



# **nova lepidoptera**

The Barclay James Harvest Magazine

Number 43, December 1998



**Exclusive:  
Woolly Wolstenholme  
Interview**



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## “NEXUS” in '99

The new studio album from John and Woolly was delayed slightly not long after the last magazine was sent out, and is now likely to appear early next year. This was partly because some recording time was lost due to illness, and partly because the record company, Eagle Rock, felt that there was a danger that the album could get lost in the Christmas rush of Greatest Hits compilations and wouldn't get the publicity it undoubtedly deserves if it were to be released too close to the festive season.

The album will be called **Nexus**, with the sub-title *Barclay James Harvest Through The Eyes Of John Lees*. As mentioned previously, the album will come out under John's name for contractual reasons, but this is very much a collaborative effort, with Woolly's contributions prominent.

The CD will include six brand new songs, plus five re-recordings of old BJH classics. Full track listing (not in order) is as follows:-

**Hors d'Oeuvres\***  
**Mocking Bird**  
**Sitting Upon A Shelf**  
**Loving Is Easy**  
**The Devils That I Keep**  
**The Iron Maiden**  
**Brave New World**  
**Float**  
**Titles**  
**Festival!**  
**Starbright**  
**Hymn**

\* This is a new instrumental prelude to "Mocking Bird".

All of the new songs are joint Lees/Wolstenholme compositions, and the album also features guest musicians Craig Fletcher on bass and Kevin Whitehead on drums. The album was recorded at John's Friarmere Studios between July and September 1998 and was self-produced.

The re-recordings of old BJH songs were included at the behest of the record company and management, and the contract with John was drawn up on that understanding. The deal also includes the long-awaited release of John's first solo album on CD (more details over the page). For more background information as to how this project came about, see our exclusive interview with Woolly, starting on p.10.

Many thanks to all of you who have expressed an interest in buying the CD from us or have tried to place an order already. Swallowtail will, of course, be stocking the album the moment it is available, but we're not in a position to accept advance orders until we get confirmation of release dates, prices etc. At that point we will be writing to all club members with an order form.

We will try to get permission from the record company to include exclusive preview clips from the album on the official BJH Web Site in the coming weeks, and if we succeed, we'll post details on the ONElist group.

There is a possibility of a single being released to promote the album, but we don't have any more details as yet.



## Track-by-Track Preview

Here are our thoughts on what we've heard so far:-

**Hors d'Oeuvres** - Woolly has obviously lost none of his keyboard skills on the evidence of this authentically orchestral-sounding instrumental piece which sets the scene perfectly for...

**Mocking Bird** - no surprises to begin with as John's guitar and vocals lead us into one of the best-loved BJH classics. However, all bets on who would take lead vocals are off as John and Woolly share singing duties. The second half is a revelation, with a new, very powerful arrangement which casts new light on an old classic whilst taking nothing away from the original.

**Sitting Upon A Shelf** - This one shows its sixties origins, with a touch of the melodies of Love's influential *Forever Changes* album about it. A very early BJH composition which escaped being recorded until now.

**Loving Is Easy** - a new take on an old favourite. Imagine the song performed by J.J.Cale or Eric Clapton in cajun mood, with harmonica by Woolly...

**The Devils That I Keep** - a repeated keyboard figure leads into a deceptively simple melody, in stark contrast with lyrics about depression and despair ("the blade is cold against my skin, it's not quite out, it's not quite in"). Well, we didn't want an easy-listening album!

**The Iron Maiden** - the very first BJH album revisited, with what is perhaps the closest of the re-recordings to the original version. The song seems less rushed than the 1970 take, and sounds better for it.

**Brave New World** - we've only heard the backing track for this one, which was written in 1971 but rejected for *Other Short Stories* (as was "Hymn"! ). Of all the songs on this album, this one sounds most like the recent BJH output (albeit with a musical quote from "Galadriel"), but without the vocals it's difficult to get the complete picture..

**Float** - a "big one", with all the hallmarks of a classic(al) Woolly piece in the tradition of "Ra" or "Mæstoso". This one finally nails the myth that MIDI-based instruments can't sound convincing. It's not what you've got, it's what you do with it...

**Titles** - back to 1975 for another look at The Beatles' influences on BJH. Without vocals when we heard it, but with some wonderful touches like John's "I can't believe it's not George Harrison" guitar break, this sounds more convincing to me than the original.

