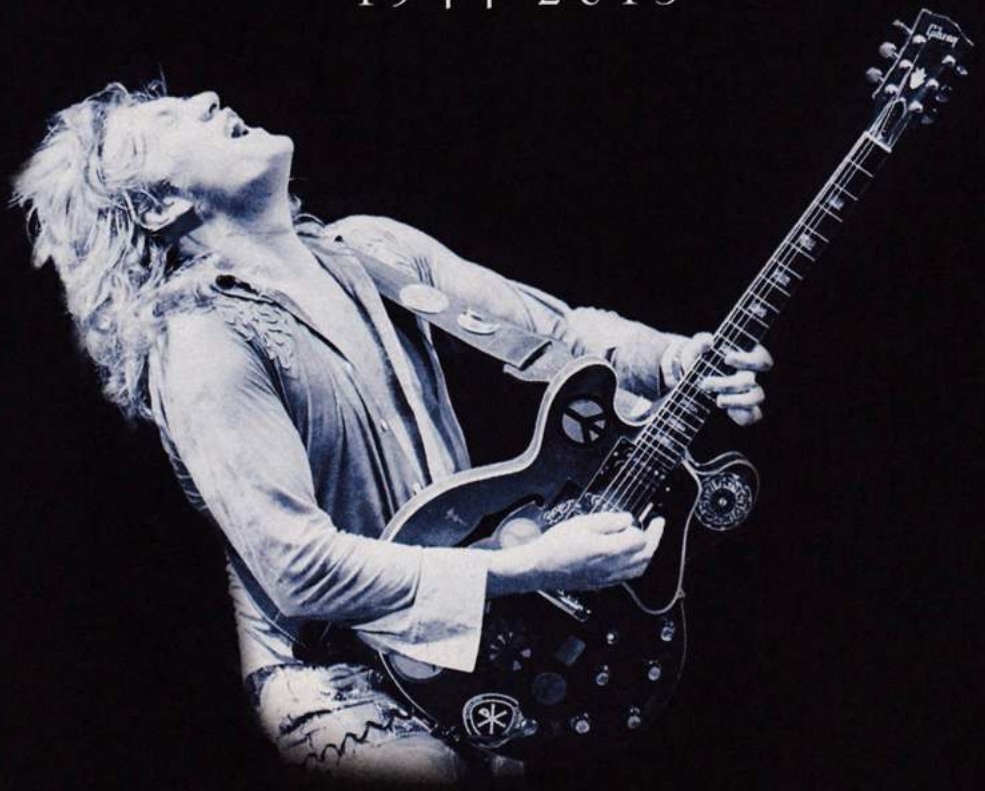
IN MEMORIAM

ALVIN LEE

1944-2013



ALVIN LEE –
FOND MEMORIES OF A GUITAR HERO

They called Alvin Lee '*the fastest guitar player in the West*', a true star and a legendary figure in rock. But he was also a warm hearted, down to earth guy, much loved and who will be greatly missed.

Alvin loved his rock'n'roll and the blues with a passion. Just 12 years old when he met Big Bill Broonzy, he always said: "*The day after my Dad introduced me to Big Bill I swapped my clarinet for a guitar. It was all the inspiration I needed.*"

Alvin went on to inspire us all with his dynamic playing ever since Ten Years After and beyond. But as well as his musicianship, I'll also treasure his infectious sense of humour.

Remember Alvin stunning the Woodstock Generation with his speedy solo on '*I'm Goin' Home*'? Well I'll always think of Alvin speeding through the streets of Paris by night carrying a giant fake advertising 'egg' we'd pinched from a pavement café after a gig. We even took it for a ride in a taxi. He was still laughing about it twenty years later…

Rock On, Alvin.

CHRIS WELCH

ALVIN LEE –
CALLING ELVIS?

When Alvin Lee told me "*I joined the Elvis Presley Fan Club just to get a photo of Scotty Moore and his guitar*," it straight away punctured the 'aloof rock god' stereotype I'd been expecting. Next came the revelation that he only took one guitar on stage – "*Some of these guys go on the road and it's like a guitar shop.*" Clearly this was no ordinary axe hero…

'*In Tennessee*', the 2004 project that had united Alvin with his childhood hero and also Elvis drummer DJ Fontana, brought him back after semi-retirement – and, more importantly, restored his enthusiasm. "*The worst thing about playing live is if you play too much and it becomes boring. Once you're bored with rock'n'roll, what the hell is there left in life to do?*"

Maybe Alvin will get the chance to stand at Elvis's side and play some 'heavenly' gigs before Scotty gets the call…

MICHAEL HEATLEY

GOODBYE ALVIN

Great British guitarist **Alvin Lee** passed away in Spain on 6 March after complications from routine surgery. In tribute, we present his final interview, full of insight and wit honed by a life in rock. Alan Clayson says farewell to a true original

Alvin Lee first garnered local acclaim in and around Nottingham, circa 1963, as lead guitarist with The Jaybirds, who were on terms of fluctuating equality with The Beat Men as the city's boss group.

