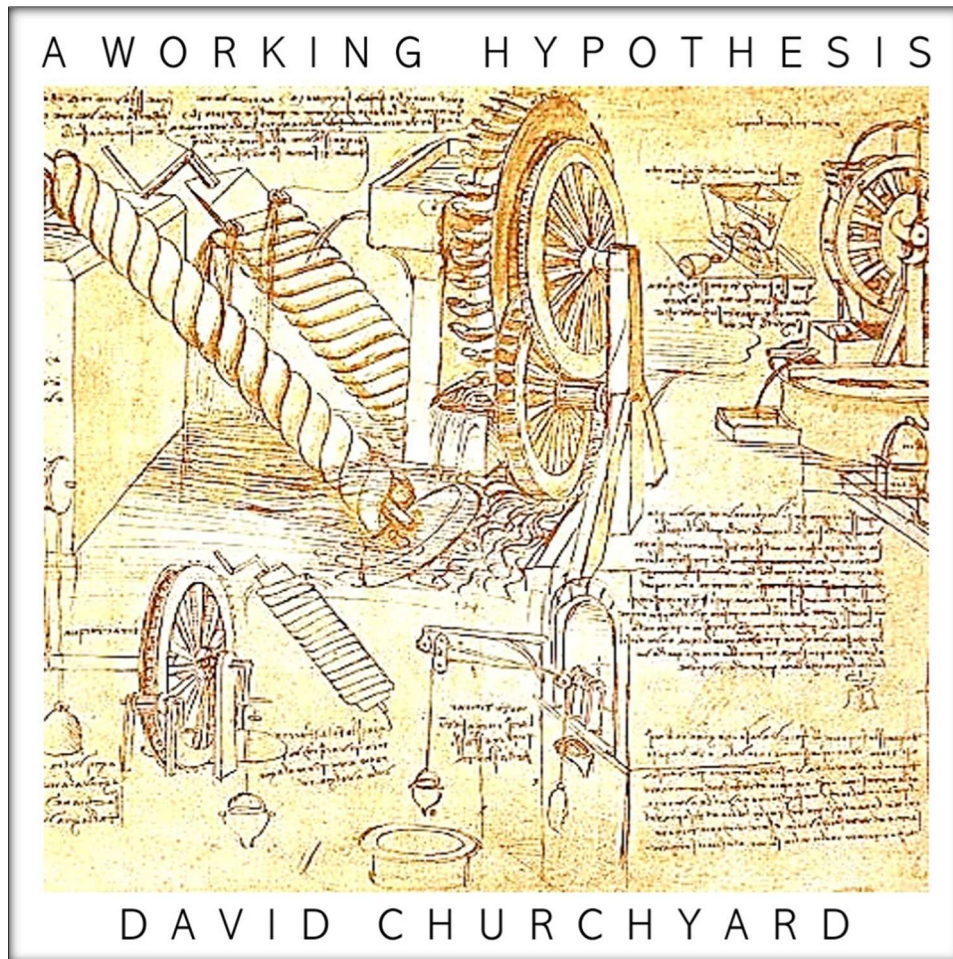




A Working Hypothesis

In July '24, I planned to take a couple of weeks' holiday specifically to do some songwriting. Some years had passed since I last wrote or recorded anything new, other than a couple of Christmas songs for the Screaming Donkeys.

It was not long since the last Deep Purple album had been released (=1) which includes some great musical explorations. Deep Purple usually goes into the studio with next to no ideas for new songs; everything comes from jamming and writing in the studio, resulting in an instrumental backing track over which Ian Gillan and Roger Glover then write a lyric and topline.

I decided to try the same approach for the songs I would write, using snippets of musical ideas I'd collected on my iPhone as well as new ideas created on the hoof. I'd then stitch different ideas together to figure out the shape of things. In fact, most of the basic musical/backing tracks were worked out and recorded within a day or two per song, though several adjustments and re-takes were done later. Writing the backing tracks was relatively easy, but finding sensible lyrics that suit the mood and ambience of the songs was another matter. Some came much easier than others.