**Festival!** - this one will make people sit up and pay attention, being co-written in the studio by John and Woolly, and a new departure for both. It's the nearest thing to a straight rocker on the album, but is far from predictable - strange but weirdly compelling. "May contain nuts", indeed...

**Starbright** - instrumental when we heard it, this is beautiful and elegaic, with a great guitar solo from John. This recalls those wonderful moments when the original band caught the perfect fusion between rock and classical music. Stunning.

**Hymn** - yes, we thought "don't do it!", too, when it was suggested re-making this one. We were wrong - better than the original? - maybe not, but it's close...

## A Major Fancy

The release on CD of John's original solo album, *A Major Fancy*, has also been delayed until 1999. The album, including the three bonus tracks from 1974, has already been mastered, but its appearance has been delayed until John and Woolly's new album has come out. Full ordering information will be sent out to club members as soon as possible. We also hope to be able to offer an autographed, boxed edition along the same lines as the Woolly *Black Box* set, and we'll include details of that on the order form, as well.

## Quad CD Out Now

One CD that is available now is the quadraphonic mix of *Once Again* on our own Brimstone label (BRIM 002). The CD was released on September 30th and is available now from Swallowtail (see the enclosed order form for details). Unfortunately, a couple of printing errors got past us, including a running order which bears little relation to the actual order of songs on the disc, but we hope to correct this on future pressings.

## Christmas Coasters

'Tis the season to be merry, and what better way to serve your drinks than on our Christmas present to you, an IBJHFC coaster? Thanks to all of you for your loyalty and support over the last year. *[See the Club Offers form for details of how to get a full set for your party!]*

## BJH CD-ROM

Also available now is the CD-ROM edition of *The BJH File*, our exclusive, fact-packed guide to all things Barclay James Harvest. The product of many years of research, the File includes detailed discographies of all the band's releases worldwide, a potted history of the band, listings of their concerts and set-lists down the years, plus information about videos, TV broadcasts, session recordings, guest appearances and cover versions of BJH songs.

The CD, which is available **only** to club members, is basically an updated version of the spiral-bound *BJH File* which we issued in 1995, but we've taken advantage of the multimedia capabilities of CD to include colour pictures of the band and many of the record covers, plus three special "hidden" musical surprises.

In order to view the CD you will need a computer (IBM-compatible PC or Apple Mac) with a CD-ROM drive and Web Browser software such as Internet Explorer (included with Windows 98) or Netscape Navigator. To take advantage of the special bonuses you will also need a soundcard and speakers.

For those who are not familiar with using Web Browsers with CD-ROMs, we have produced an information sheet, which includes hints and tips on how to get the best from the CD and how to solve common problems. If you would like a copy of this sheet, just ask for it when ordering the disc.

## CD Availability Update

More bad news on the availability of BJH's back catalogue on CD; the latest casualty is the *Four Barclay James Harvest Originals* boxed set of the band's four original albums for the Harvest label, which EMI have informed us is now deleted. At the time of going to press we still have one in stock, so you may be lucky, but please reserve first by telephone, e-mail or letter if you would like to order this set.

Swallowtail's autographed version of *Woolly's Songs From The Black Box* has now completely sold out, but the standard CD will still be available for the foreseeable future. We have quite a number of spare copies of the photographs and miniature poster which were included with the boxed set, and will give these away to club members as long as stocks last. Please ask when ordering, or, if you already have the CD, just send in a stamped, addressed envelope or a self-addressed envelope and an International Reply Coupon.

Slightly better news about the Polydor CDs, as we've managed to obtain a few copies of *Everyone Is Everybody Else* and *Caught In The Light* from various sources. Supplies are limited, though, so again we would ask you to reserve copies before ordering.

We've had a number of enquiries as to whether there are plans to issue digitally remastered CDs of the band's albums, as has been the case with many other artists. We don't know of any, but if the John and Woolly project is successful, perhaps there will be a revival of interest in BJH's back catalogue...

