A PARTICULAR SONG OF YOURS SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

WOOLLY: Certainly. I think you offer up your six songs and it's a bit like The Eurovision Song Contest after that; you're quite happy to settle for third, even though your best song didn't

get anywhere at all, because you put your six songs in and two are chosen to be worked on, so you're relieved about your aspect. Yes, there were some things you wanted on, but they were stored, perhaps, for a future idea, or you'd take them away and re-write them sometimes, speed them up, slow them down, change key - do anything with them if you felt they were worth carrying on, so it was never the end of the line for the songs.

NL: DID SONGS BY JOHN OR LES EVER GET ON ALBUMS WHEN YOU DIDN'T WANT THEM ON?

WOOLLY: When it comes to other people's songs, you were trying to be as fair to them as they'd been to you. In a band where three people write, everyone, really, finds their own niche and writes their own style of music, and, if you're lucky, there's enough other influences, not just in the performing side, but in the appreciative side, to make the album balanced. I may not have liked some songs; there are songs which make you cringe, but, luckily, they're usually over with in three or four minutes!

NL: ON TO YOUR OWN LP - WAS "SAIL AWAY" ABOUT LEAVING BJH?

WOOLLY: Yes. In fact, even though a lot of the stuff was written before, the essence of the album just seemed to be one of parting. Well, "Patriots" isn't, that was written especially for the album, and it isn't about the band, but "Sail Away" is and "Waveform" is. They're sort of both ends of the thing; one is saying, if you listen to it, "I'm waking up and having a wonderful time being a musician, and everything's wonderful", and next time it's really 'orrible and it's lost its lustre, and you get so fed up, and then suddenly you think, well, there may be something out there, and then "the earth smiles".

NL: DID YOU ENJOY TOURING AS SUPPORT TO JUDIE TZUKE?

WOOLLY: Yes, probably one of my better decisions after leaving the band. It was fun, it was like touring should be. Of course, financially, it was a complete waste of time, and then I made the mistake of doing a European leg with Saga, which cost more money and was about 1% of the enjoyment. We actually did well in Vienna, we blew them off - it's very hard for supports to blow top acts off, because you usually find that some of the bass bins have been turned off, so your act is very weak! But we did something, and we could have gone back there, but on all the tours I did there was no album in the shops, and when the album was in the shops there was no touring going on, so the whole thing was a complete waste of time. At that point, I think, despite the fact that we came back and I carried on going through the motions, I think I'd had rock and roll beaten out of me.

NL: WAS IT DIFFICULT GOING BACK TO BEING THE SUPPORT ACT, HAVING BEEN A HEADLINER FOR SO LONG?

WOOLLY: It was doubly difficult, because they say there's no turning the clock back, and despite the fact that Jill was career manager and mother for the whole entourage, and that took a lot of weight off me, I was the man paying the bills, I was the main motivation behind the operation, so the people I was taking

round didn't have the same kind of expectations, I don't think. They were going round with someone who was trying to repeat a previous success, or at least trying to go back twelve years, which was when it all started for me, and of course it wasn't the real world any more.

NL: DO YOU THINK THAT MAESTOSO COULD HAVE BECOME A PERMANENT BAND, IF THAT FIRST ALBUM HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

WOOLLY: Well, not after Steve (Broomhead), the guitarist, left. I know people who are in bands now; they're in this band this week, and then three people have left and formed another band, and the history of Barclay James Harvest has been exactly like that, there's no continuum until it's gone through various stages. I was expecting to be able to assemble a few people I liked and who could play well and expect it to stick, but it doesn't work like that.

NL: DID YOU FEEL THAT "MAESTOSO" WASN'T ADEQUATELY PROMOTED?

WOOLLY: Yes. When we were touring, you sort of understood that nothing was going to happen, and certainly on the European one I felt like we should have turned around and saved me a lot of money. I was signed to German Polydor, not UK, and they did everything they could to make me feel good; I think perhaps they did a lot of work, but at the end of the day, they still had both bands on contract, and BJH were making the most money. I mean, me going out and doing that, or the "Berlin" album? There's not really much of a choice there, is there? So, I expected 50,000 sales, and we're looking at about 12,000, something stupid like that. If it'd been 50,000, there would have been a second album, and who knows what would have happened after that? But, it died on the first album, and at about the same time as me running out of money, I ran out of interest as well, luckily.