However, the two-week holiday lasted only about two days. Consequently, the project has taken rather longer than planned, being squeezed in from time to time between other priorities such as work, gardening, life admin etc. Since I wanted 12 songs, what began in July 24 was not finished until August 25 ☹️. But finished it is.

So, here's a bunch of songs all of which, I'm relieved to say, I nearly quite like. Some are clearly better than others. They appear here in the order they were written and recorded. In the wise words of Ronnie van Zant, "Turn It Up!" And as you listen, here's a little insight to what inspired the music and/or lyrics because, when all's said and done, all the best albums have comprehensive sleeve notes.

1. Always Been This Way

Perhaps because this was the first song, it is a bit complex musically – perhaps I was trying too hard, but as the first song written for several years, I’m not complaining. Having completed the backing track, and this is true of other songs here too, it wasn’t always obvious where lyrics would be needed, and what would have to be instrumental sections. This one seems to have rather a lot of both!

A study has concluded that 70% of songs are written about love. Other studies suggest it’s more like 90%. Therefore, it’s fair to conclude that most ideas for a love song lyric have already been taken - it’s all been done before. And therein was the prompt for the lyric. So, this song observes from the side-lines the sometimes hit’n’mis way love seems to find its path. Some people just hope for the best against all the odds, rather like sending a message in a bottle. For others, it requires a bold step, a risk, a chance, all in the hope that the intended will respond favourably. And it’s always struck me as odd that valentine’s cards are supposed to be anonymous. That seems decidedly unhelpful.

But essentially, everything that happens has probably been happening this way since Adam first encountered Eve and, in the words of Mark Knopfler, said “You and me, babe, how about it?”

Always Been This Way

A message in a bottle, all it says is that ‘I love you’
It floats across the ocean wide, I wonder will it ever get through?

*Here we go again, falling deeper in
Like every other lover that there’s ever been
It’s always been this way*

A subtle inuendo, a careless look across the room
She took a risk, he took a chance, love’s mystery at work again

*Here we go again, falling deeper in
Like every other lover that there’s ever been
It’s always been this way*

All down history, boy meets girl – it’s meant to be
Tokens and potions and expressions of desire
Fan the flame of love’s fire

He wrote a note inside a card, ‘to my sweet valentine’
Declaring his undying love, but he left it unsigned

*Here we go again, falling deeper in
Like every other lover that there’s ever been
It’s always been this way*

All down history, boy meets girl – it’s meant to be
Tokens and potions and expressions of desire
Fan the flame of love’s fire

It’s all been said, it’s all been said
It’s all been said and done before.
It’s all been said, it’s all been said
It’s all been said and done before.

(29th July 2024)

2. Rock'n'Roll Wannabies

If I have a favourite on this album, this one may be it. Perhaps.

I remember a day at secondary school when four or five of us sat round one wet Wednesday lunchtime and decided to form a band. I don't recall who the other members of this band were, and I'm not sure any of the others actually played any musical instruments – so it was just me (just a drummer at the time) and lots of unsubstantiated optimism.

I recall that the idea of being in a rock band seemed to attract a lot of excitement from our classmates and for us the fleeting dreams of becoming rich and famous, with all the associated benefits, were exciting – for one or maybe two lunchtimes at least! We never wrote a song or even had a rehearsal, but it seemed like fun to dream of what might be. It was all schoolboy nonsense, of course, and dissipated like Willow the proverbial Wisp and, by the following week, some other focus of attention had no doubt replaced it.

Whilst at college in the early 1980's I ended up rehearsing with a local band, but again without much likelihood of achieving much. Our enthusiasm certainly exceeded our ability. The band consisted of me on drums, my brother Phil on bass and Juju on guitar. When I mentioned this to Phil a while ago he reminded me that there was also another guitarist whom I had completely forgotten about, which is odd because now that I recall him, I think he was the one that could really play! His name won't come to mind, sadly.