That was not, however, the ceiling of Lee's ambition. While there's no doubt that his eye-stretching ability as a guitarist alone would have been a passport to stardom, he also had the hunger. He, as he admitted, "wanted nothing more than to be noticed, and consequently become rich and famous".

Well, he achieved this with a vengeance when his band Ten Years After caught the lightning during the transatlantic blues boom in the late 60s. Later, he saw through his ambition and came to terms with his artistry. It hadn't been easy. Years of grinding up and down the trunk roads of Britain – when the country's only major motorway ran from London to Birmingham – and the almost obligatory Hamburg period, had delivered hard-won professionalism on a mission that saw The Jaybirds eventually migrate from Nottinghamshire, to nest in London.

All manner of odd jobs prefaced their mutation into Ten Years After – named because 1966 was a decade after Elvis Presley's global emergence. Via a residency in The Marquee and an acclaimed slot at '67's Windsor Blues Festival, there came transition from a "group" (ignorable, trivial) in the ballrooms, to a "band" (serious, powerful) wowing 'em at specialist clubs like Bluesville in Hackney,and amid whirling hippie dancers with eyes like Catherine wheels in venues like Middle Earth, and, as their reputation widened, Amsterdam's Paradiso. Their appeal hinged not on filling such places with teenage ecstasy, but a virtuosity demonstrated in lengthy improvisations launched from tracks featured on their eponymous maiden album. The loudest ovations were for the fretboard fireworks that were to earn Alvin the unwanted nickname 'Captain Speedfingers', after Ten Years After surfaced as a dependable draw in North America's baseball parks and concrete coliseums following an appearance at Woodstock that proved seminal.

Because they were fronted by one of the most worshipped of guitar gods, Ten Years After albums sold by the ton – and the band climbed high in the singles charts too, with Love Like A Man and 1971's I'd Love To Change The World. It's feasible that they'd have continued to do so had not Alvin embarked on a solo career in the mid-70s.

His solo commercial fortunes were mixed. 1973's *On The Road To Freedom* (with gospel singer Mylon Lefevre) and the double-LP *In Flight* – an audio souvenir of his first stage appearance in his own right – sold steadily if

unremarkably. Nevertheless, he was assured of capacity crowds and interest enough to merit release further releases such as *Pump Iron* ("a rubbish title", Alvin told me) and *Let It Rock*, prior to entering the 80s with the Ten Years Later trio. There were also troubled if well-received reunions with the old band for as long as Alvin lived where Berkshire dissolves into Oxfordshire – described sometimes as Hollywood-on-Thames – and he was a near-neighbour of George Harrison, Joe Brown, Jon Lord and Dave Edmunds, with whom he mixed artistically and socially.

The halcyon days of automatic chart entries were over for all of them, but by concentrating on the possible, Alvin Lee at least kept a grip on the realities of his various successes and defined his motivations sharply enough for another gold disc to be a mere sideshow. Yet when we spoke to him, Alvin was justifiably if quietly proud of his final album, *Still On The Road To Freedom*, released in the autumn of last year.

"I've never been a great one for publicity," Alvin told *RC*. "I'm more obsessed with keeping a low profile, but I still want people to hear *Still On The Road To Freedom* – especially those who might have lost track of me since Ten Years After – partly because I hope they find it demonstrates that there's more to me than being 'Captain Speedfingers'".

The album shows the multifaceted nature of your musicianship. For example, Back In 69 – very topical and cynical – is a world away from Song Of The Red Rock Mountain's downbeat feel. Yet it all makes sense as a kind of musical inventory of Alvin Lee. One of its surprises is the skill of your harmonica playing.

"I was always a fan of Sonny Terry, Little Walter and Sonny Boy Williamson," explains Alvin. "However, there are some good white players around now – such as Alan Glen of Nine Below Zero. They toured with me in the States. You have to remember I was brought up with blues. My dad was an avid collector of that and all sorts of other ethnic music."