NL: WHY WASN'T THE "GATES OF HEAVEN" SINGLE RELEASED?

WOOLLY: Who knows?

NL: WAS IT A DIFFERENT VERSION FOR THE SINGLE?

WOOLLY: No, the same. The only thing that was different was the B-side, "All Get Burned", which didn't exist in any other form. It was always meant to be a novelty item for the other side of the single, so it didn't really have an album place or anything.

NL: WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO QUIT THE MUSIC BUSINESS?

WOOLLY: Altogether? Leaving the band was because I couldn't deal with it, or I didn't want to be involved in that kind of thing, which didn't mean to say that I wanted to be out of music - I still had a lot to say. But with songwriting you have deadlines, you have reasons to do things, you have a schedule to work to. If somebody said "you've got an album coming out" or "we'll go into the studio in a month's time", I'd write music. It'd pour

out, probably, but because there's no outlet for it beyond these four crumbling walls (get that in, because people'll send me money then!), I don't have a reason to write music. There's enough music lying around to make an album: there's no album to be made, therefore I don't make any more, it's supply and demand.

NL: AFTER YOU LEFT THE BAND, DID YOU FOLLOW THEIR ACTIVITIES?

WOOLLY: We had no choice. I would, for instance, go to Germany for some kind of presentation, and they'd put us in this nice little hotel, and you'd put the television on and there'd be a news item about them arriving somewhere - the whole thing was like a failed love affair. To start with, it was very much like that, saying "it's all wrong, why aren't I up there?", but eventually it's all mellowed.

NL: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THEIR ALBUMS SINCE YOU LEFT?

WOOLLY: I don't know, I haven't listened.

NL: DO YOU LISTEN TO ANY CONTEMPORARY MUSIC?

WOOLLY: I'm still getting some pleasure out of things like U.K., the records I was listening to when I was in music. I like chunks of INXS, sometimes they're very good....Billy Joel...

JILL: He listens to Peter Gabriel...

WOOLLY: No, I don't listen to that any more, I'm fed up with that; I think he should write a new one.

JILL: In the last year he has listened to - Peter Gabriel, U.K., Eric Clapton, Nik Kershaw, Dire Straits...

WOOLLY: I object to the Dire Straits!

JILL: You have to listen because I listen to them!

WOOLLY: Oh, yes, I'm in the same room, that's the only qualitative assessment I make!

JILL: The last single that we bought was "Relax"

WOOLLY: "Relax" by Max Bygraves - "Relaxalongamax"!!

NL: WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS YOUR FINEST MOMENT WITH BJH?

WOOLLY: I liked being on stage with the orchestra - when it worked it was fantastic. When you're on stage and there's four of you thrashing for dear life and the crowd is going "Yeeaaaah", your importance is overblown, but when you do that with the orchestra, you're just like a little piece of the whole spectacle, and that felt good for me. Apart from that, the good things have been to do with having the occasional brilliant moment on stage - when something sounds just right or you just feel good about something.

NL: HAVE YOU GOT A FAVOURITE OUT OF ALL THE SONGS YOU'VE WRITTEN?

WOOLLY: My songs?....No. Only because I have different kinds of writing, I have the little pieces, which are the "Iron Maiden"s and the "Prospect Of Whitby"s, and then there's the drawn-out, angst-ridden ones like "Patriots". I can't compare them. I like "Sea Of Tranquility", I think, not necessarily how it sounds, but there's some writing on there which I like.

NL: IF YOU COULD DO IT ALL AGAIN, WOULD YOU CHANGE ANYTHING?

WOOLLY: Socks, probably! No, not while it was happening. I'd probably change what I did after BJH, not for the music's sake, not because I didn't enjoy meeting people and doing different things, but because I think it was a waste of time and money. I don't think you can say, "I liked the bits where we had a wonderful time, played great shows and made loads of money, I didn't like the bits where we had horrible times, played terrible shows and didn't make any money!", because they were all part and parcel of it. So there's nothing I'd change, I don't think.

