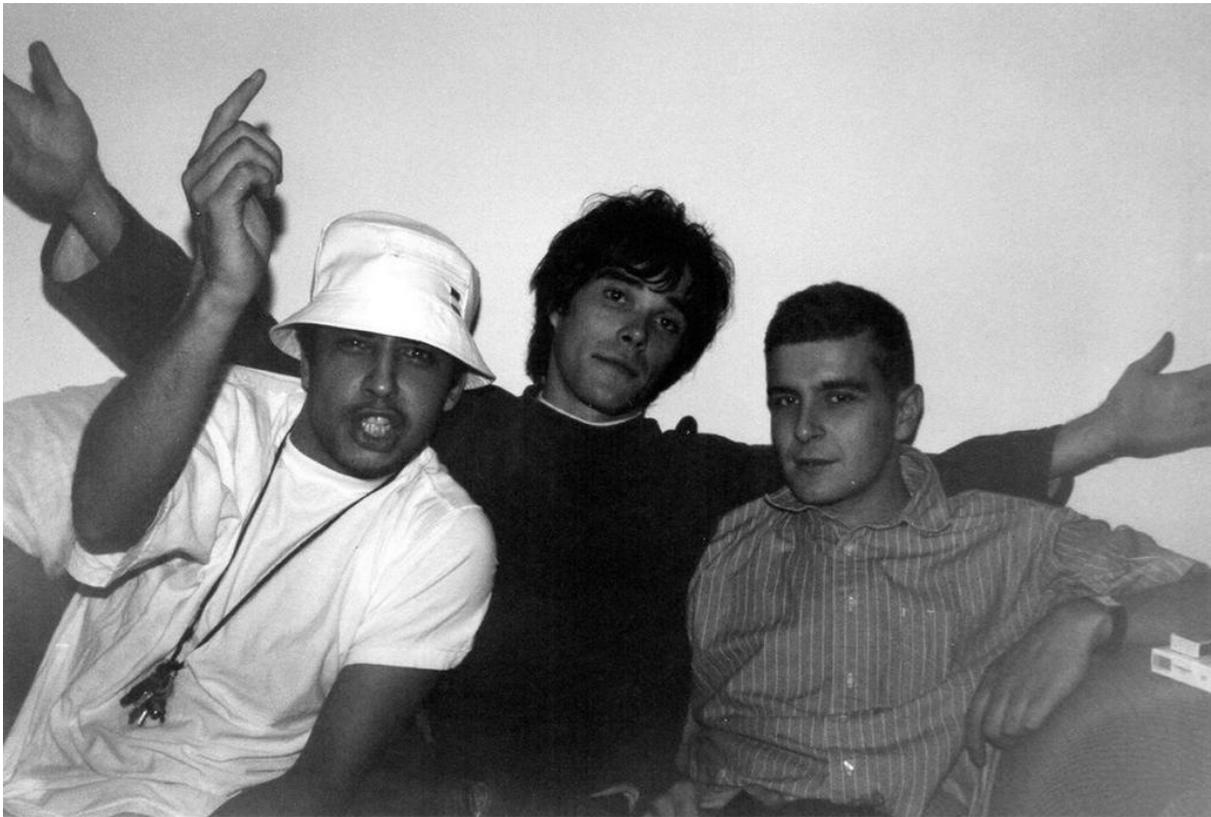


Matthew Mead interviews Simon Wolstencroft for This Is The Daybreak (04/08/14).



Reni, Ian and Simon.

How are you ?

Hi Matt, I'm doing fine thanks.

Can you talk us through how you first got into music ?

I got into drumming after checking out all the bands that appeared on Top of the Pops on a Thursday night during my time as a child of the Seventies.

Who are your drumming influences ?

I picked up the drumming bug from my late mother's 7inch single collection. Earth Wind and Fire, Barry White and the Rolling Stones. I thought the Sweet were a good band too.

How did you get to know Ian Brown, John Squire and Andy Couzens ?

I met Ian Brown and John Squire after passing my eleven plus and attending Altrincham Grammar School for boys. The three of us were in the same class all through our schooling there, which began in 1974. Ian and I became mates straight away but it took me a couple of years to get to know John. John was a massive fan of the first Clash album, just like me. The pair of us went to the Manchester Apollo to watch the first of several Clash gigs there together. We were hooked straight away and decided to form a band with Ian playing bass guitar.

The three of us decided to attend South Trafford Collage, although we studied different subjects. This is where we met Andy Couzens after Ian spotted him kicking someone's head in during lunchtime in the collage refectory. He started singing for us and we did our first gig at the Sale Annexe youth club in 1980. There were about eight songs in the set and we rehearsed at Walton rd. scout hut in Sale.

What were rehearsals like ?

I have recordings from this period which will be heard on my podcasts due out in September (the book is due out at the end of October on Strata books).

Tell us a bit about the background to The Patrol and what you were up to.