Marie often attended rehearsals, not sure why, but she was a friend from college and perhaps we were hoping she might sing. Oh, and on keyboards we had a mysterious maestro known as Bucket. I have no idea if we were ever told his real name! As it was, we rehearsed every Sunday night at Edington village hall (or was it Cossington?), but we only ever seemed to do about two songs, and one of them was definitely *Roadhouse Blues* played very loud!

Fast-forward a few years and in mid/late 1990's I was occasionally seconded into a band called The Sons Of Toil. This was probably my favourite band to be in because I never had to rehearse - and I got paid! They gigged most Friday and Saturday nights across the West Country doing covers of The Eagles, Dire Straits, The Beatles, Van Morrison et al including Copperhead Road (Steve Earl), Moondance and Hotel California – inspiring some of the lyric in verse 2.

For some reason their drummer, I believe the founder of the band, would periodically announce he didn't intend to play at the forthcoming weekend gigs so they'd ask me to sit in for them. I never had to rehearse, I just turned up to play. The only guidance was 'Don't start anything you can't finish' in terms of fills and flamboyance. As if! It was great fun.

Back in the day, brother Phil and I could get a bass amp stack and a 15-piece drum kit in the back of a Mini Clubman, and Sons of Toil were often squeezed into the back of a club

Rock'n'roll Wannabes

Top of the bill every Sunday night
Mainstage at the Edington Hall
The light is low and the amps are rumblin'
But it wasn't how that sounds at all
Juju and me, and sweet Marie
Brother Phil on bass and a bucket of keys
I can't remember why it ended
Unravelled at the seams
Together with our dreams

*We were rock'n'roll wannabes
Shaking the roadhouse blues
Nothing better we ever wanted to do, oh no!*

On a tour with the Sons of Toil
Every Friday and Saturday night
Miles of roads and miles of travellin'
But the money's alright
Van the man had us all moon-dancing
We took a trip down Copperhead Road
Taking it easy in California
Where the music is loud
I'm just loving the sound

*We were rock'n'roll wannabes
Shaking the roadhouse blues
Nothing better we ever wanted to do, oh no!*

*Don't want no sad sort of country music
Give me a song with a rock'n'roll beat
Play it loud in the pubs and the honkytonks
And out in the street
We thought that we were gonna rule the world
With all the money, and the fame and girls
Fast cars and the fancy clothes
And living it up like nobody knows*

Now the years have fallen behind us
Everybody's gone their own way
Got a job working 9-5
we all got bills to pay
What I wouldn't give for the chance to go back
And make some noise like we used to do
Crammed into the back of the club-
Man, it could've been yesterday
I remember it clear as day

*We were rock'n'roll wannabes
Shaking the roadhouse blues
Nothing better we ever wanted to do, oh no!*

(2nd August 2024)

3. Farewell

In May 24 we travelled to London for the funeral of Julie K. Julie and her husband Roger were really close friends with my parents from when they were all in their teens in the 1950's. Roger had been dad's best man, and later on our two families used to go on holiday together. It was a friendship that lasted 60 years or so. Mum and dad had already died by now, so I felt a sense of responsibility to go to Julie's funeral and pay my respects on their behalf, and I wanted to go anyway.

It was amazing and more than a little moving to find myself, for the first time, in the church where my parents had met and spent so much time nearly 70 years previously. We'd heard many stories about what an amazing church fellowship it had been back then, but I'd never visited.

In Julie's book of condolence, I remember writing something along the lines of 'I bet Julie's already met up with mum and dad and they're just waiting for the rest of us to hurry up and join them.' So, it came as a real shock to learn that, just a couple of months later, Roger unexpectedly died too.

I 100% believe they are re-united, and they're waiting for us. Roger was a real encourager, and a man of prayer. Both he and dad used to pray for our families on a daily basis. I suspect they still do. Once again, we journeyed from the West Country to London for a funeral service. It was another long journey on a very warm day, but it was necessary and our 'Goodbyes' were really only 'Farewell'.

