

# NOTTINGHAM'S ALVIN LEE REMEMBERS HIS EARLY YEARS ON THE ROAD

## To Woodstock and back

**S**TRAPPED in by a safety harness, Alvin Lee surveyed the Woodstock half-million from the Army helicopter which buzzed above the heads of the peace and love generation.

The chopper was called in to take Ten Years After to the stage area. The roads surrounding the site were solid with traffic; the natural arena was a heaving mass of hippies in extraordinarily high spirits.

"We were actually only there for five hours," recalls Alvin.

"We should have flown in and gone straight on stage but the storm broke when we arrived and there was a three-hour wait. The stage was soaked and the electricity was sparking. So I went for a walk around the lake and into the crowd. Out from it was peace and love but the egos were really battling backstage about who was going on before whom.

"There wasn't a great deal of 60s ideology there. "But I look at Woodstock now as the coming together of the peace generation.

"But afterwards, it was as if they all went home again." Many years before Alvin Lee and his band stole the Woodstock show, he was inspired by crowds of a very different sort.

"I used to wheel my bike along Middleton Boulevard each morning as a kid, looking at the traffic queues into town. I remember thinking that there had to be more to life than that.

"And there was no doubt that my way out was going to be music of one sort or another. I couldn't leave school quickly enough."

Alvin Lee — then plain Graham Barnes — was 12 when he started learning his first instrument, choosing the clarinet because his brother-in-law played one in a jazz band.

**TWENTY-ONE years after their appearance at the Woodstock Festival — and 17 years after they split up — Ten Years After are back on the rock circuit. And no one's more pleased than Nottingham-born guitarist Alvin Lee who talks about the good and the bad times in their career**



By JOHN HOLT

"I changed to the guitar because I was fed up with only being able to play one note at a time. It had nothing to do with the noise factor as the amplifiers of the time wouldn't have made a great deal of difference."

Taking lessons from Norman Barnacle in West Bridgford, he played his first gig aged 13, at the Sandiacre Palace, playing short sets between the films.

The first group he joined was Alan Upton and the Jailbreakers.

"He was a Jerry Lee Lewis clone and I cut my teeth on that," says Alvin, who then answered a newspaper ad to join forces with Vince Marshall and the Square Cats.

"He used to turn up two hours late at the corner cafe and if you were still there you got the job."

For the young rock-star-in-waiting it was a case of one small-time group after another until he met bass player Leo Lyons who came from Mansfield.

"He was an Elvis fan and I played guitar like Scotty Moore (Presley's guitarist) so we got on. With singer Ivan Jay we became the Jayvins, Jaycats and Jaybirds."

The next year, shortly after Alvin's 16th birthday, the band were booked for a five-week residency at the Star Club in Hamburg, just four weeks after the Beatles had left.

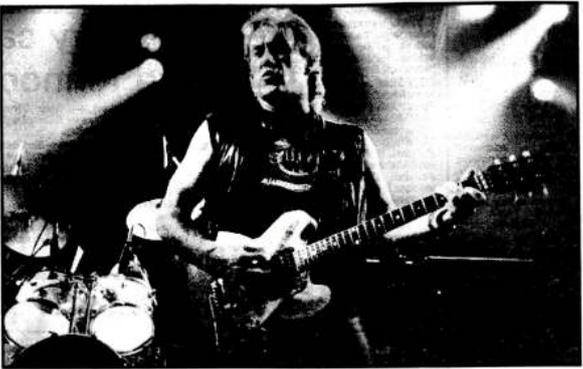
"I remember, around the same time, being offered a gig to play with an outfit called 'Robin Hood and his Merry Men' but there was no way we were getting me in green tights."

"After Germany, we were finally getting somewhere but in Nottingham we were purely big fishes in a little pond. My parents were very supportive and only occasionally mumbled something about a proper job."

"So we went down to London a couple of times although nothing came of it. On the third trip, however, we met Ric Lee [also from Mansfield] and added to a stage version of Saturday Night and Sunday Morning. We had a few hit parts and advised the cast on the local accents."