In 1981 I met Johnny Marr in a pub called the Vine in Sale. This is where the Patrol started drinking. Ian and John had started joining the scooter club scene but it wasn't for me. Johnny, as well as bass player Andy Rourke and I, had a band called Freak Party and searched for a singer to no avail. This is when I started dabbling in drugs and this became more important than the music for a while. Tragic really.

Johnny split the scene for six months then rang me one night and said he wanted me as the drummer in his new band The Smiths. I was hanging out with Andy Rourke most of the time at his Dad's house, again, in Sale. I didn't fancy rehearsing in the freezing rehearsal room in Ancoats and wanted to get high with Andy instead.

Johnny pleaded with me to record on The Smiths first proper recording, but I didn't like the cut of Morrissey's jib. "Thanks but no thanks" was what I said to Johnny.

I was still in touch with Ian and John, but mostly Ian during this time, though John got me a job painting the pink inner ears of the cartoon character Danger Mouse. He worked at the acclaimed Cosgrove Hall animation studio in Chorlton. I got bored after about three days though.

Fast forward a couple of years and I had joined The Fall. Reni had joined the band, now known as The Stone Roses. I thought he was awesome and still do. He's in a different league to me. I don't know any drummers who could fill his shoes.



Backstage at Blackpool, 1989. (c) Ian Tilton. <http://www.iantilton.net>

Did you keep tabs on what John and Ian went onto do after The Patrol ?

I went to a lot of Roses gigs and was dead happy for them. Ian gave me a cassette of the first Roses' album and I knew they had something special. I was on tour most of the time, so I only saw the Roses on my hotel room TV where they were on heavy rotation on MTV. But Ian still kept in touch with postcards from other parts of the world.

Fast forward to December 2011 and The Patrol reunion ! How did that happen ?

In December 2011, Ian invited me down to the Hillsborough benefit gig at the Manchester Ritz with Mick Jones. Ian and John were to perform on The Clash's classic 'Bankrobber' which Ian and Pete Garner (The Stone Roses' first bass player) had witnessed being recorded at Pluto Studios in Manchester, years before. At the soundcheck, I was asked to play drums for Ian and John on Bankrobber, as the house band drummer was late.

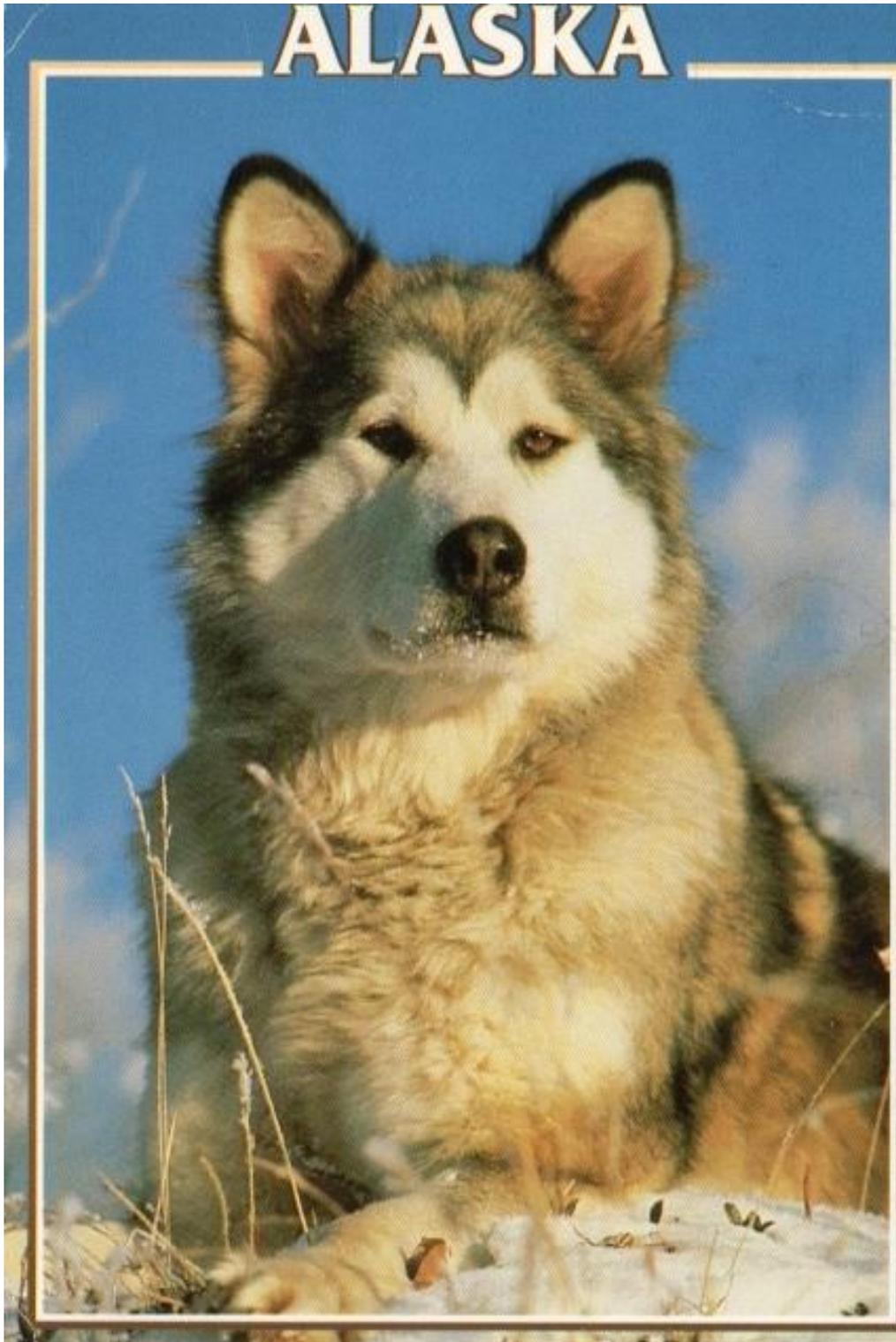
I had not seen John Squire since 1995 at the Manchester Apollo when the Roses played one of their last gigs together. It felt amazing to be back on stage together after all this time and I was buzzing all night, though when it came showtime I was gutted cos The Farm's drummer showed up. We had all come full circle.