Farewell

I travelled such a long way
Just to say goodbye, goodbye
Time has shifted, it's not like it was before
It's not here any more

*O it's a journey of no return
No matter when it begins
We all will take that road someday
O will you be looking out for me?
Til then, Farewell*

So many gone before you
Won't you say 'Hi' from me, from me
Reunited, tomorrow's looking fine
I'm watching for the signs

Stand with the faithful
Or we don't stand at all, at all
The days are gathering, but victory is assured
In the Lord

(6th August 2024)

4. Geordie Girl

From about 1983 I played drums for a choir that was later called Floodgates. It was run by my parents and acted as a fellowship of Christian believers (a church, if you like) as much as a choir. Indeed, we were probably better at being church than we were at being choir.

Typically, rehearsals began with a Bible study led by dad. He was a great Bible teacher. I loved this part of the proceedings and am grateful that both my parents inspired in me an interest in understanding the Bible. A great many people passed through the ranks of Floodgates over the years – it had a meaningful impact for nearly everyone involved.

One evening in November 1984, we were performing the Jimmy & Carol Owens musical ‘Come Together’ in Bridgwater Methodist Church. In the audience was a fair young maid who decided she quite liked the look of the drummer in the band and so she convinced her parents that they should join the choir.

One thing led to another and we’ve now been married 37 years! This song retells the story, albeit under the remit of a very expensive poetic licence purchased for this very task, so the lyric is only a close approximation of what may or may not have actually happened, perhaps. In fact, the original lyric said “Saturday night back in ‘85” ... so it’s just as well I checked the date before finishing the lyrics.

There’s a song we like by the Proclaimers which contends that Irish girls are pretty. That may be true for I am yet to meet a really ugly one. However, I’ve come to appreciate that the Geordie girls equal the Irish in their sublimity and pulchritude. Well, mine does.

Geordie Girl

Saturday night back in ‘84
She found the chance that she was looking for
She was out of sight
But for sure that was the night
Nearly 40 years have come and gone
It’s hard to believe that it’s been so long
We must have been so young
But for sure she’s the one

*She’s my Geordie girl
Who would have guessed that I got me the best
Out of all the girls in the world?!*

She didn’t really give too much away
But she was getting closer every single day
That’s how it seems to me - though I didn’t see
She held her nerve, never showed her hand
Meticulously working out her/a well-laid plans
What a surprise to find - I’m in the firing line

She’s my Geordie girl ...

I heard them say that in the Emerald Isle
The girls are all pretty, walkin’ by with a smile
That’s what I heard, but it’s not the last word
From the north to the south, from the sun to the snow
From the east to the west, and all the world over
I guess they look real fine, but they ain’t from the Tyne

She’s my Geordie girl ...

(13th August 2024)

5. Truth & Mercy

This song reflects on three quite different situations but, no matter what, God remains unchanging and in complete control.

As I look out from the bottom of our garden, I can see the steeple of the church where my dad was organist in the 1960's. He reckoned to have preached in 87 churches in Somerset (that he could recall). It was a different time, but a good time. The church seemed to have a more positive and relevant influence a few decades ago. There are exceptions, but I'm not sure the Church possesses the respected voice of trust and reason it once had.

The world is not changing for the better as it seeks to sideline God and faith. War, violence, injustice and selfish greed continue to over-run the innocent. And in the noise of calamity, God calls out "Be Still! Know that I am God!" Whatever else happens, God is still in control. Whether we understand the big picture or not, Jesus has everything in hand. Meanwhile, life happens. Sometimes it's great and sometimes it's heartbreaking, but the best we can do is to seek the God who is in Heaven, and who came to Earth in truth and mercy – and who will surely come again.

As the old hymn says: "Be still, my soul! your God does undertake to guide the future as he has the past; Your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake; all now mysterious shall be bright at last." So, I look out and see the church steeple, and give thanks for what has gone before and for the reminder of God's goodness to us.