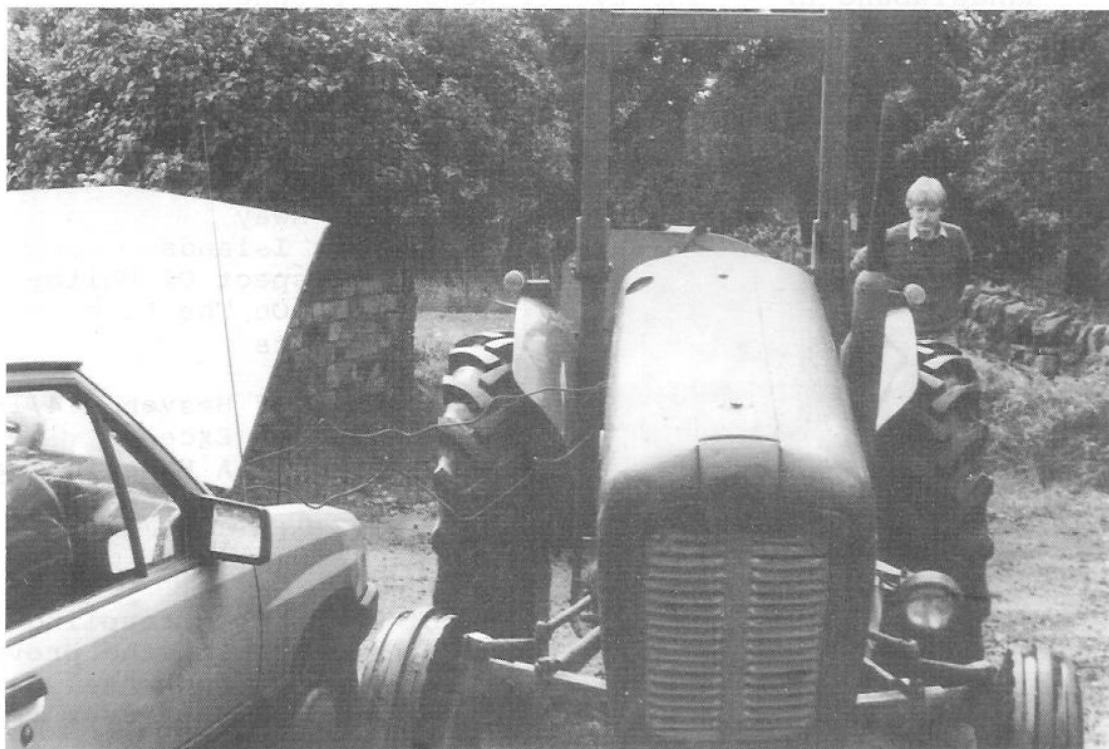
NL: FINALLY, DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANY CHANCE THAT "MAESTOSO" WILL EVER BE REISSUED, OR THAT YOU'LL BRING OUT A NEW ALBUM?

WOOLLY: Only if you do it! How about that?

NL: There's a challenge! OK, that's all - thank you very much.

* * * * *

POSTSCRIPT: Unfortunately, your intrepid reporter had neglected to switch his lights off on arrival, resulting in one very flat battery. Enter Woolly on a white charger, or, to be precise, a red tractor pressed into service as a charger! The only damage done was to the pride of the editor, whose face matched the tractor!



The Woolly File

PERSONAL HISTORY

Born: Stuart John Wolstenholme, Oldham, 15th April 1947

Educated: North Chadderton Secondary Modern

Oldham Art School

Groups: The Sorcerers, 1965

The Keepers/The Blues Keepers, 1966-1967

Barclay James Harvest, 1967-1979

RECORDED COMPOSITIONS

With Barclay James Harvest: (*co-written with John, Les & Mel)

Early Morning*

Mr. Sunshine

Poor Wages

The Sun Will Never Shine

The Iron Maiden

Happy Old World

Ball And Chain

Someone There You Know

Ursula (The Swansea Song)

The Poet

Moonwater (Poco Adagio)

Beyond The Grave

Ra

Sea Of Tranquility

Harbour

In Search Of England

With BJH as "Bombadil":

When The City Sleeps

FILM AND TV MUSIC

Soundtrack music for: "The Talking Parcel"

"Cinderella"

"The Pied Piper Of Hamlyn"

"Cockleshell Bay"