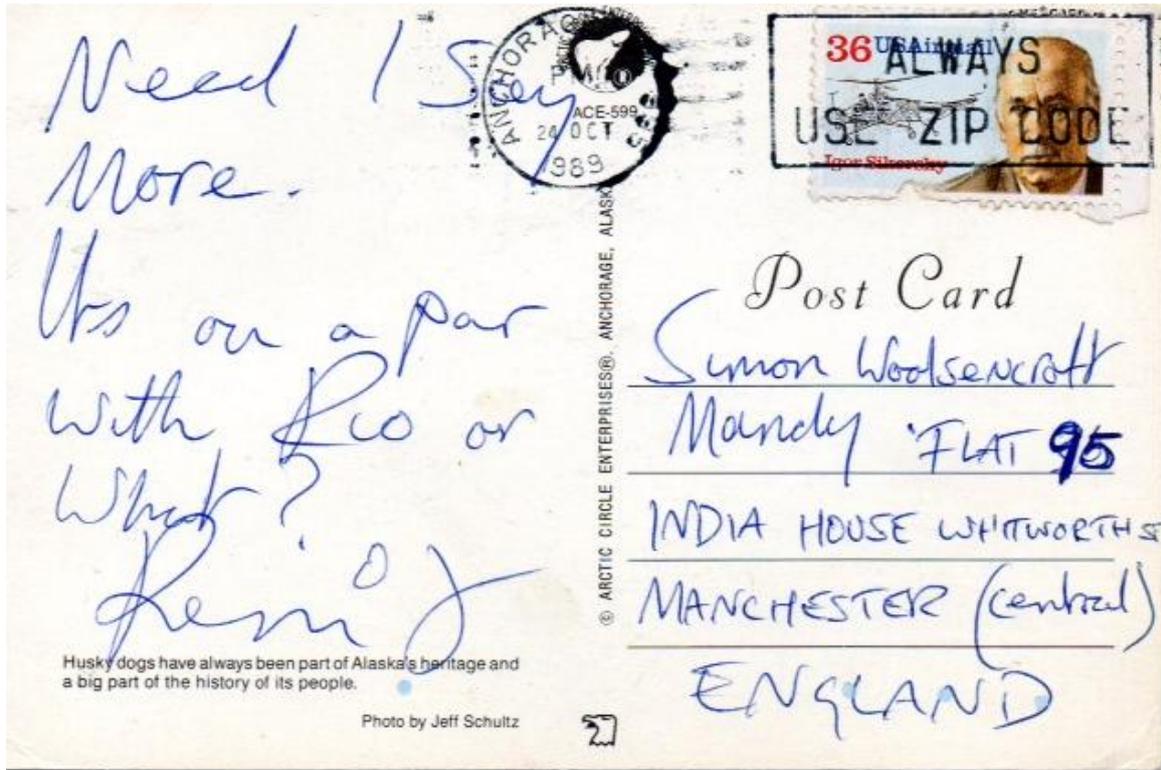
Have you seen the Roses at any of their reunion gigs ? If so what did you make of their shows ?

I went to see a lot of Roses shows when they reformed. Ian took me over to Amsterdam with Inder Goldfinger, who played percussion on Ian's solo album 'Golden Greats', which I also played on. They sounded amazing and I was really proud of my former bandmates.

Are you good friends with Reni and Mani ?

Last year I went on holiday to Spain and drove over the border into southern France to stay at Mani's huge farm house for the weekend.





Postcard from Reni, October 1989.

Simon's new book, *You Can Drum, But You Can't Hide*, is out in October, on Strata Books.