Truth & Mercy

Shades of evening fall across the fields
Over the levels out to Brean Down
A steeple rises from among the trees
A sure reminder of what used to be

*And God is in his Heaven
With the Earth beneath his feet
And that's where truth and mercy meet*

War is tearing people's lives apart
The rhetoric of yesteryear a forgotten art
Terrorist or freedom fighter? Who [gets to] decides?
But the innocent still suffer when ideologies collide

*But God is in his Heaven
With the Earth beneath his feet
And that's where truth and mercy meet*

*O why do the nations rage and plot in vain?
O the kings of the Earth have been told again and again
O he utters his voice and the Earth is melted and falls
O Be still and know that our God is the Lord of all*

The sun and rain will fall on all alike
There's no escaping the fragility of life
So, live in peace and love and do what's right
Live humbly with your God, live in the light

*For God is in his Heaven
With the Earth beneath his feet
And that's where truth and mercy meet*

(1st January 2025)

6. Get Away

The backing track for this is great 😊 Punchy and aggressive intro and chorus combined with laid-back verses. Some great chords to play too.

Life is short. For many people it is difficult and stressful. I look at the news and realise there can be no other conclusion - the world has gone completely mad. Utterly. Nonsense has been allowed to become the norm. Fortunately, there are moments when we can escape. This song fondly remembers some of them.

Verse 1 recalls the stillness of early morning (6:30am) walks around the country village where we live.

Verse 2 is about a wonderful, blue-sky hot day at Old Sarem, Salisbury. We had nowhere else to be. We lay on the grass staring up at the sky and watched dozens of parachuters jumping out of aeroplanes and we saw a buzzard hovering – we didn't know they could do that! The world and its worries were left behind for a few hours – wonderful.

Verse 3 is about a family holiday on Cyprus. On some evenings we found a relatively deserted beach where a gentle tide washed over the shore as the sun set and the stars appeared. I'd happily go back there any day.

Every so often, we need to get away!

Get Away

Shadows in silent lanes before first light
The tawny owl heads for home, the geese take to flight
The river still finds its way as morning breaks
Stillness fills the air before the world awakes

*There are days you've got to get away
Keep the clamour of this crazy troubled world at bay
Leave the constant bad news far behind
Don't need reminding that our leaders have all lost their minds
Break the routine and abandon 9 to 5
Seek out the freedom, let us live again not just survive
Make the most of every opportunity
Life is way too short to squander - there's so much to do and see*

You can lose yourself, under endless skies
The warmth of the summer sun relaxes the mind
Watching the buzzards rise, circling way up high
Let time drift along the breeze, til evening is nigh

Warm waters kiss the shore, wash our cares away
Golden horizons shine at the end of the day
The evening sun slips away, the night sky appears
And we catch a fleeting glimpse of Heaven right here

(24th December 2024)

7. LA

The riff for this was inspired by a couple of Lynyrd Skynyrd songs which, I unexpectedly discovered, are in B and C#m, not obvious keys for guitar-based bands. C#m seemed a pleasingly odd key for a guitar riff, so I started tinkering thereabouts too. The main instrumental has resolved back to E and uses bits of a chord progression stolen from Phil Keaggy's *Strong Tower*. I like to steal from the best and I find it a most satisfactory section of the song. Always nice to record something I like to listen to!

Sometimes people say really nice things to us. Not always. Sometimes. A few years back we were in Brighton meeting with our friend Ronke, who is an Olympic gold-medallist when it comes to culinary dexterity. She assured us that one day we'd be so successful that we'd be living in LA and generally jetting off around the world enjoying the high life.

For us, it has become an in-joke when there's something we want that's completely out of our reach or expectation. We'd love an F-Type jag. Well, when we get to LA we'll have one! You get the idea. So, this song is all about the things we don't have and possibly won't ever have ... until we get to LA which will be the indicator that we've finally 'made it'.