## New Internet Addresses

Since the on-line side of the club and Swallowtail's activities seem to be booming, we thought that it was time to get ourselves some more user-friendly, professional-sounding addresses. With immediate effect, the official Barclay James Harvest Web Site address is:-

**<http://www.bjharvest.co.uk>**

The site is still located on the old server, but typing in this new, more memorable address will automatically transfer you to the site. Similarly, the club, Swallowtail and Brimstone have the following new e-mail addresses:-

**[ibjhfc@bjharvest.co.uk](mailto:ibjhfc@bjharvest.co.uk)**  
**[swallowtail@bjharvest.co.uk](mailto:swallowtail@bjharvest.co.uk)**  
**[brimstone@bjharvest.co.uk](mailto:brimstone@bjharvest.co.uk)**

In case anyone is wondering, the even easier addresses of [www.bjh.com](http://www.bjh.com) and [www.bjh.co.uk](http://www.bjh.co.uk) have already been taken by unrelated businesses.

## ONelist changes

On the subject of the Internet, ONelist have made some changes to the free BJH e-mail discussion forum recently. It is no longer necessary to sign up via the ONelist Web Site, as it is possible to join the group by sending an empty e-mail to the appropriate address as follows:

To subscribe, send an empty e-mail to:

**[bjh-subscribe@onelist.com](mailto:bjh-subscribe@onelist.com)**

To unsubscribe, send one to:

**[bjh-unsubscribe@onelist.com](mailto:bjh-unsubscribe@onelist.com)**

To switch from normal to digest mode:

**[bjh-digest@onelist.com](mailto:bjh-digest@onelist.com)**

To switch from digest to normal:

**[bjh-normal@onelist.com](mailto:bjh-normal@onelist.com)**

## Vincent Paver

Apologies are due both to Vincent and to anyone who wanted to order from his advertisement in the last issue of NL. In my attempts to squeeze all the information onto one page, I managed to omit his address altogether! I believe that many of the records listed there are still available, and the address for enquiries is:-

**Vincent Paver  
37A Kingsley Avenue  
West Ealing  
London W13 0EQ  
GB  
Tel. 0181-810 5874**

## Airplay

We were somewhat surprised but equally gratified to see Tommy Vance airing the "Cheap The Bullet" video on his *Friday Rock Show* at the beginning of November on satellite channel VH1. Apparently this is not the first time that VH1 have shown the video, although on this occasion they spoilt the effect slightly by captioning it "Cheat The Bullet".

Thanks are due to John Lunn and others for the information that Ken Bruce has played "Just A Day Away" on a number of occasions on his Radio 2 show, the most recent being in September.

## Win a Rare Promotional CD Single!

While we are waiting for *Nexus*, this seems like a good time to conduct another poll of NL readers' favourite Barclay James Harvest songs and albums.

We'd be grateful if you could take the time to fill out the enclosed poll form and return it to us at the usual club address by the closing date of January 10th, 1999. We will also publish a form on the BJH Web Site, and are happy to accept entries by e-mail. This means that, for the first time, voting will not be limited to club members, as we want this poll to be the most representative ever carried out.

As an added incentive, all entries will be placed in a hat or other suitable receptacle, and the first three drawn will each win a copy of the German radio-only CD single of "River Of Dreams".

Full results will appear in the next issue of NL.

## Once More

Many thanks to everyone who sent good wishes for the birth of sprog number two in September. Stephanie Jane finally made her appearance just before midnight on my fortieth birthday, which made for an unusually sober birthday but the best present ever!



**John at Friarmere, Summer 1998 (photo: *Oldham Evening Chronicle*)**

# The NL Interview...

**We're proud to present the first interview which Woolly Wolstenholme has given in ten years, since the one he gave in 1988 to, er, NL...**

**Welcome back, Woolly!**

Thank you! I just had a bit of a late night last night...

**You were out of the music business completely for more than fifteen years - what changed your mind?**

I think I was sent for by some bigger power than myself, which pointed the finger and said "It's you - again!" Whatever happened with my circumstances, what was happening with the band appeared to be somewhat terminal and so it seemed only right, although that wasn't the reason that prompted me to come back and get to it. It was meeting John again and having discussions and all that kind of thing. Some things have changed, like a period has gone, something has passed and something else has come to fill it. Nature abhors a vacuum cleaner!

**Were you still writing over the last fifteen or so years, or did you have a complete break?**



I had a complete breakdown. No, I didn't write. If you listen to most of the songs that appeared on Black Box, which is unresolved stuff, there's a lot of the bitter and twisted in that, and after I thought "well, what's the point?" Like the baker who won't bake bread if there's no-one to buy it, I felt the same way. I kept my eye on the music business, and of course I was influenced by what I heard, but I wasn't inspired enough to carry on writing, and there was no outlet for it anyway. I started again because I know there's an outlet for it and people can hear it.