"What money was available in those days was earned through session work, providing the backing for established stars."

"It was soul-destroying stuff with little reward. When we met Chick Churchill we took him on as a roadie because we couldn't afford a Hammond organ. He thanked us by leaving a trail



● Above: Alvin Lee now; left: In the Ten Years After days, circa Woodstock; right: Pictured with the Jaybirds in 1964

of microphone stands all over the country.

"We used to play three sets a night, playing my favourite jazz and blues very early in the morning when everyone was too drunk to notice."

"I got all that from my dad. He collected the other stuff and I grew up on chain-gang songs. It was great material but there was absolutely no market for it at the time."

But times changed — to Alvin's great advantage. Thanks to musicians like Peter Green, John Mayall and Eric Clapton, the English blues scene exploded — and Alvin had all the best tunes already under his belt.

The band started to take off and it was during a residency at London's Marquee club that Alvin dreamed up the name Ten Years After, baffling some pseudos who could only imagine he meant ten years after Elvis.

"No, it was nothing like that. It was just a nice phrase."

The blues played such a large part in Alvin's life, he was a little disappointed on his first trip to America.

"It came as a shock to find out the vast majority of people had never heard of John Lee Hooker and the other blues greats. I thought that everyone who would know who they were."

On the strength of the blues-based debut album, rock promoter Bill Graham had them play at Monterey to perform at a new club he was opening in New York.

"We had another concert in San Francisco so we just



had to fill in the other 3,000 miles. We lost about \$35,000 on that first tour."

For the second time in a still short career, Alvin looked the Beatles.

"The Americans were still crazy about them and other English groups but the Nottingham accent came in handy. If you didn't speak cockney or 'posh', you were cute. We were constantly asked if we knew the Beatles so we just said 'sure, England's so small, everybody knows everybody else'."

Ten Years After also had diversity in their favour, playing blues, progressive rock and jazz — "we just couldn't be pigeon-holed," says Alvin.

They appeared at the famous Newport Jazz Festival and Alvin remembers rubbing shoulders with some of the greats.

"Miles Davis was there looking at the poster which was split into two halves. As I approached, he pointed to his name and said 'that's me.' I went over, pointed to Ten Years After and said 'and that's me.'"

"We did a lot of festivals around that time. The Texas Peace Festival was better than Woodstock but it was forgotten because there wasn't a movie."

"The Woodstock film made the peace movement fashionable and, as we all know, fashions come and go."

Now the 60s are back in fashion once again and Ten Years After are back on the road.

"We used to be considered boring old musos and now we're living legends again. Funny, isn't it? If you were at Woodstock, you're once again considered to be 'happening'."

**TOMORROW: Why Ten Years After originally split, what the future holds for Alvin Lee and Mrs Doris Barnes on her rock star son**

### 'Help us solve these cases'

This week we look at a robbery in which a 71-year-old woman had her bag stolen, a burglary in which jewellery worth £2,000 was taken, an attempted robbery attempt at a break-in in which cigarettes were stolen.

The first incident happened at 4pm last Thursday when a 71-year-old woman was walking along Rothsay Avenue, which runs between Derby Road and Ilkeston Road.

A man came up behind her, pushed her to the ground and stole her handbag. He ran off towards Ilkeston Road with a black shoulder bag which contained a red purse, reading glasses and other items worth £70.

The woman was shaken and is still upset by the incident and we are anxious to trace the thief.

He was black, in his late teens, 5ft 2ins tall and of athletic build. He had short, black hair, which was smartly cut, and was wearing a three-quarter length dark coat, dark trousers and black shoes.

If you were in the area of Rothsay Avenue last Thursday at 4pm and saw this man, please call the Nottinghams on 0800 626999.

A large amount of jewellery worth around £2,000, was stolen from a house in Litchfield Avenue, Mansfield, last Saturday between 7.30pm and 12.30am.

The haul included a metal Omega watch, some Canadian Olympic commemorative coins and a dark

tail, very slim, with short black, behind raincoat. Another man looked similar, but was broader.