LA

Monday morning way too soon, the alarm set way too early
Earth goes full circle and comes right back again
I get so busy, I meet myself coming back the other way
I get so dizzy can't seem to catch me a break

*But O when we've been to LA
Ev'rything we're dreaming of will fall into place
F-Type on the freeway with the top down low
O it makes me wonder how did Ronke know?!*

No country mansion house, no pool, nor stables neither
No Lamborghini waiting out on the drive
No yacht in Monaco, no bijou beach house in St Lucia
No gold or diamonds, no accounting at Coutts

*But O when we've been to LA
Ev'rything we're dreaming of will fall into place
F-Type on the freeway with the top down low
O it makes me wonder how did Ronke know?!*

No Parisienne penthouse got no private island in the Med.
No Italian suits, no Christian Louboutin shoes
No stock portfolio, got no private jet to Dubai
No lunch at Claridges, no Maldivian cruise

*But O when we've been to LA
Ev'rything we're dreaming of will fall into place
F-Type on the freeway with the top down low
O it makes me wonder how did Ronke know?!*

(30th December 2024)

8. No Mediocrity

Some great musical ideas in this one (IMHO), particularly the brash intro and the post-chorus funky groove of the band, albeit slightly obscured by the guitar solos – and a fun outro too.

When our middle child moved away from home to live in leafy Oxfordshire, it came as something of a surprise to learn that she taught herself some songs on the guitar, caught a bus into Oxford, walked into a pub and played at their open mic. This created new friendships which led to her being asked to play drums in what has become a fairly successful covers band, and also in a second band who are writing their own material.

She decided not to sit at home in a new place and get bored ... she created opportunity and pursued it. This song takes some of that story and squeezes it into a week. Ed Stafford and his survivalist programmes are a family favourite and his latest series was not just about surviving, but thriving. It seemed to fit.

No Mediocrity

Monday morning she's on the road heading for a new big city
Got a 9-5 to keep her alive and for sure she's sitting pretty
She's set up home, but she's all alone, wonder what she's gonna do
No sitting around, she's making up ground
It seems she's got a lot to prove
Tuesday evening guitar in hand, she caught the bus into town
It's open mic, and this is her first night, singing in front of a crowd

*Oh, no mediocrity, that's not her style
She's taking Ed Stafford's advice to thrive not just survive*

Wednesday comes, when the work is done,
She's headed out the door again
She's singing the blues,
She's paying her dues on the long road out to fame
Beneath the lights of yet another stage
It's going better than she ever planned
A man said "Hey there honey, wanna make some money
playing in a rock'n'roll band?"
Thursday night, they set the town alight,
now they've got a foot in the door
The stage is set, there are no regrets with the crowd calling out for more

*Oh, no mediocrity, that's not her style
She's taking Ed Stafford's advice to thrive not just survive*

Friday arrives and the week is over and done, but the night is young
Back on the road to play another show and the weekend is just begun
They're making the headlines, top of the bill,
This band's kicking into gear
So there's a lesson to learn that when it's your turn
Don't give in to the fear
No matter who you are, what you did,
Where you're from you don't have to settle for less
Like a diamond in the rough, you can be a cut above,
It's a blueprint for success

*Oh, no mediocrity, that's not her style
She's taking Ed Stafford's advice to thrive not just survive*

(19th March 2025)

9. WIFI Man

Following the move of our smallest descendant to a new home in Lyme Regis, she arranged for the WIFI man to call. He came on a day when she had told them she would be abroad in Spain, but notwithstanding he claimed he was able to do what was required. However, it turns out that there was a distinct lack of WIFI in the house when our young descendant had decanted from Spain, so a second WIFI man visit was hastily planned. This time they could only come when no-one was home so, as the paternal ancestor, I agreed to drive down and wait for the engineer to call between the specified hours of 8am and 1pm. The WIFI man turned up at 1pm.

Technically, I don't think this is between 8am and 1pm. Ho Hum. He came in, fiddled with some wires, announced it didn't work (which we already knew) and then decided it probably wasn't connected-up in the green box up the road. I wondered, therefore, what the first chap had done that made him think it should work. I also wonder collectively how many hours are wasted per year in the UK by people waiting in for something or someone to arrive within hugely unhelpful time slots. I expect it's lots of people and lots of hours. As I drove home, I was listening to this backing track and pondering lyrics. I found that 'I'm waiting for the WIFI man' fitted nicely in what was probably intended as an instrumental section. Thus the spark of an idea set the lyrical fire ablaze.