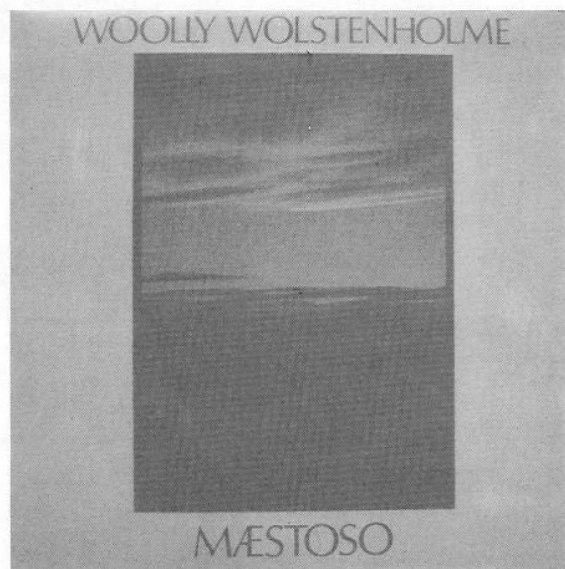
GUEST APPEARANCES

Mandalaband LP - "The Eye Of Wendor: Prophecies"

David Soul LP - "David Soul" (on "Black Bean Soup" only).

SOLO ALBUM

"Maestoso" (Polydor 2374 165, October 1980)



1. Sail Away
Quiet Islands
A Prospect Of Whitby
Lives On The Line
Patriots
2. Gates Of Heaven (14/18)
American Excess
Maestoso. A Hymn In The Roof
Of The World
Waveform

Note: a single coupling "Gates Of Heaven" with the previously unreleased track "All Get Burned" was planned but never released.

Charity Raffle

To celebrate our "Woolly Special", we have some very special prizes up for grabs, generously donated by the man himself.

This is a unique opportunity to win a superb souvenir of BJH's history, and we make no apologies for charging £1.00 per entry in the raffle, since all proceeds will be donated to a charity of Woolly's choice. The more entries you submit, the better your chances of receiving one of these magnificent collector's items, and you'll have the satisfaction of helping a good cause at the same time.

FIRST PRIZE - A genuine, top-quality tour jacket, as worn by Woolly himself. The black, fully-lined jacket is hand-embroidered in gold thread with "Woolly" on the front, and the BJH symbol from the "Everyone Is Everybody Else" cover design surmounted by a butterfly in gold and red on the back. This really has to be seen to be appreciated!

SECOND PRIZE - A "Woolly" jumper, hand-knitted in green with a large red "Woolly" across the chest. He can be seen wearing this very jumper in the "Gone To Earth" tour programme, and on the European picture sleeve of "Loving Is Easy".

THIRD PRIZE - Another jumper, this time in red with "Woolly" emblazoned in green across the front. Both this one and the second prize have shrunk somewhat over the years, but BJH fans and very small people who feel the cold will still be delighted to add one of them to their wardrobe!

CONSOLATION PRIZES - two runners up will each receive a butterfly-shaped picture disc single of "Just A Day Away" in lurid red and blue. It may not be in the best possible taste, but it is definitely a collector's item!

To enter the raffle, send £1.00 per entry cash, cheque or postal/International Money Order, together with your name, address and membership number, to this address:

International BJH Fan Club
35 Wood End Green Road
Hayes
Middlesex
UB3 2SB

The closing date for entries is 20th January 1989, and winners will be announced in the February issue of NL.

RANT!

SO TOMORROW?

I actually stumbled across BJH by accident way back in 1974 when a friend gave me an unwanted copy of a promotional floppy vinyl disc from "Sounds". The A-side, if I remember correctly, had a track from that old band Rare Bird on it; the flip side was "Negative Earth" by, of course, BJH. I remember well how impressed I was and dashing off to purchase my copy of the "Everyone Is Everybody Else" album.

Some fifteen years on I have all the BJH albums and have seen the band at many concerts, including gigs in Paris and Germany. It would probably be fitting to say, at what must be somewhere near the twilight of the band's career, that I am well satisfied with the band and the small notch that it has carved out for itself in the music history books. Alas, this is not the case, and the reasons for this I will try to explain.

To say that the problems began when Woolly Wolstenholme left the band would probably file me in the category of someone locked in the past (I suppose that 29 does qualify me for the title of dinosaur). However, I firmly believe this to be the case (not that I am a dinosaur!), and in my defence would say that when the event actually happened I was not unduly concerned; after all, it seemed to me that it was John and Les who wrote the bulk of the band's material, and Woolly's efforts seemed at times slightly indulgent and out of character with the rest (not illustrated better anywhere else than on the "Time Honoured Ghosts" album with the track entitled "Beyond The Grave"). It is only with the benefit of hindsight that I have come to this conclusion.