# Woolly Wolstenholme

## **Did you miss writing or recording for all those years?**

No, miss is the wrong word. I used to say that when I'd finished with music, I'd had the rock and roll beaten out of me, and I didn't feel like I wanted to do it. The first thing that happened when I did come back to it was not music, it was poetry. I started writing again, and it was terrible stuff, not in the sense that it was bad, but it was monstrous. That was the catalyst for me starting again. When I finished it just all stopped because I stopped, temperamentally. Starting up again happened because there was a reason for it.

## **The lyrics of one of the new songs talk about your time in the wilderness. Did it feel like that?**

You have to think like a sailor who spends six years of his life at sea and then doesn't do it anymore. There's a kind of relief that you're not doing it, but then eventually you say, well, really I'm still a sailor and I still think that the sea is where I should be, so perhaps there's a bit of that in it. I didn't really miss it, but now I'm back in it, I missed it, if you understand that.

## **It didn't feel like desert then, but it does now?**

I think a kind of denial went on, where you say, well, I don't need that kind of thing, and yet in some ways I must have needed it. Being back proved to me that I do need it, and the reference to "years and years without event" in one song is just that. You didn't think of it at the time, you had other things to do, but really the

artistic event, the expression was not there.

## **Has it been difficult to get back into writing and recording and playing again?**

I think I have to go back to a bit before that when I did try and do something modest. It wasn't for release or anything, and it was almost impossible, and then progressively it got better. I think between us starting this album and now, almost at the end of it, the speed of work has picked up, the ideas are coming thicker and faster. It was hard at first, but it's gained apace and now although I feel clapped out and don't want to do another noise, another note, at least I think it would be possible to carry on and do another album, because I'm up for it, we're up to speed. It's been hard and easy at the same time, and once it got going it became easier, so the answer to that is yes and no.

## **This album is nominally a John Lees album - how much input have you had into it?**

If you listen to any other BJH album and you discount the fact that some songs are more keyboard led or guitar led, you know, that kind of variation within the album itself, you listen to one of the albums without me, there's lots of keyboards, that's the way the band has gone. Therefore you listen to this and you say well there's loads of keyboards on it, and I think that's probably the way recording is going. When the guitars come in they come in rather like a featured instrument rather than something that drones in the background like the keyboards, which is what my strong point is -

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droning away in the background! I think I've put a lot in as sonic backwash, and when John's voice or guitar comes in or whatever is featured, it's not just in the background. I've done as much as I always did, probably more, but it's really the framework for John to solo on.

## **How much have you worked on each others' songs on this album?**

Absolutely. Like, man, we're in the studio at the same time! We've had some laughs, and the whole thing has been not his song or my song or an old song or a new song - it's just been the song of the moment and we've worked on it as though it was our own song or not our own song. We've been committed to each others' work. Some things have been written by me and John in a huddle on the day, so that shows how they're instant things. We drew on past resources to do them, so some of the writing has been reviewing old songs that were written and were never recorded. Some of the stuff has been things which were lying around which we'd done individually and then we've come together and the other person has put their stamp on it. There's a lot of give and take. It's been more of a co-operative effort, and if I can remember those dim distant days, maybe the first couple of albums we did felt like this one, where we were all pulling the same way. I think that certainly towards the end of my last album sojourn with BJH it wasn't pulling the same way. It was an album that wanted to be many things and failed because not everyone had the same vision. At least me and John think the same way, I think.

**You said that the feel of recording is like the very first couple of albums of the band - if you could compare it musically with any of your previous output, which would it be?**

Oh, I don't know, I can't really do that - someone else will decide that, the influences and what it's most like, and it won't be the same for everybody. They'll listen to it and say "that sounds very much like a track off *Maestoso* or one of John's songs from another album". That's only to be expected, but it will become its own thing, and I prefer to think of it like that. This is not the album that would have been after *XII*, it's not the album that would have succeeded *Once Again* or *Gone To Earth* or whatever, it is "the album", and after this there'll be another one, I presume, and that, too, will be "the album".