To what further degree did your family background impact on your musical taste?

"From my earliest youth, we often had musical evenings, singing She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain and the like. I was very fortunate with my parents, who were totally behind me making a living as a musician."

Was the guitar your first instrument?

"No, it was the clarinet. But I always used to plonk about on the various guitars around the house. Both my parents owned one, and one of my two older sisters had a Hawaiian model. Finally, while learning clarinet, I was listening hard to Benny Goodman, but I came to prefer Charlie Christian, his guitarist. Then along came Bill Haley, Chuck Berry – and my absolute hero, Scotty Moore. I joined the Elvis Presley fan club just to get a photo of him with his Gibson guitar. I was to meet him in 1989 in Nashville, and played with him 10 years later in London, during a music industry tribute show. Afterwards, I sounded him out about making an album together. He was most amenable, so I started working straight away on songs for it and, a year later, we recorded at his Nashville studio with DJ Fontana, the house drummer at Sun in the old days.

"My influences also include classical, country-and-western – Chet Atkins, Merle Travis – and jazz, particularly George Benson much later on."

When did you fix on the notion of being a full-time musician?

"My parents used to frequent this pub, The Test Match, near Nottingham cricket ground. 'Big' Bill Broonzy, Josh White, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee and other US bluesmen, used to fit in gigs there whenever they toured Europe – and, on one occasion, my parents brought Big Bill back to the house. Meeting him was quite a pivotal moment for me as far as deciding to make a living as a guitarist was concerned. They also knew Lonnie Donegan when he was doing his 15-minute skiffle spot in Chris Barber's Jazz Band, and I was introduced to him too when he was staying with friends in the city.

"When I was 13, I answered a 'musicians wanted' ad for a group called Vince Marshall & The Square Caps. I turned up with my guitar and amp in the Kardomah coffee shop for auditions that were supposed to start at 2pm. By three, Vince still hadn't arrived, and some of the hopefuls went home. But he explained that the reason for his lateness was that it was a test of how keen you were to join him. We were, therefore, all hired – two drummers, three guitarists, a piano accordionist – and rehearsed an all-instrumental repertoire for six months. Then we undertook just one gig – with us standing on cardboard plinths, apart from Vince, who was the conductor – and broke up immediately afterwards.

"Next I was lead guitarist in Alan Upton & The Jail-Breakers. Alan was a Jerry Lee Lewis-style singing pianist. In a way, that was my favourite period, just playing guitar from the back of the stage with a pint of beer on the amplifier, no pressure to sing or show off. I became good not so much at copying riffs as adapting styles. For example, I could capture the groove and feel of Chuck Berry without actually playing his exact notes."

How did you escape the local orbit?

"That came about when I was lead guitarist with Ivan Jay & The Jaycats – later Ivan Jay & The Jaymen. Ivan left and we became The Jaybirds – me, Leo Lyons on bass, Pete Evans on drums, and a singer, Faron Christie, who also did Twist demonstrations. By 1962, we were covering maybe 2,000 miles a week in the van, travelling as far as Newcastle and Wales. Then we were offered a five-week residency at the Star-Club in Hamburg via Reg Calvert, one of the looniest booking agents in the Midlands. He reckoned we needed a rhythm guitarist – so we picked a random guy who was hanging around. Most of the time, he was heard only psychosomatically, as we used to unplug him!

"Another adjustment had to be made when Faron decided he didn't want to go to Germany. That's how I become the lead singer by default.

"At the Star-Club, we were sharing the stage with Cliff Bennett & His Rebel Rousers, Buddy Britten & The Regents, The Big Three, Davy Jones, Tony Sheridan… and only had to do an hour a night. We used to do versions of Bo Diddley and Joey Dee & The Starliters' Ya Ya, plus a rock'n'roll medley, that each lasted about 10 minutes.

"That was my first time overseas. Everything I'd ever heard about sex, drugs and rock'n'roll was compressed into five weeks. Gangsters, prostitutes, pushers… it was pretty scary for an 18-year-old lad from Nottingham. Yet when you worked the Star-Club, you were given a special badge – which I've still got – and with that on your lapel, you could go in any Reeperbahn club without any trouble.

"When we got back, we got rid of the rhythm guitarist. Then Pete quit and we enlisted Ric Lee. As I was the van driver, I always had to collect and drop off Ric – and Leo – at their homes in Mansfield, 15 miles from Nottingham."