The "XII" album proved to be the beginning of the demise, and shows the staleness of the band which must have been a major consideration in Woolly's decision to leave. Although containing some BJH classics, the album as a whole is limp and uninspiring, Woolly's songs and arrangements being the only real outstanding feature - in "In Search Of England" the chord sequence and arrangement are truly classic early BJH. Without going into an in-depth analysis of each of the following albums, I would say that the results have been patchy; many classics, yes, I would wholeheartedly agree, but how many complete albums such as "Everyone Is Everybody Else", "Gone To Earth", "Short Stories" etc?

"Eyes Of The Universe" proved to be a sparkly recording, and who could not appreciate the awesome classics "Sperratus" and "Play To The World"? But in musical and arrangement terms it is over-simplified and reveals the commercial direction that the band were beginning to turn in. Without the third member to add to the band's material the song listing has fallen into the Lees then Holroyd then Lees again trap - why, I ask myself, shouldn't a song be chosen on its merits rather than on who's particular turn it may be? It could be argued that towards the end Woolly only provided one or two tracks for each album, but an additional member prevented the monopoly of Lees/Holroyd songs, and that is without considering or mentioning his large contribution to the arrangements or shaping of the band's songs.

If it seems like I am calling for the return of Woolly, then this is not the case: I am simply using his past position in the band to illustrate where, in my opinion, things have gone off the rails. It would probably be highly unrealistic to think that he would ever play in the band again, although I for one am not averse to indulging in a little daydreaming at times!

If "Turn Of The Tide" was really what it claimed to be, "Ring Of Changes" hit me like a bolt from the sky. It represented a sharp change, ironically at a time when BJH had just committed themselves to the then new digital and superior recording format, and things looked particularly exciting. The Lees songs, with the exception of "Fifties Child" and "Paraiso Dos Cavalos" are weak and forgettable, with "Just A Day Away" sounding as if it would be more at home in the Eurovision Song Contest. The Les Holroyd tracks are commercial pop songs with bland lyrics, and "Waiting For The Right Time" even sounds like the Bee Gees!

"Victims Of Circumstance" continued the stagnation and individual styles of writing became even more obvious and entrenched in one particular formula; everything seemed to be becoming so familiar and predictable along with the heavy reliance on the synthesiser.

While "Face To Face" has proven to be the best set of songs from John Lees in some time, the contribution from Les Holroyd pushes me into despair; the lyrics are those of someone who has lost all originality and are a hotch-potch of his own past lyrics and song titles with even those of other artists such as Elton John and Journey, almost all of which hinge around the narrow boy/girl love theme. How many times are the words 'love' and 'night' (to mention just two small but obvious examples) going to be used in his lyrics? Is this really what we have come to expect from BJH? I don't think so. If the lyrics are borrowed, the musical content definitely is; it does seem that Les is heavily influenced at the moment by some of the American FM bands, and in particular by Chicago and Peter Cetera.

I think the picture I am trying to paint is that of a band which at the present time, and indeed for some time now, is suffering from familiarity and a lack of new ideas. As the band start to write and prepare for the new album, I am keen to impress upon them, and I know that there are many old BJH fans in my own home town alone who would like to do the same, and ask them to consider the direction the band has been moving in recently, and to reassess their position and return to some of the old BJH values of the past.

PAUL BAKER

Nodding your head in agreement? Incensed? Put pen to paper and let us know what YOU think. We don't just print articles we agree with, because NL is your forum for debate. Use it! - ED.

Feedback

A STATEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF "BABY JAMES HARVEST"

"Baby James Harvest" is sixteen years old. The baby pictured on the sleeve is probably now studying for 'A' levels. Released in October 1972, Barclay James Harvest's fourth LP is regarded by a sizeable number of fans as mediocre, doleful and the nadir of the group's songwriting abilities. In a recent survey of fans, the LP was in fact adjudged a runaway 'winner' in the category of least favourite release. All of this is rather unfortunate. Though obviously not as majestic as the LPs recorded during BJH's best periods of 1971 and 1975-1978, "Baby" is still, at least to these ears, very enjoyable and much better than the cloying "Ring Of Changes".