## **What was behind the decision to re-record some old BJH songs on the album?**

Record companies like to possess artists, but they also want to possess catalogue, so the move behind that was that Eagle Rock, who are the new label, not only get John and me, they also get an interest in the band's history, musically, so that's why these songs have been requested. Whilst I would have loved to have done a complete album of re-makes, so it would be "Revisited", or something like that, **and** a completely new album, they want this formula so they can sell it. They gave us a list of the things they wanted, and I blanched at every one of them, saying "it can't be done, it won't be done!", and yet I'm amazed at what's come out. It's a new look at old things, and there's a

# Woolly Wolstenholme

challenge to it, which you wouldn't normally come across, saying you've got to re-record this thirty-year old song, that doesn't happen normally, does it? When you get into it you say, "well, how can we make it different and yet at the same time how can it remain the same?", because you still want the flavour even though you can't deny the song. You must be true to the song, but you can make some variations to that. I'm very pleased with what we've done with the old songs. I think to a degree we spent more time on them than we have on the new stuff, because on the new stuff you haven't got anything to "undo", as it were, to unpick. Eagle Rock's idea was to not only have the artist but to have some of the history of the band, and that's how they will sell it.

## **Would you say that the new versions are radically different?**

It would be hard to be radically different - there's no techno version of "Mocking Bird", there's no country and western "Hymn" on there, but they've all got a twist to them, in the sound certainly, and sometimes in tempo or treatments or whatever, that makes them different enough. Some people will say well, why bother if they're so close to the originals, others will say you can't re-make that because the original can't be bettered. I'm not trying to do that, I think we went in there and said this is the job we've been given, so do it, and we did.

## **Whose idea was the "Barclay James Harvest Through The Eyes Of John Lees " title?**

Well it certainly wasn't mine! Where

there's a hit there's a writ, and where there's a show there's an ego. Having this sub-title of "through the eyes of John Lees" is some kind of sop to people to make them not feel miffed or have their nose put out too far. It means little. To me it's just a convenience to address a problem. I think it's ludicrous, but that's the way it's gone.

## **What about the working title now, *Nexus*?**

It is *Nexus*, and as you kindly pointed out it has been done before, but then of course all the notes we're using have been done before, haven't they. I had another idea, *Codex*, which means a literary work or a pile of books. John likes *Nexus* because he thinks it sounds like a computer game, and I think *Codex* sounds like pills! "Take two Codex and go to bed". Another twist to my wacky world...

## **When we interviewed John he said that Melve had been invited to join the project, but nothing had happened. Can you update us on that?**

Er, no. It's a mystery! We went to see him, and as per your interview with him, he said he would drum for us - he would drum for anyone who wanted him to drum. Then it all ceased, proving that you can take a horse to water but you can't make it drum!

## **So which musicians apart from yourselves are involved in the album?**

We had to have a four-piece, because you need to have somebody who

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knows how to wield the sticks or play the thick strings. They're both thirty-four, which makes you feel godawful old! There's Craig Fletcher, who plays the bass, and he also played string bass, which is an interesting tone colour, and the drummer's Kevin Whitehead, and they're both from Oldham. Having a new drummer and another bass player, you suddenly find you've got a lot of new influences, just because they are there and it's not the same old people any more.

**It sounds like you've moved away from the recent Barclays style of having a lot of synthesised instruments and not much live recording.**

You obviously work within the framework of what you have. There's no Hammond in the studio, there's no Mellotron, there's no string orchestra, but there are keyboards and synthesis, and there are samples, which are the nearest thing to the real thing. You put all this down and at the end of it you put my clanky, out-of-tune, scratchy twelve-string guitar and suddenly it sounds realistic, the whole thing makes some sense. You might say, yes, we've even left parts that weren't very tight, because they make it sound real, and of course those parts were real, people were playing them. We weren't concerned about lining everything up on the button and being colossally right on pitch all the time. We went for the performance and the fact that it felt like some people were in there really playing and meaning it, so it sounds live, even though you know full well there is no orchestra and there is no genuine acoustic environment, but it sounds convincing, and that's the good thing about it.