WIFI Man

Sitting in a kitchen waiting for a WiFi-connection
He came once before but there's a fault and it needs a correction
I make a cup of coffee and I hope that he won't be too long
But it's always the same and soon my optimism is gone
They said, he'd call between 8 and 1 two hours ago
It seems to me, I've prob'ly got another three hours to go

Make the most of my time I write a little letter or two
Another cup of coffee and I'm wondering what else I can do
Turn the radio down – I'm listening for a knock at the door
I'm a prisoner here – no chance to go out and explore
They said they'd call between 8 and 1 three hours ago
It seems to me, I've prob'ly got another two hours to go

I'm waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man
Waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man
I'm waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man
Waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man to call

They said, he'd call between 8 and 1 four hours ago
It seems to me, I've prob'ly got another hour to go

I'm waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man
Waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man
I'm waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man
Waiting for the WiFi man, waiting for the WiFi man to call

Well would you believe it he arrived on the stroke of 1
Five hours of waiting – it seems they've got us under the thumb
He says we're not connected to the green box up the road
I hide my incredulity – how come he didn't already know?

So I'm sitting in a kitchen waiting for a WIFI-connection
He's been twice before but there's still a fault in need of correction
Another cup of coffee and I hope that he won't be too long
But it's always the same and soon my optimism is gone
Waiting for the WiFi man to call

(20th May 2025)

10. Cheese & Chalk

I stumbled on this guitar riff when noodling about on the 'Strat one day – my fingers just fell upon it by accident and so the recorder on my iPhone was quickly switched on. When I listened back I thought "Ah ha! That'll do nicely." I like the Moog & guitar duet in the middle but, the more I listen, the more I hear the old TV theme to Charlie's Angels. Ho hum. This is another song where I really enjoy the groove of the band under the instrumental sections – a fun little riff. It possibly needed a third verse but lyric-laziness persuaded me not to.

After some deliberation, and in the absence of any other ideas (!), I decided that we needed a sequel to an old song called 'Don't Tell The Bishop'. Arguably DTTB is a song about a game of chess, but it might actually be about a scheming actress who took a bishop for a fool. This new lyric gives us a slightly different insight to the relationship. When someone is given ye olde 'heave ho' their friends might comfort them by saying there's no need to worry because there are plenty more fish in the sea. That may be true, but in this lyric there's a twist because it's the heave ho-er that made the mistake and the heave ho-ee is actually the fish that got away ... and just as well too!

Cheese & Chalk

She was high maintenance
He drove an old Capri
She demanded everything
He just wanted to be free

You can talk about your cheese and chalk
Everybody else could see
It was only a matter of time before
They faced the reality

*It came as no surprise when she said her goodbyes
'Sorry babe, I'm letting you go - there's plenty more fish in the sea'
Words that haunt her every day - he's the one that got away*

She preferred a chic boutique
He preferred his old blue jeans
She spent all the money he'd got
He had the girl of his dreams

What can we say about night and day
Never together for long
When you're poles apart there ain't no easy way
No wonder it all went wrong

It came as no surprise ...

*Paint and powder, designer threads and heels
Covered up her ice-cold heart
It was no secret, he understood the game
A risk pursued until the last*

You can talk about your cheese and chalk
Everybody else could see
It was only a matter of time before
They faced the reality

(1st July 2025)

11. Seasons

Lots of musicians have snippets of music, riffs, runs, chord sequences etc. that they tend to play when noodling about, and often those ideas never make it to a complete song. The opening chords of the chorus of this song have been with me for years! Moving from the opening G chord to the diminished 7th whilst the vocal note is a D creates a nice musical tension – it's really a dis-chord, but I like it. The final section has different soloing instruments, intended to reflect the different seasons. Not sure that entirely worked.