> "Everything I'd ever heard about sex, drugs and rock'n'roll was compressed into five weeks in Hamburg. Pretty scary for an 18-year-old lad from Nottingham"

Wasn't that around the time you adopted the stage alias 'Alvin Dean'?

"I was Alvin Dean for only a few weeks. We all had stage names. Leo's real name was actually David. In those days, we wanted nothing more than to be noticed, and consequently become rich and famous – though when that happened, the reality didn't live up to the dream."

As harbingers of "The Trentside Sound", did you regard The Jaybirds as Nottingham's answer to The Beatles?

"Not really. Nevertheless, we were the biggest band in Nottingham, making good money, but there was nowhere left to go unless we tried our luck in London. We used to stay at The Madison, a very cheap hotel in Bayswater. The Move were on one floor, Mike Patto's band from Norwich on another – and four other groups elsewhere in the building. By the time we found a flat, the only gigs we had were back in Nottingham, but we finally cracked it with engagements at Bluesville in Hackney, the Cricketers Arms near the Oval,

and, later, the Marquee and the psychedelic clubs like Middle Earth and the UFO."

How did you survive before that?

"One of our first jobs in London came about when Frank Dunlop, the theatre director, was putting on *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe, who was from Nottingham and based the play there. We were taken on as the band for the pub scene and to accompany the female lead singing Anyone Who Had A Heart. We were also responsible for incidental music played from the wings. It ran for five weeks at the Prince Of Wales in the West End.

"Then we backed The Ivy League on the cabaret circuit. It paid the rent, and The Ivy League talked about recording My Girl's Song, the first number I ever wrote, but it didn't go beyond talk. Around that time, Chick Churchill joined us on organ – which was ideal for underlining what I was doing on the guitar.

"The four of us hung around the Giaconda snack bar on the corner of Denmark Street – London's Tin Pan Alley – the studio for the publishers, Southern Music, was in the basement. Now and then, we'd pick up sessions there. By the way, we weren't the same Jaybirds signed to Embassy, the Woolworth's label, running off carbon-copies of the then-current hits."

Calling yourself The Jaybirds wasn't very trendy, was it? By 1967, if you were, say, The Hedgehogs, it was kinda groovy to change to just Hedgehog.

"We considered shortening to just Jaybird. A name we nearly stuck with was Blues Yard – which was what we were when we first appeared at the Marquee – but then I thought we might not be trading in blues in 10 years' time. Another possibility was Life Without Mother – to do with living in the capital on food parcels from home.

"We were Ten Years After when we acquired a manager, Chris Wright. He'd been the social secretary at Manchester University, where we'd played just before he moved to London to start an agency. He got us signed to Deram, the 'progressive' subsidiary of Decca – who'd turned us down months earlier."

That first album lifted you off the runway in North America…

"After it was played a lot on radio stations in and around San Francisco, we were invited over by Bill Graham to play the Fillmore West. It was the first of many visits to the States. Outside the hotel in LA, I spent hours just watching the Cadillacs, Chevrolets and Buicks flash by."

Over here, it was the second album, *Undead*, that was the vehicle of Ten Years After's breakthrough.

"That was live at Klook's Kleek in London – and when that came out, I reckoned that that was it for Ten Years After – the best we could do unless we developed rather than just consolidated the stage show."

You were doing Crossroads, Spoonful and other songs that were the common property of many other groups during the Blues Boom, but no-one else had the nerve to attempt Woodchopper's Ball.

"That was from my clarinet days, but it hadn't much to do with Woody Herman's arrangement. Ours was more or less jammed – just a couple of verses and see what happens kind of thing. I remember doing it on BBC Radio 1 during John Peel's *Top Gear* show. The producer, John Walters, said to me, 'That'll stop a few vans on the M1 when we broadcast that!'"

It helped bolster your standing as a high-velocity guitarist.

"I don't think I was a particularly fast guitarist, not compared to Django Reinhardt, Barney Kessel or George Benson. They don't sound fast because what they do isn't exciting to a rock listener. The way my fast stuff seems more energetic is via light and shade – the contrast between mellow and rifle riffs."