Though Holroyd was, at this time, a nascent songwriter, his material points the way ahead to the beautiful songs he was producing in the mid-1970s. "Believe In Me" and "Taking Me Higher" for example, could be said to have evolved from "One Hundred Thousand Smiles Out", and "Crazy (Over You)" could undoubtedly, in a more developed form, have replaced "Prisoner Of Your Love" on the most recent studio LP. Lees can hardly be accused of standing still on "Baby". With its parts for brass instruments, the excellent "Delph Town Morn" was unlike anything BJH had previously recorded. Similarly, "Summer Soldier" was the most ambitious song he had yet attempted; 'Bloody Sunday' had occurred a few months earlier in Ulster, and Lees responded with a penetrating set of lyrics in, arguably, his most moving and overtly political song. Wolstenholme, meanwhile, was working out his ideas as to what BJH should be. The resulting "Moonwater" is the treasure of this LP, and unquestionably its composer's finest moment with the group.

I can remember buying "Baby". At that time, I only had a mono record player, but the LP still sounded very good. All these years later, the same record still appears regularly on my turntable. Amongst all the clutter, "Baby", I see, is still on sale at Woolworths - and rightly so.

STEPHEN ROBERTS

RANT REVISITED: WHO WROTE WHAT?

It's not that bad - it's even worse! The muddle created on the covers and labels goes on with the German cover of "Concert For The People", where "Mocking Bird" is credited to Les! The nicest confusion, though, is that since "Glasnost" we've got two Holroyd brothers in the band, Richard and Leslie! The cover and disc credit only Les, whereas according to the lyric booklet "brother" Richard has written "Hold On", "Love On The Line" and "Berlin", leaving the new songs to Les. But at least the German "Baby" record agrees with the sleeve that Les wrote "Thank You", and doesn't the "Live" inner sleeve just state who wrote the lyrics? Seems to be worth discussing!

MONIKA BRAUCKHOFF

Reviews

THE MOODY BLUES - "SUR LA MER" (Polydor)

This is a hard review to write. For more years than I care to remember, I've been a Moody Blues fan. Now, for the first time, I'm saying that I don't like the new LP from the band. Perhaps one reason for this is the awful cover; it's beyond description! I thought that the 1983 offering for "The Present" was poor both in wrapping and musical content, but "Sur La Mer" goes far beyond that.

However, there are some redeeming points on offer. "I Know You're Out There Somewhere" is the song that was released as a single, and I have to say that it's as good a song as Justin Hayward has written for the band. The remainder of side one is filled with predictable, banal and dated songs, with just one notable exception. In my opinion, John Lodge has always been underestimated as a songwriter, having to live in the shadow of Hayward. His song "Here Comes The Weekend" is the best track on the album. It has a short, strong, acoustic guitar opening and then maintains a strong, pleasant beat. Perhaps, John, it's time for another solo album. Side two starts with Hayward's "Vintage Wine"; it sounds just that, a dated song! None of the tracks on side two is really worth mentioning except to say that there's nothing new on offer.

ALL the tracks on "Sur La Mer" were written by Hayward and Lodge, either as solo efforts or collaborations. On the last two Moody Blues albums there seems to have been a marked decline in the contributions of Ray Thomas, Graeme Edge and Patrick Moraz. Looking at the credits it seems to me that the Moody Blues are Hayward and Lodge. Perhaps they should rename the band "Blue Jays". So, who are the Moody Blues? Hayward and Lodge?

I'd like to think I'm wrong.

Kevin Goodman

AL STEWART - "LAST DAYS OF THE CENTURY" (Enigma/Virgin)

Four years on from "Russians And Americans" and dropped by his record company, you could be forgiven for assuming that Al Stewart's musical career was over. Then, out of the blue, comes a new album on a small American independent label, licensed to Virgin in the UK, and a string of concerts.

The voice has changed not a whit, nor have Stewart's lyrical preoccupations - history, mythology and sharp social observation are married to strong melodies and highlighted by a clean, high-tech production. The songs are his best for some time, with "Fields Of France", "Helen And Cassandra" and the title track outstanding, while others, notably "King Of Portugal" and "Bad Reputation", sound like potential hit singles.

The uninitiated may find Stewart's voice irritating in large doses, but for fans this is one to stand alongside "Past, Present And Future" and "Year Of The Cat". Recommended.

Keith Domone