**Since the news broke that you were working again with John, the automatic reaction from fans was "Does this mean a reunion of the original four-piece line up of BJH?" Given the choice, would you rather work with John or with a four-piece Barclay James Harvest?**

It's beginning to sound like ten little Indians, isn't it? There were four, then there were three and then there were two. Along those lines, the band without me was still Barclay James Harvest, so one can deduce from that that the band which is working now - me, John and two other people - is also a form of Barclay James Harvest. I don't think there's any denying that. Back to the four-piece, if you mean the original four-piece, well, I've read Les's interview, and I think in some ways he's absolutely right. To quote George Harrison, "all things must pass", and I think the old four-piece, the one that ended with *XII*, that's gone, it went twenty years ago. You may even have to speculate that the three-piece in the middle period has also gone, and now there's a two-piece. Maybe this, for the next few years, is Barclay James Harvest, and going back to try and recapture that four-piece band of 1979 or earlier is irrelevant. It's not a question to be really considered.

**Do you think it's likely that you'll be touring in support of this album?**

If you'd asked me, say four or five years ago, about writing songs again, or working with John again, being in the studio, making this album, considering sleeves, writing lyrics, meeting other musicians, I would have said "fanciful dreams"! I still don't

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believe a lot of what's going on! It is, and I'm not that insane to think it's not happening, but when it comes to touring, then that will be the time that I deal with the touring, so I have no idea about touring, what it would be like, whether it will come or not. My plate is full of making an album, and that (at least for my tiny mind) is enough for the moment!

## **Would you like to do it?**

Soiled underpants come to mind! I think it could be exciting and terrifying at the same time, but then again my view of making this album was excited but terrified, and I've done that, what's next? Maybe it's touring.

## **Would it be Britain or Germany?**

Yes! I don't know, ask the powers that be...

## **If you were to tour, would you want to take Mellotrons and suchlike?**

That is an option, and I would like to, but if I'm going to go on stage with a battery of things, then maybe there are things which are more pertinent to this album and touring with it than, say, a Mellotron might be. I've used one Mellotron sample on this album, and whilst I think if I'd have had one there I might have used it more, there wasn't one there, so I couldn't. It was not required that much, so therefore it will not be required that much on stage. If we go on stage, I'd like to have one there, because it gives me something to hide behind when they start throwing things!

## **Presumably if you toured, you'd be doing more old material as well?**

I don't know if we can, really. We've just done five historic tracks, so I don't know whether we'd still carry on with the same salt and pepper mix, with two more new ones and another old one - maybe it'd be a fifty per cent kind of show, with half new and half old. Even if you discount all of Les's songs, because they're not within our domain to use, and you count the songs that I've written solo, that John's written solo, the albums we're both on together, the songs he's written since I left, on *River Of Dreams* and things of that ilk, the choice of what to do is bewilderingly endless. You could do a thirty-date tour and not do the same numbers on any one of them.

## **Think of the rehearsal time, though!**

What's that?!

## **What other music have you been listening to recently?**

This album! When I was farming my respite was to listen to music, and sometimes lots of it. Now I'm in music, I don't have any listening. No, I've been listening to all the same old things - tons of Mahler, as usual, and various other classical bits and bobs, Wagner's *Ring*!! King Crimson again, *Thrak* is certainly very interesting, and thanks to you and various other people, Radiohead. You listen to something and you'd like to bring an element of that into it. I don't think Radiohead really fits in with the band - spiritually it fits in, but sonically it doesn't - but it's good to have these

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references where you go off into someone's musical world and are either appalled or inspired by what you're hearing. Maybe another few tracks on you'll hear a touch of Radiohead. John hasn't heard it yet, so I shall introduce him to that little hell on earth!

## **Do you think that in some ways, while you've been out of the music business, it's come full circle?**

The only thing that's fundamentally changed, I think, is rhythm. If you listen to early BJH stuff and things of that time, the rhythm was of a certain type. Now, if you listen to the musical output of the world, there's lots of shuffles going on, drumming is now less adventurous, I think, there are no breaks any more. It just goes from one end to the other, because some people just want a constant, mind-numbing, repetitive, simple rhythm.

## **Or because they're all using electronic drums?**

It might well be, but even when they're not using those things, everything sounds like a Matthew Marsden single or something, which isn't all bad, or All Saints.