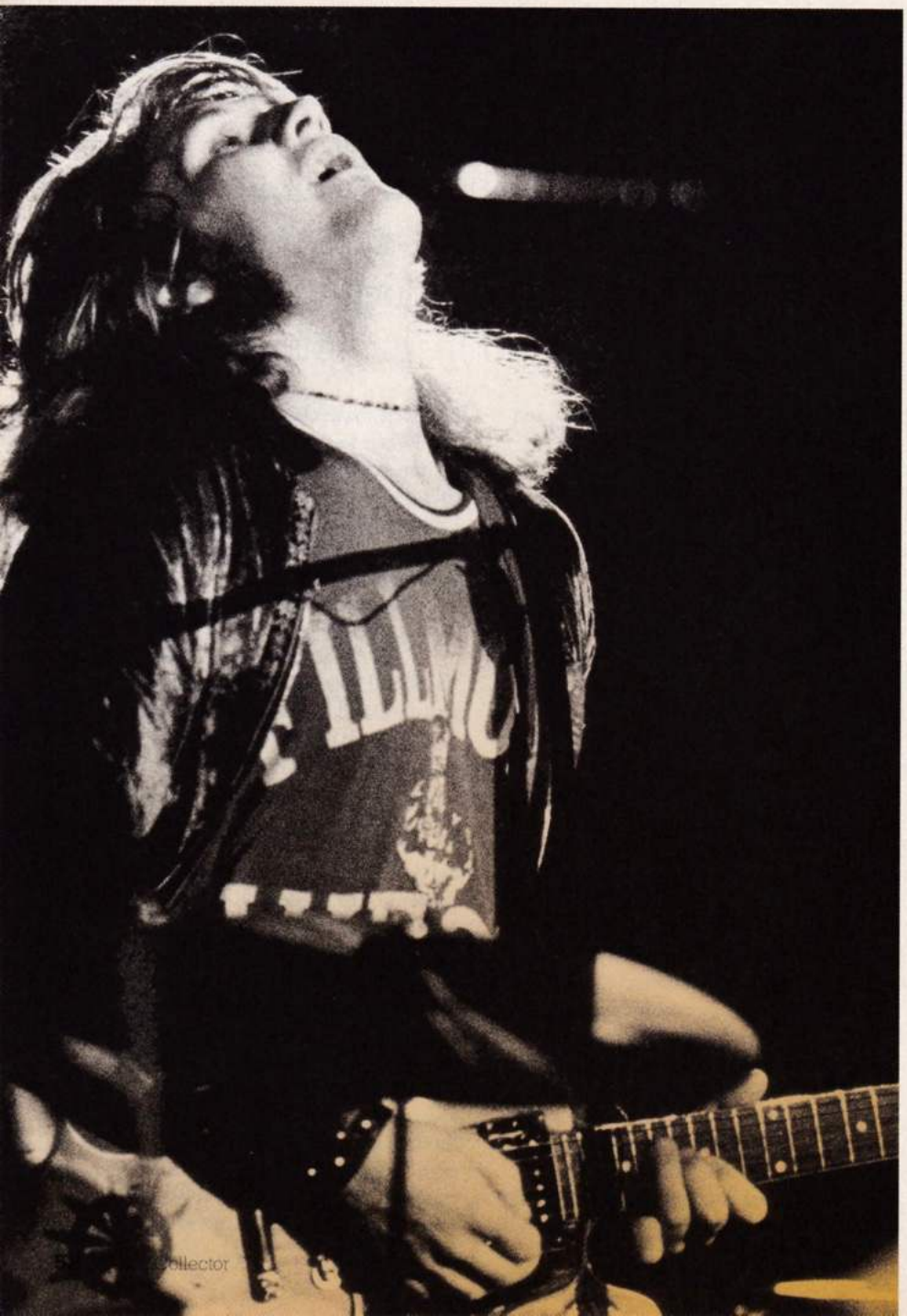
As well as your technique, the Big Red, the Gibson guitar you used at Woodstock, is synonymous with you too.

"I bought that eight years earlier in a shop in Nottingham called Jack Brentnall's for £45 – with case. It turned out to be a sound investment because it's worth a ridiculous amount of money now, as the instrument I played at Woodstock."

Were you under pressure to produce a hit 45?

"I suppose we were after we transferred to CBS, because a 10-minute studio version of Love Like A Man was edited down to two-and-a-half. It was my idea to have that backed with a 33rpm live arrangement on the single. The trouble was that, on a juke-box, the live side sounded like Pinky & Perky!

A lot of the stuff worked far better on stage than it ever did in the studio, especially where there's room within a given song to expand and develop. When you're working five, six nights a week, that's how a three-minute number becomes a five-minute number becomes a 10-minute number."