As we get older, one of the benefits of hindsight is observing the different seasons we live through. Some are long, some are brief, many overlap. Some we might prefer to forget, whilst others are cherished. This song is about as bluesy as I ever get, but it's not intended to be melancholy. Rather, it reflects life as it is, and life is good. The seasons shape us and we grow through them but, unfortunately, we won't have all the answers on this side of eternity.

Some of the good seasons end way too soon but, as Adrian Plass once observed, nothing is wasted and, as Romans 8:28 teaches, all things work together for the good of those that love the Lord. That doesn't make all life's experiences positive, but it does mean that something beneficial can come from every season, good or bad.

Seasons

Looking back we trace the path
Of tears and laughter, of life and love
And nothing is wasted from dark valleys to the mountain tops
It's part of the journey, it's who we are

*Seasons come and go
They never last forever they change before you know
Seasons ebb and flow
Like winding rivers through life's high's and lows
Evermore*

More than thirty years of love
Until death did them part
Every day she sees his face before her
Whispers a prayer to hold his hand

Seasons come and go ...

He made his plans and followed a dream
Until somebody closed the door
It's soul destroying when the best you get is no reply
But by grace we're tempered in the fire
By grace we're tempered in the fire
In the fire of life

There is a time and there is a season for all things under Heaven
And all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord

(31st July 2025)

12. Still Don't Know

I wanted to end the album with something fast and frivolous. This is probably about as fast as I can play the '12-bar blues' riff. It is also, possibly, the only recording I've made using my Fender Telecaster. I can only think of one other recording where it might have been used. It plays surprisingly different from the Strat and you can kind of hear what created the signature Quo sound. Anyway, I thought it should definitely make an appearance somewhere!

The accompaniment for this song is akin to the Gillan band's version of *Lucille*, an amazing cover of the Little Richard song, but it's by no means as fast as Gillan played and the notes are subtly different. The three instrumentals borrow a chord sequence found in Deep Purple's *Lazy*, but with a much faster tempo.

So, while the music deals with the 'fast' part of the specification, the lyric is the 'frivolous' part, a bit of a daydream about living the life of Larry, whoever he was. Our eldest recently arranged for us to buy a Nintendo DS so that we can, once more, play the original Donkey Kong games. When he was about three, I could beat him on any of the levels. How times have changed! But it's easy to waste a few hours on DK, and why not?!

The Bible teaches that it's good for a man to work and that's true, it meets his basic need to accomplish, deliver, achieve and be useful. But there is no doubt that days off are good too, and I'm happy to volunteer for as many of those as I can get away with! And even having given it many years' consideration, I still don't know what I want to be when I eventually grow up.

Still Don't Know

I Still don't know what I want to be
But a fat wage packet, no responsibility
Would suit me just fine
Minding my time
Playing DK with my friends online
The diary's empty, no-one's beck and call
Just enough to get by and you can bet that's all
That'll suit me just fine
Minding my time
Playing my music and drinking my wine
It's a crying shame
I've got nothing to prove
But who can I blame
What's a man supposed to do?!

Still don't know what I wanna be
But being tied to a desk is not for me
Don't want to Zoom no more
Project planning is a bore
Chasing after targets has become a real chore
I want to be my own boss in control of my time
I'd never be late no matter when I arrive
And when the day is done
At nine-thirty-one
The deadlines disappear like ice in the sun
Walk away from commotion
The Out of Office is on
Give myself a promotion
To a bar and a beach in the sun

I still don't know, I still don't know

Still don't know what I want to be
But so long as it comes with a guarantee
Of lazy days in the sun
Work is all done
The bills are all paid and we're still having fun
Everyday is a weekend gonna get up late
Have a huge cooked breakfast and plan my day
Long walks in the rain
Down country lanes
And a beer by the fire in the pub at the end

Is too much to ask?
Sounds too good to be true
What's a man supposed to do?!

I still don't know what I want to be
I still don't know what I want to be
Oh no!

(13th August 2025 / 15th August)

The musical project of my two-week holiday in the Summer of 2024 is thus concluded – 13 months later.