## **What keyboards are you using now?**

I don't really know. What I'm using is what you might call the in-house keyboard, which is the Alesis, which is attached to all the other devices in the studio, so I play one keyboard and it plays everything else. Everything is on MIDI, so I just know them by their names, which is TG33, OR5W or some

other legend. It's not the same - one of the most difficult things I had to deal with was going to a studio that didn't have a piano in the corner. There was no Hammond organ and Leslie, there are no real instruments, but they are there in spirit, because they live in the machines. Whilst I don't think you can necessarily compensate for the lack of a full symphony orchestra by doing a few tootles on a synthesiser, well that's what I had to do in the past with Mellotron and Mini-Moog, so there's nothing really different about that - I just miss having a grand piano there where you can go and tinkle.

## **And the traditional final question - any messages for the fans?**

John mentioned something in his last interview which didn't actually get into *Nova*, and that was based on the idea that people will be looking for something from the middle period of BJH and will find that missing, and I'm specifically saying Les's songs, of course. Nonetheless, what you're going to hear is typical of me and John, and for those who want the Les songs, they must wait for Les to produce something. So that's it, it's here, it's there, you've got it, like it or lump it!

## **Thank you!**





# BH's Christian Influences

Barclay James Harvest are not a Christian rock band in the generally accepted sense, in that their *raison d'être* is not to evangelise. However, guitarist John Lees is a committed Christian, and the band's music over the years has always possessed a spiritual quality, whether intentionally or by virtue of their early influences draw heavily on the Anglican tradition.

It's not just in John Lees that the Christian influence manifests itself, although it's certainly true to say that the band's most overtly religious songs have come from John's pen. However, the other writers within the band have also produced their fair share of music steeped in religious imagery.

Les Holroyd's songs are not the first place that one might look for evidence of religious belief, but even here there is an exception in "Sweet Jesus" from *Time Honoured Ghosts*, an anguished cry for help which calls on the Son of God to 'take the shadow from my eyes'. Elsewhere, though, Les's songs seem to be the work of a determined humanist. Spiritually he's a sceptic, at least as evidenced by the lyrics to "Who Do We Think We Are": 'Do we believe there's someone watching over us? Can we be sure?'

It may seem a tad controversial to suggest that Woolly has been strongly influenced by the Christian faith (not least to Woolly himself!), but the evidence is there. "Happy Old World" may be a "green" protest song, but to whom is Woolly referring when he sings 'He didn't mind us being here to live in peace and grace' and 'Oh, Lord, any eye can see what harm we've done'? Elsewhere on *Once Again*,

Woolly sings 'I've just got to be free - God in heaven, help me' ("Ball And Chain"). Sir Hubert Parry's musical interpretation of William Blake's "Jerusalem" insinuates itself into the introduction of "Summer Soldier" on 1974's *BH Live*, and it's this music, perhaps more than any other, which typifies the band's early religious influences - it's quintessentially English, at once insular and grandiose, pompous and magnificent.

Woolly's solo work, too, has occasional religious overtones, from the churchy organ on "Open" to "Mæstoso"'s finale - 'we should fall upon our knees and thank sweet God we are alive'.

It's to John that we must look for a direct Christian message, though: "After The Day" in 1971 visualises armageddon, with 'the multicoloured cross left standing through it all'. "Child Of Man" is more explicit, but was hidden away on the B-side of a single in 1972. 1974's "For No One" attacks mankind's greed and violence, and tells us 'then pray God we can live in peace'.

By 1977 "Hymn" was using powerful images of Jesus to underline a message about drug abuse, but it was 1987's "He Said Love" where John really "came out" as a Christian: the lyrics have been criticised as naïve, but the song is a simple and moving statement of belief, with a message for us all:-

*There once was a man  
Who was born to be king  
He'll change all your lives  
If you'll just let him in...*

**KEITH DOMONE**

# Marketplace

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## **MANY CONGRATULATIONS** to

Olivier and Agnès Gille, whose daughter Clarisse was born on August 6th, 1998. Lots of luck from Keith, Monika and all your friends in IBJHFC.

## **FELICITATIONS, TOO,** to Carol and

Peter Bennett, on the birth of their son, Conor.

## Coming Soon...

In the next issue of NL, more details about the *Nexus* album, including John and Woolly's own thoughts about each of the songs. We'll have more information about the release schedule for that CD and for the CD release of *A Major Fancy*.

Plus, the definitive BJH poll results: which are the very best songs and albums from the band's thirty-year career?

NL44 will be available at the end of February, and the last copy date for contributions and advertisements is January 10th.