"Mick Taylor also played piano on stage. Sometimes those solos would last for 20 verses and I'd be forever waiting for the cue for the vocal to re-enter"

After Love Like A Man reached the Top 10 in Britain, I'd Love To Change The World was poised to do likewise in the States the following year…

"I could write a book about I'd Love To Change The World. It started with me reckoning I could write a Top 40 hit anytime I liked, and someone taking me up on it. That song shaped up in that respect – with a great hook line, a cool verse – although I nearly didn't release it because I thought that opening line about 'freaks and hairies, dykes and fairies' was a bit sexist, especially as I had gay friends who might feel insulted. I enjoyed writing and recording it, but I never played it live. It didn't suit that, mostly because it hinged on acoustic guitar and a falsetto chorus."

Despite such triumphs, it wasn't all smiles when Ten Years After signed off with *Positive Vibrations* in 1974?

"That wasn't a very apt name for that album. Positive vibrations were in short supply by then. The others were complaining that I was getting too much attention. But as I was singer, lead guitarist and main songwriter, it couldn't be helped. Into the bargain, there was all the responsibility for a crew of about 50 people on the road, and finding myself in the company of accountants, lawyers and managers rather than musicians. Once, in LA, I was invited to this lawyer's house. He seemed a nice guy, but as I left, he said, 'Let me know if there's anything you want, anything at all. If you want somebody bumping off, just give me a call.' What had I got myself into? I turned to drugs and drink to distance myself from it. As I wrote in the sleevenotes on the new album, I was in danger of joining the dead-before-30 club. It wasn't quite that desperate, but sufficient for me to decide enough was enough. Anyway, eight years is a pretty good run for any band."

There were two non-Ten Years After albums by you in the shops while the dust was still settling.

"*On The Road To Freedom* was a collaboration with Mylon Lefevre, who opened for Ten Years After on a tour. He had that Deep South country-rock thing, and I wanted to blend that with what I did, so we began writing songs together. A lot of people didn't like the resulting album because they were expecting a Ten Years After-type thing, but I've never liked getting stuck in any particular style.

"It was strictly a studio project – and the next one started that way. I had a studio in Hook End, near Reading – the first Space Studio. Ian Wallace, Boz Burrell – one of my favourite bass players – Tim Hinkley and Mel Collins were regular visitors, and we'd play and record together and, eventually, I had ample material – funkier and more tasteful than I'd done before – to approach Chris Wright with the idea of an album. But that didn't happen because it would have destroyed the gravy train of Ten Years After, which, at that point, hadn't yet disbanded officially.

"However, Terry Doran, George Harrison's general factotum, dared me to do a solo gig in London. So I said, 'Right!', and rang up the Rainbow, which had a date free in 10 days' time. Boz had joined Bad Company, so we wheeled in Alan Spenner as well as Neil Hubbard on second guitar and the singers from Kokomo. There followed 10 labour-intensive days of rehearsals, but halfway through, I realised that, owing to everybody's working schedules, nobody in the band had been in the same room at the same time. Yet it turned out great in the end – though there was disenchantment from certain Ten Years After fans that I wasn't playing fast all the time. Nevertheless, the tour that followed got really good reviews."

So did the tour in the 80s when Mick Taylor was in The Alvin Lee Band...

"I don't usually like playing with other guitarists, but things worked out very well. His more laid-back style contrasted suitably with mine. He also played piano – a Wurlitzer – on stage. Sometimes those solos would last 20 verses, and I'd be forever waiting for the cue for the vocals to re-enter."

How were the Ten Years After reunions that reared their heads on and off from 1983's Reading Festival to the Eurowoodstock event in Budapest 10 years later?

"It was great at first, but too much resentment had built up since the group first split up. Really, the crux of Ten Years After was the interplay between me and Leo. He and the other two reformed Ten Years After a few years ago with another guitarist. I haven't made a fuss about it because it was their music too."

ALVIN LEE LPS

Ten Years After *Ten Years After*
(Deram DML/SML 1015, 1967)
Co-produced by Gus Dudgeon – fresh from John Mayall's Bluesbreakers With Eric Clapton – this was mostly a streamlining of stage standbys, among them Spoonful, Sonny Boy Williamson's Help Me, a handful of Lee originals and the Chick Churchill feature, Adventures Of A Young Organ.

Ten Years After *Undead*
(Deram DML/SML 1023, 1968)
This in-concert offering (and domestic Top 30 breakthrough) showcased extrapolations extending far beyond the one verse at most that was the norm on pop singles. Of particular note are an overhaul of Woody Herman's Woodchopper's Ball and soon-to-be Ten Years After's own signature tune, I'm Going Home.