The third man was around 30, 5ft 9ins tall, of broad build with a full beard. He was wearing a colourful knitted hat, a long black shiny raincoat and gold jewellery.

If you recognise any of these men, please ring Crimbusters.

with your information

0800 626999

green smell, measuring 18ins by 26ins.

Neighbours saw a light-coloured car leaving the driveway of the house between 9.30pm and 10pm on Saturday and anyone who saw this, or anyone acting suspiciously, is asked to contact Crimbusters.

An attempted robbery took place last Sunday at the junction of Hyson Green and Radford Road in Nottingham, outside LaDobrobes betting shop, between 8.30pm and 8.50pm.

A man was approached separately by two men and was then grabbed by a third who spun him round in a shop doorway.

He held a knife with a 4ins blade to the victim's chest and demanded money. He ran off when a passer-by offered help.

All three were black. One was in his mid 20s, 5ft 9ins

As a result, some of the trousers have been recovered and two people have been arrested and charged.

# CUT YOUR MORTGAGE & LOAN REPAYMENTS

## HERE'S HOW IT CAN BE DONE...

<p><b>EXAMPLE A</b></p> <p>Mr and Mrs CARTER of ARNOLD PAY OFF LOANS and raise £2,000</p> <p>Here's what they had</p> <p>A MORTGAGE OF £28,000 over 25 years with 23 years to pay off per month £301.98</p> <p>A FINANCE COMPANY LOAN OF £8,500 over 60 months per month £270.27</p> <p>A CAR LOAN OF £4,000 over 36 months per month £152.43</p> <p><b>TOTAL MONTHLY PAYMENTS £724.68</b></p> <p>Here's what we did for them</p> <p><b>NEW MORTGAGE OF £42,500</b> over 25 years replacing existing mortgage including additional amount to repay loans in FULL and raise £2,000 for their own use</p> <p><b>TOTAL MONTHLY PAYMENT £501.61</b></p> <p><b>SAVING Mr and Mrs CARTER £223.07 per month</b> (Interest rate 14.75% APR 15.80% (variable) Total amount payable over 25 years £176,293)</p>	<p><b>EXAMPLE B</b></p> <p>Mr and Mrs JOHNSON of WEST BRIDGFORD PAY OFF LOANS</p> <p>Here's what they had</p> <p>A MORTGAGE OF £23,000 over 25 years with 21 years to pay off per month £255.31</p> <p>A HOME IMPROVEMENT LOAN OF £8,000 over 60 months per month £226.82</p> <p>A BANK LOAN OF £3,500 over 36 months per month £130.86</p> <p><b>TOTAL MONTHLY PAYMENTS £612.99</b></p> <p>Here's what we did for them</p> <p><b>NEW MORTGAGE OF £32,500</b> over 25 years replacing existing mortgage and FULL repayment of loans</p> <p><b>TOTAL MONTHLY PAYMENT £380.68</b></p> <p><b>SAVING Mr and Mrs JOHNSON £232.31 per month</b> (Interest rate 14.75% APR 15.80% (variable) Total amount payable over 25 years £135,407)</p>
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Typical Example: £35,000 mortgage over 25 years - £358.17 Interest Rate 14.95% APR 16.4% (Variable) Total amount payable £130,483.50

In addition to the above, additional security of an Endowment Policy will be required. For example a man aged 34 years and a female aged 29 years, both non-smokers will pay £58.79 per month. The Endowment Policy will be effected with Royal Life (Unit-Linked Assurance) Ltd a member of LAUTRO. The example is based on tax relief being received at 25% on £25,000. The value of Units cannot be guaranteed as prices may go down as well as up. Examples are based on current cases. Normal Brokers fee is 1% of new mortgage. A Survey Fee and Legal Fees will be payable. This average costs based on a valuation of £60,000 and a mortgage of £35,000 will be £130.00 for the survey and £250 for the Solicitor's Costs (these can be deducted from the proceeds). All mortgages subject to status and valuation.

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