Ten Years After *Stonedhenge*
(Dream DML/SML 1029, 1969)
Highlights include Hear Me Calling – revived by Slade in 1972 – and the Speed Kills finale penned by Lee and producer Mike Vernon. If in perverse mood, however, you might favour the Three Blind Mice nursery rhyme presented as a one-minute drum solo.

Alvin Lee *Detroit Diesel*
(Atlantic 7 90517-1, 1986)
Lee was assisted here by Jon Lord, Joe Brown and, contributing bottleneck to Talk Don't Bother Me, George Harrison. Yet this release is desirable for worthier reasons than the famous names credited, not least because it embraces perhaps Alvin's most adept singing on record.

Alvin Lee *In Tennessee*
(Rainman RM 04012, 2004)
If it's once more with feeling for I'm Going Home, this title is entirely fitting on Lee's studio liaison, albeit on only two items, with Scotty Moore, the guitarist who captured his adolescent imagination. Crucially, Alvin sounds as if he was having fun.

Alvin Lee *Still On The Road To Freedom*
(Repertoire REP 5223, 2012)
On the acoustic instrumental, Song Of The Red Rock Mountain, a fractional widening of vibrato is as loaded as some of the most in-yer-face solos of Alvin's past – which is revisited in blues-freighted items and an intriguing remake of Love Like A Man.

Not Forgotten

Send obituaries to tim.jones@metropolis.co.uk


Kevin Ayers

Kevin Ayers, singer, songwriter, bassist (born Herne Bay, Kent, August 1944), died in Montelieu, France, on 18 February, aged 68. As co-founder of Soft Machine, he played a significant role in both the Canterbury and UK psychedelic scenes, before his wayward, gem-studded solo career turned him into a quintessentially English enigma. His languid, burnished tones provided one of the last century's most unmistakable voices.

Son of BBC producer Rowan Ayers, Kevin spent most of his childhood in Malaya during the 50s, which informed his subsequent persona as a louche romantic. After returning to the UK at 12, he attended college, where he joined The Wilde Flowers with Robert Wyatt, Hugh Hopper and future Caravan members. With the addition of keyboardist Mike Ratledge and guitarist Daevid Allen, they became The Soft Machine, Ayers switching to bass while sharing vocals with Wyatt. 1967's debut single, Love Makes Sweet Music, placed them as pioneers of London's underground psych scene, the following year's self-titled debut album a classic of the genre.

After a gruelling US tour, Ayers sold his bass to Noel Redding and took off for Ibiza, writing songs such as Lady Rachel and Song For Insane Times, which appeared on his debut solo set for Harvest, *Joy Of A Toy*, followed by *Shooting At The Moon*. By then, he'd formed The Whole World, a powerful, unpredictable live outfit, members including saxophonist Lol Coxhill, avant keyboardist David Bedford, and guitarist Mike Oldfield. After they broke up, Ayers released 1971's *Whatevershebringswesing*, 1973's *Bananamour*, and 1974's spoken-word collaboration, *Lady June's Linguistic Leprosy*. Ayers was established as an idiosyncratic creator of mellow, sometimes surreal songs. Signing to Island in 1974, he upped his game on *The Confessions Of Dr Dream & Other Stories*, joined by mercurial guitarist Ollie Halsall and dueting with Nico, who took part in a gig at London's Rainbow, which saw Ayers joined by Eno and John Cale, released as *June 1, 1974*. After 1976's *Sweet Deceiver*, Ayers returned to Harvest, releasing *Yes We Have No Mananas*, followed by 1978's *Rainbow Takeaway* and 1980's *That's What You Get Babe*, before heading off for Majorca, and returning with 1983's *Diamond Jack & The Queen Of Pain*, and heavy drug problems.

By 1986, he returned with the more positive *Falling Up*, and showed up in 1992 with the predominantly acoustic *Still Life With A Guitar*. After spending years in the south of France, he returned to the UK to find a new generation of devotees, including Teenage Fanclub, Neutral Milk Hotel and Trash Can Sinatras, their members joining Wyatt, Hopper, Bridget St John and Phil Manzanera on 2006's *The Unfairground*. *Kris Needs*

Alvin Lee, guitarist, singer, songwriter (born Nottingham, December 1944), died of complications from atrial arrhythmia surgery in Spain, 6 March, aged 68.

He learned guitar from 1958 and, by 1960, had formed The Jaybirds, who played in Hamburg in 1962 and would metamorphose on moving to London in 1966 into Ten Years After. They got a residency at its Marquee Club and issued an eponymous set in 1967. They toured the US the following year and, to 1974, went on to play more US dates than any other UK band, including a bow at the Woodstock Festival. TYA issued nine more albums, while Lee issued a solo country-rock set, *On The Road To Freedom*, in 1973, featuring George


Alvin Lee

Harrison, Steve Winwood, Ron Wood and Mick Fleetwood.

In 1974, Lee created Alvin Lee & Company and issued the live 2-LP, *In Flight*, followed by *Pump Iron* and *Let it Rock*. Lee formed Ten Years Later for *Ride On* and *Rocket Fuel*, then, at the onset of the 80s, he issued two sets with Rarebird's Steve Gould. Other Lee projects included *Detroit Diesel* (1985) and *Zoom* and *1994 (I Hear You Rocking)*, both featuring George Harrison. 2004's *In Tennessee* included Scotty Moore and DJ Fontana, and was followed by *Saguitar* in 2007, and his final LP, *Still On The Road To Freedom*.

(George Francis) 'Shadow' Morton, producer, songwriter (born Richmond, Virginia, USA, September 1940), died of cancer, in California, 14 February, aged 72.

Best known as the maverick genius who brought to life the Shangri-La's teen melodramas with widescreen production, he created one of 60s pop's most evocative bodies of work. He also worked with Vanilla Fudge, Iron Butterfly, Janis Ian and New York Dolls.

Morton grew up in Brooklyn, then Hicksville, Long Island, forming doo-wop group The Marquees at school, before infiltrating the girl group action of New York's Brill Building, hustling songwriters Ellie Greenwich & Jeff Barry, who told him to pen a hit. Morton came up with Remember (Walking In The Sand), recording the Shangri-Las' cry of teen angst. Released on Jerry Leiber's Red Bird label, the song made the US and UK Top 10s in 1964, securing Morton's post as Red Bird staff producer, and his 'Shadow' nickname after proving hard to pin down! A flamboyant figure, he went on to produce further hits for the girls, including Leader Of The Pack, I Can Never Go Home Any More, Give Him A Great Big Kiss, Out In The Streets, Give Us Your Blessings and Past, Present And Future. Fronted by Mary Weiss, and under Morton's direction, the leather-clad Shangri-Las kick-started the girl power that resonated through punk, Riot and Spice to Lady Ga-Ga. After Red Bird collapsed and the Shangri-Las split, Morton went on to produce Society's Child for Janis Ian, and three albums by his discovery, Vanilla Fudge (including *The Beat Goes On*). He produced Iron Butterfly's *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, leaving the tapes running when the group were warming up. Morton then produced female rockers Isis, and Mott The Hoople's Midnight Lady in 1971, before working on New York Dolls' *Too Much Too Soon* in 1974 and fighting alcoholism in the 80s. *Kris Needs*

(Kenneth Daniel) 'Kenny' Ball, trumpeter, singer, bandleader (born Ilford, Essex, May 1930), died Basildon, Essex, 7 March, aged 82. He played bugle in the Sea Cadets in 1943, then took up trumpet and played in local jazz outfits from 1950, going pro in 1953 with Sid Phillips. He joined Eric Delaney in 1956, then Terry Lightfoot & His New Orleans Jazzmen two years later. In October 1958, he co-founded Kenny Ball's Jazzmen and opened a jazz club in Southend. Lonnie Donegan got them signed to Pye, and they issued Riverside Blues and South Rampart Street Parade in 1960. They hit the following year with Samantha, then I Still Love You All and Someday (You'll Be Sorry). The band appeared in 1962's *It's Trad, Dad!* film, and they had a transatlantic No 2 with Midnight In Moscow. The March Of The Siamese Children and The Green Leaves Of Summer followed, along with a live album and, in 1963, they hit again with Sukiyaki. Hello Dolly, Mame, Cabaret and When I'm 64 followed, and the band became a staple on UK variety TV shows in the 70s.

(Anthony Esmond) 'Tony' Sheridan (McGinnity), singer, guitarist (born Norwich, May 1940), died on 16 February, aged 72. After playing violin in his school orchestra, and singing in Gilbert & Sullivan musicals with his mother for six years, Tony saw Lonnie Donegan in 1957 and learned guitar. While working in a brewery, he formed The Saints and played London's coffee bar circuit, including The Two I's. He played with Vince Eager & The Vagabonds and Vince Taylor & The Playboys, and Tony was signed to the Top Rank label and for work on TV's *Oh Boy!* In 1960, he toured with Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran, before joining The Jets and getting